

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs;
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International
Organizations;
Subcommittee Hearing: The Worldwide Persecution of Christians;**

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**Witness Statement: Khataza Gondwe, Ph.D.
Team Leader for Africa and the Middle East
Christian Solidarity Worldwide**

The majority of Christians in sub Saharan Africa experience hostility, harassment, repression, restrictions or violence on account of their faith suffer as a result of two main sources. Firstly, there is a seeming proliferation of militant Islamist insurgencies that have taken advantage of pre-existing local issues, weak application of the rule of law, or vacuums caused by the chronic failure of state structures to establish strongholds. They temporarily appear to offer a dysfunctional form of stability, a religiosity underlined by violence to those in occupied areas who adhere to the vagaries of their restrictive interpretation of faith. Secondly, Christians suffer in countries led by authoritarian regimes whose governing political ideology or religious dogma includes an underlying hostility to pluralism in any form. An atmosphere where the slightest divergence from the official orthodoxy is interpreted as a challenge, and encourages the abuse of human rights in general and freedom of religion in particular.

The Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram and its off shoot Ansaru, provide the clearest example of the former trend. From its inception in 2002 when it was known locally as “the Taliban” or Yusufiyya after leader, Mohammed Yusuf, the group made it clear that Christians and symbols of the federal system were its primary targets. It was also made clear that the group's aims were to be accomplished by violence. During 2003 and 2004, Boko Haram’s abortive uprisings directed violence at Christian and federal targets in Yobe State.¹

By the time the group made headlines again, it had a headquarters in the Borno State capital, Maiduguri and mosques in several northern states. Discourse on the group’s targeted attacks on Christians was lost in the controversy surrounding the extra-judicial execution of the group’s leader following its 2009 uprising. While Boko Haram and its apologists insisted the 2009 violence was aimed at the authorities and was prompted by the persistent and severe abuse of the rights of its members, the head of the Nigerian Brethren Church retorted, “In the middle of everything the attacks were geared to bombing Christian places of worship and individual church members were attacked at their places of business and residence.” As the group retreated to its stronghold in the Railway Suburb of the Borno State capital, Maiduguri, it murdered three pastors, torched over twenty churches, destroyed numerous Christian-owned businesses and abducted over 100 Christian men women and children for use as human shields. Surviving hostages informed CSW that following

¹ In late 2003, the group began an armed uprising in Yobe State by issuing pamphlets declaring it would make Nigeria an Islamic State under Mohammed Yusuf’s interpretation of the Sharia. Its members invaded Kanamma and Geidam Local Government Areas (LGAs), destroying Kanamma police station, killing a policeman and carting off weapons while chanting *Allah u Akbar*. Next, they marched to the town centre, took over a primary school, renamed it “Afghanistan”, hoisted their flag and declared a *jihad* against Christians and the Federal Government. They caused havoc in several towns and villages, including the Yobe state capital, causing the displacement of around 10,000 people. Federal forces eventually overcame them, arresting several members, four of whom were killed while allegedly trying to escape prison. In September 2004, the group rose up again, murdering over a dozen Christians during raids on Bama and Gwoza in Borno State. Around 60 members also attacked police stations in the area, killing four policemen. As a joint force confronted them, the group forced seven locals to act as their porters as they retreated over the Madara hills into Cameroon. Two were murdered, while one managed to escape. In an interview with CSW, he recounted the efforts that were made to elicit his conversion.

intensive indoctrination sessions; male hostages were given the choice of conversion or beheading, while women were to be subjected to what was termed “hard labour” upon refusing. Some male converts died anyway, as Mohammed Yusuf, the group’s leader arbitrarily decided who lived or died.

Following the destruction of the Maiduguri headquarters and extra-judicial killing of its leader, the group went underground, re-emerging to launch uncharacteristically sophisticated attacks that indicated a degree of specialist training. Purported spokesmen for the group have since claimed that the group is variously affiliated with other Islamist groups Somalia’s al Shabaab or AQIM. As the increasingly religious dimension to Boko Haram’s actions became clearer, and the group itself articulated its aim of religious cleansing, or in the case of Ansaru, the creation of a caliphate, academic debates regarding the group’s origins and motivations became superfluous, however the time taken to engage in these debates had delayed an effective international response to this transnational threat.

Today, recognition of the extent of Boko Haram’s campaign of religious cleansing is once again being obscured, this time by the oft repeated phrase that “more Muslims than Christians” have died in Boko Haram attacks. Given the religious demography of the areas most affected, and the fact that bombs do not discriminate between victims, this may indeed be the case. However, it ignores the dramatic rise in religious cleansing, particularly in Borno State. During 2013, 46 villages were destroyed, around 14,000 Christians displaced in the Gwoza area of Borno State, close to the Cameroon border.² An unknown number of Christians were murdered, with women and girls captured and forced into sexual slavery.³ On 26 January at least 138 people are now known to have died in attacks by members of the Islamist terror group Boko Haram on a Catholic Church and village in Adamawa and a farmer’s market Borno States in north east Nigeria.⁴ However the Christian death toll is likely to be far higher than this. According to a Muslim eyewitness interviewed by local media, prior to attacking the church in Adamawa, the gunmen mounted a roadblock in a nearby area and killed many Christians. This tactic of blocking highways and screening, murdering or kidnapping of travellers is being employed increasingly by the insurgents.

As violence continued unabated throughout January, causing further large scale population displacement, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that approximately 5500 Nigerians fled into Cameroon and Niger within a ten day period.⁵ This is tragically ironic, as Boko Haram militants also cross into Cameroon when placed under pressure by the Nigerian armed forces and have done so since 2003. Moreover, hostages kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria are often held in Cameroon.

The cross border element underlines the transnational aspect of Boko Haram and Ansaru, and their stated ties with jihadi movements on the continent. For example prior to its reemergence with fresh tactics in 2010, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb had offered its assistance to Nigerian Muslims. One of the leaders of Ansaru is said to be a Cameroonian national. Nigerians potentially from Boko Haram/Ansaru were reportedly sighted in northern Mali, where al-Qaida-affiliated Islamist groups stepped in to take advantage of a political vacuum and pre-existing tensions between the political centre and marginalised or under-developed periphery. Even more recently, according to Edmond Mulet, assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping operations at the United Nations in New York, Boko Haram already has some kind of presence in the Central African Republic (CAR), similar chronic and pre-existing power vacuums have been exploited to transform what was essentially a

² <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/borno-indigenous-christians-accuses-governor-shettima-negligence-says-boko-haram-sacked-46>

³ <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Peace/2013/11/17/Boko-Haram-Kidnaps-Christian-Women-Forces-Them-to-be-Slave-Brides>

⁴ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/islamic-extremists-in-nigeria-attack-christians-at-sunday-worship-every-week-in-january-113147/>

⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/52e256fa9.html>

struggle for resources and political power into an increasingly religious one, raising very real fears of the partitioning of the country along religious lines.

Pre-existing issues facilitated the rise of extremism in northern Nigeria also. A prevailing international human rights narrative focusing primarily on the outworking in Plateau State only of the constitutional issue of indigeneship, and more recently on a heavy-handed governmental response to Boko Haram, has failed to identify and address chronic underlying realities that have contributed towards creating an environment in which violent groups that deny freedom of religion to indigenous and non-indigenous Christians, and indeed, to Muslims who do not share their extreme vision of Islam, regularly emerge. Temporarily obscured by the current terrorism is the long-term, comprehensive and systematic marginalization of non-Muslim communities in terms of their – civil, political, economic, social, cultural and developmental rights – which has been facilitated tacitly or deliberately by successive state and non-state actors over decades, and has often been undergirded by violence. There are areas in the north and centre States where religion is the determining factor in all sectors, access to education, employment opportunities, graveyards, land for houses of worship, social amenities and even vaccination initiatives are predicated on belonging to the “appropriate” religion, and where the religion of the ruling community has become the de facto state religion to such an extent that an indigenous Christian in Kebbi State protesting at the unconstitutionality of being brought forcibly before a shari’a court can be informed by the judge that “his constitution” may work elsewhere but does not work in Kebbi . This underlying and systemic marginalisation, which predates the ending of military rule, will need to be tackled whenever the Boko Haram crisis has ends in order to ensure such groups no longer enjoy conditions in which to flourish. Earlier examples of this religion-based inequality, discrimination and violence include the rise of the similarly violent Islamist groups, Maitatsine and Zakzaky’s Izala in the 1980s; the beheading of an Igbo trader following unproven accusations of defamation in Kano the 1990s, the appalling lynching by students and towns folk in Gombe of a female Christian teacher following similar accusations in 2007, collective punishment of non-Muslim communities for unproven religious infractions from the 1990’s onwards, and more recently, the lynching of an Assemblies of God (AoG) pastor in Katsina state and the burning of his and other Christian properties following the unfounded accusation that he had kidnapped and mutilated a six year old girl. The persistent lack of justice in these and many other instances fostered decades of impunity, emboldening perpetrators and eventually engendering retributive violence.

Violations occur despite the fact that Nigeria's constitution contains provisions promoting freedom of religion and forbidding discrimination against any citizen. In many cases, authorities at individual state level appear to be complicit in these violations, either deliberately or through negligence. For example, despite the clear dangers posed to his administration by the Boko Haram insurgency, which is suspected to have a headquarters in Gwoza's Madara Hills, the current Governor of Borno State is said to have taken inadequate measures to prevent the actions of the group and his administration has allegedly failed to adequately address the ongoing security crisis in the area. After his country home and church in Gwoza were destroyed on 8 January 2014 by insurgents, Peter Biye, the only Christian member of the Federal House of Representatives from Borno State, complained of the “non-chalant attitude” of security operatives with regard to the enforcement of security. "What is happening in my constituency is very unfortunate, people are being killed by terrorists on daily basis, churches are being burnt, and if people like my honourable self, who is also a member House Committee on Army will alert military authorities that based on intelligent report my village will be under attack by terrorists, and nothing was done to secure the area, then it is unfortunate, because an ordinary citizen of this country, especially those from volatile areas are no longer safe or protected by our security outfit." ⁶

⁶ <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/lawmaker-alleges-plot-to-wipe-out-christians-in-borno/168653/>

Events in Tanzania appear to provide early warning signs of freedom of religion violations similar to those that occur in Nigeria. Societal discrimination based on religious affiliation is increasingly being reported from predominantly Muslim areas and the semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago, which is 98% Muslim. *Uamsho* ('Awakening'), a separatist religious movement founded in 2001, has benefitted from local dissatisfaction with the terms of political union and campaigned for Zanzibari independence during the last elections. The group and its supporters are alleged to be behind an increase in violence targeting local Christians, and an extreme interpretation of the religion of the majority community takes precedence over civil law and constitutional religious freedom provisions.

The Christian community, which constitutes around 2% of Zanzibar's population, experiences repression, discrimination and violence. Christians struggle to access employment in government sectors; anyone with a non-Muslim name applying for work in the army or other government services are regularly removed from the list; non-Muslim female students attending public schools are obliged to wear head scarves; Islam and Arabic are compulsory subjects in the curriculum; refuse is regularly deposited in the Christian graveyard on Unguja Island. During Ramadan 2013, Christians were obliged to fast following an official announcement that anyone found eating outside the prescribed hours would be jailed until Ramadan 2014. Christian leaders find it difficult to rent accommodation, and CSW has received credible evidence of Christians experiencing difficulties in receiving appropriate medical treatment, and in two cases, of receiving treatment that further endangered their health, necessitating evacuation to medical facilities on the Mainland.

In an arbitrary and extra-legal requirement, erecting a church building is dependent on permission from the local community, which is rarely if ever given. Many churches, including several that have obtained all necessary permissions, are embroiled in endless court cases, with hearings repeatedly postponed in a seeming attempt to deplete meagre resources through the indefinite retaining of lawyers from the mainland, since local practitioners either refuse or fear to take on such cases. Stones are often hurled at churches during services and faeces left in the grounds or buildings. In addition, churches regularly suffer arson attacks or are demolished in mob action. At least 20 have been looted, then burnt or demolished, allegedly by supporters *Uamsho*, who often attack during services, assaulting all present. Perpetrators are never brought to trial even when identified or caught in the act, with police investigations generally being extended indefinitely.

Of particular concern are regular threats issued via text message or leaflets naming Christian leaders targeted for assassination. In August Father Anselm Mwang'amba, an elderly Catholic priest, was attacked as he left an internet café in the historic Stone Town area of the Zanzibar capital, and was left with severe burns to the face, neck, chest and hands. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) was informed that Father Mwang'amba received a call from an unknown number while inside the cafe and was doused with acid as he exited to answer his telephone.

The attack on Father Mwang'amba was the latest in a series of increasingly frequent assaults on churches and church leaders. In 2012, Catholic priest Father Ambrose Mkenda was shot and injured by unknown assailants. In February 2013, a Protestant pastor Mathew Kachira and Catholic priest, Father Evarist Mushi, were shot dead on 10 and 21 February respectively. No one has been apprehended for these murders, neither have local authorities taken measures to ensure the safety of key leaders, several of whom received threatening text messages from a group calling itself "Muslim Renewal", which claimed responsibility for the murders, added that the killers were "trained in Somalia", and promised "disaster" during the 2013 Easter season. During a CSW visit in August 2013, several leaders reported continuing threats naming specific church leaders targeted for assassination. The threats came via text messages in leaflets left around the town; they were received verbally from strangers while leaders were out in public, and two occasions, a leader narrowly escaped an ambush. So far the Zanzibar authorities have failed to offer protection to pastors who have been threatened in this manner.

Weeks earlier, two English teenagers who worked at the St Monica nursery school, linked to the Anglican Church were severely injured when two men threw acid on them, and were flown to Britain for treatment. The glare of international publicity that followed this attack appeared to galvanise the Tanzanian authorities into action and also shed light on the activities of Uamsho, which in the preceding weeks, had distributed anti-Christian leaflets telling Muslims to prepare for “a call” to action. One of Uamsho’s key supporters is the Muslim cleric Sheikh Ponda Issa Ponda, who had spent two weeks in Zanzibar issuing inciting sectarian statements with no official intervention, who was eventually arrested in Dar es Salaam after a brief period on the run.

On the Tanzanian mainland, where Christians and followers of traditional beliefs are thought to constitute a majority, there are also reports of increasing discrimination, of a rise in religion-related violence and of a lack of justice in the aftermath of such violence.

In an emblematic case, the family of a Pentecostal pastor beheaded in March 2013, when violence erupted in Buseresere Town in the Geita Region, is still awaiting justice. Pastor Mathayo Kachili of the Tanzania Assemblies of God (TAG) Church was murdered as he sought to intervene to end violence that had erupted after the local Muslim community objected to the opening of a Christian-owned butchery. The weak, or rather uneven, enforcement of the rule of law was also evident in this case. Instead of arresting the culprits, Christians were told to stop slaughtering animals.

There is also a looming threat of international terrorism in the country. In fact the Tanzanian president described the bombing of the inaugural service of Arusha’s new Roman Catholic Cathedral in May 2013 as “an act of terrorism”, and there is evidence that the Somali Islamist group al Shabaab has been actively seeking to create loosely affiliated networks in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, using its connections and social media. Moreover, investigations by the United Nations Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia uncovered the fact that al Shabaab has developed extensive funding, recruiting and training networks in Kenya, centring on the Muslim Youth Center (MYC), now known as al Hijra, and the Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque Committee, although the latter denies this publicly. Amongst other things al Hijra was reported to be strengthening its links with the Tanzania-based Ansar Muslim Youth Centre, and with al Shabaab affiliates in Rwanda and Burundi.⁷

The arrest in early October of 11 al Shabaab suspects who were undergoing military training in Tanzania’s Mtwara region provided a fresh indication of the group’s determination to advance its influence and aims by exploiting local grievances. According to veteran journalist and owner of G&S Media Consultants Gideon Shoo, as well as targeting Zanzibar, al-Shabaab is specifically focusing on Mtwara, one of the least developed areas in the country where in May, a protest by against the construction of a gas pipeline to Dar es Salaam turned violent.⁸ “It is no secret that al-Shabaab is planning to use the discontent in those two areas as an entry point into Tanzania.”⁹ The 11 suspects, who were aged between 18 and 39, were found with found firearms, machetes and 25 DVDs. One called *Zinduka Zanzibar* (Wake up Zanzibar) provides training on how to kill effectively and train militia. The other DVDs were reported to be al Shabaab training manuals. “Al Shabaab and al Qaeda are now using Zanzibar as a stepping stone. Their target is the whole country of Tanzania and the African continent at large. This is the biggest threat ever. Training on our land proves they are here.”¹⁰ In mid October police announced they had arrested two more suspects in connection with the Mtwara incident.¹¹

Turning to the second reason why Christians in sub Saharan Africa experience hostility, harassment, repression, restrictions or violence on account of their faith, a nation’s political considerations or governing ideology can often engender violations of religious freedom. This is the case in Eritrea, a

⁷ http://www.somaliareport.com/downloads/UN_REPORT_2012.pdf

⁸ http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/05/23/feature-02

⁹ http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/10/17/feature-01

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201310210337.html>

state governed by a former Maoist liberation movement often referred to as an equal opportunities oppressor where meetings of more than seven people requires official permission, and where the country's network of prisons, the main growth industry in the country, as a refugee wryly observed.

The Eritrean ruling party successfully harnessed all sectors of society to attain freedom, at times using brutality to enforce the tight discipline necessary for success against overwhelming odds. Unfortunately, this requirement for total and unquestioning allegiance underlined by force was carried into the independence era, creating an obsessive determination for excessive control of the population, and assisted in transforming the nation into one where, in the words of one victim, there are more new prisons than schools and hospitals.

The Eritrean regime has a long-held ideological antipathy towards religion of any sort, appearing to have deemed religious adherence as a competing and dangerous allegiance and a source of national division. This attitude was evident during the 1970s, when the ruling party drew up policy documents vowing, inter alia, to punish anyone it felt was using religion to sow discord and undermine the progress of the Eritrean people both during and after the armed conflict. The document included an undertaking to vigorously oppose all 'imperialist-created new counter-revolutionary faiths', such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals, and to punish anyone attempting to use religion to sow discord or undermine the progress of the Eritrean people during or after the conclusion of the armed conflict.¹ Consequently, the liberation movement discouraged religious activities in areas under its control, arresting recruits that were involved in any such activity.

The 1990s marked the beginnings of a government campaign against elements of Christianity, with the 1995 "Proclamation to legally standardize and articulate religious institutions and activities", which amongst other things limited the activities of religious institutions in development work, and obliged them to register all assets, including bank accounts with the Department of Religious Affairs. While some church leaders held meetings with the authorities to debate this, others felt the move may not be right, but that the government should be allowed to learn from its mistakes.

In 2001 open persecution slowly emerged, as the government began to close facilities owned by Charismatic and Evangelical churches. May 2002 saw the harsh enactment of the 1995 law, when the Minister of Information issued a decree obliging all religious groups must register or cease all religious activities. The decree also obliged all religious groups, except Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran Christians and followers of Sunni Islam, to officially register and to function under the surveillance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, registration requirements were discriminatory, in that they did not apply to sanctioned groups, and were also excessively stringent and intrusive, including demands for intimate details of the lives of church members that made many churches hesitant to comply. It soon became clear, however, that groups without a significant historical presence in the country would never be licensed to operate. Years after having complied fully and satisfied all requirements, the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Bahai movement still await official accreditation.

The 2002 decree marked the acceleration of open repression, with the initiation of a campaign of arrests particularly targeting evangelical and Charismatic or Pentecostal Christianity that has continued since that year with varying waves of intensity. The repression was also accompanied by inflammatory statements from officials, with adherents equated with Islamist extremists and vilified as non-indigenous, unpatriotic agents of foreign interests who were seeking to undermine public morality and divide and destabilise the country.

Between 2000 to 3,000 Christians are detained indefinitely at any given time in Eritrea. As with the tens of thousands of other prisoners of conscience, none have been formally charged or brought to trial and all are held pending a denial of faith. Torture is rife in Eritrea's detention centres, with prisoners being held in such inhumane conditions as metal shipping containers, underground cells, and in the open air in desert areas surrounded by barbed wire or thorns. Reports persist of

prisoners dying following torture, privations or after being denied life-saving medication or treatment after falling ill because they refused to deny their faith in order to access it. CSW has also received credible reports of female Christian prisoners being regularly beaten on the soles of their feet and their wombs, ostensibly to render them barren. In her autobiography, Helen Berhane, a well known singer and evangelist from one of the largest Pentecostal churches in Eritrea, vividly described the condition of a lady beaten so severely that her uterus prolapsed and hung from her body. Ms. Berhane herself was imprisoned in Mai Serwa Military Camp for 32 months where she endured numerous beatings, the last of which was of such ferocity that it caused severe nerve damage, impairing her mobility.¹² This extensive forceful, systematic attempt by Eritrea to eliminate non-sanctioned denominations, the severe mistreatment of detainees in deliberately life threatening conditions, the extensive use of torture and the deaths that are attributable to deliberate privations amounting to extra-judicial killings, may constitute a crime against humanity in the international legal sense.

Authorised denominations also suffer repression. Most significantly, in a series of government-initiated punitive measures from 2005-6, the legitimate patriarch of the Orthodox Church Abune Antonios, who had resisted government interference in church affairs, was forced from office, replaced by a government-approved priest in violation of canon law, and placed under house arrest, where he remains to date. The pontiff is an insulin-dependent diabetic and according to recent reports is in declining health. The government is now in effective control of the Church's finances, and Priests seen as sympathizing with the Patriarch have been detained, harassed, forced out of the church or conscripted following a 2005 revocation of clerical exemption. A 2011 report indicated that the Patriarch's removal, around 1700 Orthodox clergy of all ranks have been forced out of the church; 1350 have been forcibly conscripted, 23 are known to be detained, fourteen have been banned from entering the compound of any church, seven are not allowed to leave the confines of the capital city Asmara and a significant number have fled the country, including 49 lay workers, 32 monks and five nuns.¹⁰ In addition the government has confiscated the Church's historical artefacts, and around 1500 churches are reportedly slated for closure in the near future.¹³

Similar pressure regarding conscription that was exerted on the Roman Catholic Church in late 2005 necessitated an intervention by Pope Benedict, who requested that "the right to exemption from military service be respected," by the government. In June 2006, the country's three Catholic bishops are said to have informed the government that the bearing of arms was "not in accordance" with the role of clergy, and in March 2007, it was reported that the Church had not only refused to supply the government with a comprehensive list of clergy and their whereabouts, but was also resisting a request to either reduce their number or send them to the military. Five months later the government issued an ultimatum, ordering that control of Catholic-run schools, clinics, orphanages and women's vocational training centres be handed over to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour. In November 2007, 13 foreign Catholic charity workers were effectively expelled. Today, although Eritrean Catholic clergy have been allowed to visit Rome in limited numbers for religious purposes and training, according to a recent report by Catholic NGO Aid to the Church in Need, the conscription of seminarians and other church workers is occasioning a personnel shortage.

Clearly in its vigorous quest for total allegiance and obedience, the government has come to view religious groupings as rivals. The government's harassment of authorised groups serves as a clear indication that in reality, it seeks to either curtail or control every major social activity in the country, comprehensively violating the right to freedom of religion or belief by seeking to dictate both the private beliefs or forum internum and the external expression of beliefs or forum externum of its citizens.

¹² Song of the Nightingale: One Woman's True Story of Faith and Persecution in Eritrea, 2009

¹³ 'The EPLF and Religious Policy in Eritrea', 17 December 2004, **Release Eritrea**; 'Current Situation of Orthodox Churches', 17 December 2004, **Release Eritrea**; 'Full Blown Assault on Religion in Eritrea', Fr. Halleyesus Oqbai, 23 February 2003, **Asmarino**

A consequence of this wider state repression is the fuelling of a mass exodus, with Eritreans constituting the largest population of refugees per capita in the world. Despite recognition of their plight by the UNHCR, Eritreans continue to experience difficulties in countries where they have fled. As one refugee in hiding in Libya where refugees and migrants face racial and religious mistreatment, said: “We flee lawlessness to find there is no law anywhere”. State repression has also fuelled human trafficking through the Sinai, where to date thousands from the Horn of Africa are estimated to have been abducted, tortured, killed, or have had organs forcibly harvested by extortion rackets. Many are, or were, recognized refugees seeking an environment where they could freely practice their beliefs.

Sudan is another country where religious freedom violations are part of a wider human rights crisis. Here, the religion of the majority – as interpreted by the current regime – is treated preferentially. Following the secession of South Sudan, such violations increased in the north, where the state made assessments of church buildings at the beginning of the year, then claimed and demolished places of worship after April 2012, using the justification that churches were derelict after the forced expulsion of South Sudanese nationals. In addition, northern-based church leaders began to receive threats and in at least two instances experienced direct attacks. Between December 2012 and April 2013 the government embarked on a systematic campaign of repression against Christians. CSW noted an increase in harassments, arrests, and detentions of Christians during this period. Foreign Christians were deported at short notice and their property confiscated by the state. Of particular concern is the policy of deporting Sudanese Christians of African ethnicity to South Sudan, on the disputable premise that Sudan has no indigenous Christian community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Each of the countries mentioned in this report illustrate one of the identified trends of persecution, albeit with differing degrees of severity and at different points of evolution. However, there are several recommendations applicable across the board, while others are applicable to specific nations. On a general note, countries that have failed to enforce constitutional and legal provisions providing for freedom of religion and belief and to ensure rule of law must be persuaded to do so in order to combat impunity that surrounds religion-related discrimination and violence.

- Nigeria is a strategic African nation and must be given every logistical assistance to combat what is ultimately a threat to the peace and security of the region. The increasing sophistication on insurgency weaponry must be matched by the Nigerian forces with the assistance of the international community. Africa and general and Nigeria in particular, are fast becoming the new frontline of the war on terror
- Nigeria's neighbours must be persuaded to make greater measures to identify and neutralise in terrorist hideouts in their land. It could be argued that this may make these states a greater target also. However, sooner or later, these insurgencies will pose a direct danger to their unwitting hosts, given their ideology. Any unstated truce is merely a temporary one.
- With regard to the CAR, sufficient international contingent must be sent to the country to disarm all armed groups as soon as possible and to enforce peace and security for suffering civilians in the towns and countryside. Justice and reconciliation efforts must also be prioritised.
- With regard to Tanzania, the authorities must be encouraged move decisively to tackle rising extremism and prevent the entrenchment of impunity from taking hold in any part of the country. It is vital that all incidences of religious violence and incitement to violence are swiftly and thoroughly addressed and planners and perpetrators are prosecuted regardless of religion or social standing.
- With regard to Eritrea, the government must be encouraged to implement its commendable constitutions, which include provisions for freedom of religion or belief, release all prisoners

of conscience, and to end the practice of jailing members of faith communities indefinitely without charge or trial.

- Finally, the government of Sudan must be encouraged to draft an inclusive constitution that takes into account the rich religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation.
-