



Nigeria

Number of projects

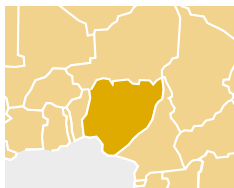
📁 110

Type of projects

🔔 21 🎯 4 🏠 27
 📍 2 🎤 0 📄 0
 👥 46 🧑 2 👤 8

Head of Section

Kinga von Schierstaedt



Nigeria is home to around 206 million people, making it the most populous country in Africa. The country is

roughly half Christian and half Muslim, although the distribution varies greatly from region to region. In the north, Christians and moderate Muslims have been suffering from persecution by Boko Haram for years. While the situation there has improved somewhat,

violence against Christians is increasing in other parts of the country. It is mainly perpetrated by Muslim nomadic cattle herders, the Fulani. In 2024, the local Church once again relied on ACN's assistance in numerous ways.

The problems in Nigeria are complex. A rapidly growing population, the effects of climate change and the struggle for the country's resources are compounded by the interests of extremist groups like Boko Haram and the Fulani. Around Easter, for

On the road from Maiduguri to Jos.



Refugee victims
of a Fulani attack.

In 2018, two priests and 16 worshippers were murdered in Mbalom, Ayati during a Mass. The site has been a place of pilgrimage ever since.



Destroyed church building in Kaduna.

example, dozens of Christians were killed in towns and villages in Nigeria's Middle Belt. Terrorists had already massacred over 300 Christians in this region during the Christmas period in 2023.

Priests and religious are particularly at risk. At least 11 priests were kidnapped during the reporting year alone.

However, the challenges facing the Church in the West African country tend to strengthen people's faith. The high number of priestly vocations is particularly encouraging. In 2024, ACN therefore once again prioritised supporting the training of future priests and provided assistance to needy priests through Mass stipends. Priests serve as the primary and immediate caregivers for the suffering population. In view of the high number of severely traumatised victims of violence, ACN also promotes additional psychotherapeutic training for priests and religious sisters so that they can offer qualified help to those affected.

In areas where the situation has improved, we help the Church to rebuild destroyed buildings. In crisis regions, we also aid in implementing essential security measures, including the construction of protective walls and fences or the installation of technical equipment to protect monasteries and seminaries from violent attacks. In September 2024, ACN also provided assistance to the Diocese of Maiduguri in northern Nigeria, which had been severely impacted by the worst flooding in 30 years, offering food, hygiene products, medicines and materials for emergency shelters.

» These attacks are now part of daily life. «

Father Andrew Dewan, Director of Communications for the Pankshin Diocese



How many more victims will the Church have to mourn in Nigeria?

Two acts of violence serve as a stark example of the suffering the Nigerian Church continues to endure. In October 2024, the small seminary of the Auchi Diocese in southern Nigeria was attacked. The gunmen took two seminarians hostage. The seminary's rector, Father Thomas Oyode, then offered to exchange himself for

the two young people. The two seminarians were released and the priest was abducted. He was only released after 11 days. On the evening of 26 December, Tobias Chukwujekwu Okonkwo (see photo), a priest from the southern Nigerian Diocese of Nnewi, was shot dead in the street by a group of gunmen.