

## **Aid to the Church in Need: Nigeria is “an epicentre of Christian martyrdom”**

**For immediate release**

**2 October 2025 – ACN launches urgent appeal for persecuted Christians in Nigeria, to ensure protection for clergy, train seminarians, and provide urgent relief for displaced families**

*Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN) is calling for urgent support for Christians in Nigeria following National Director **Bernard Toutounji**'s interview with *Sky News Australia* host **Gabriella Power**, in which he described the scale of violence and government denial about targeted attacks on Christians.

“Nigeria today is an epicentre of Christian martyrdom,” Mr Toutounji said. “Since 2000, more than 60,000 Christians have been murdered by Islamist groups like Boko Haram and heavily armed militias.”

Mr Toutounji added that persecution is widespread and systematic: “Christians are not a tiny minority in Nigeria. They make up nearly half the population, yet they live as if second-class citizens, especially in the north. Every single day, Nigerian Christians wake up to fresh news of kidnappings or attacks. This is not sporadic; it is targeted, and it has gone on for decades with little accountability.”

**ACN has launched an urgent appeal** focused on three immediate priorities in Nigeria:

1. **Enclosed vehicles for clergy**, to provide safe passage for priests and sisters who face kidnappings and ambushes on pastoral trips
2. **Formation of seminarians**, in response to Nigeria's abundant vocations and to ensure future priests are spiritually, pastorally, and psychologically prepared to serve their communities
3. **Lifesaving relief for internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, including food, shelter and basic necessities for families forced from their homes by village raids, massacres and church burnings

“For almost 80 years, ACN has sustained the faith where it is under greatest assault,” Mr Toutounji said. “We are a pastoral organisation. We build and rebuild churches, support poor nuns and priests, provide means of transport, train seminarians, and fund trauma healing and reconciliation centres. As our founder said, ‘They are being tested in faith, but we are being tested in love.’”

As a recognised global authority on religious freedom, ACN's biennial [Religious Freedom in the World Report](#) covers 196 countries and runs to nearly 900 pages; today it stands as one of only four major global reports on religious freedom, and the only non-governmental report. The next edition will be launched on 21 October 2025.

The latest report places Nigeria in the Red category, indicating active persecution.



Aid to the  
Church in Need

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#### How to help:

- **Donate to ACN's Nigeria appeal:** to fund enclosed vehicles for clergy, seminarian formation, and relief for displaced Christians.
- **Learn more and share:** Watch the [Sky News interview](#) and share [ACN's Nigeria Appeal](#) to raise awareness and provide support.

**Donate now:** <https://aidtochurch.org/nigeria>

**Learn more:** <https://aidtochurch.org/nigeriaappeal>

**Watch the Sky News interview:** <https://youtu.be/s8iN35ZsuMY?si=iSsFapsNDgNUXuof>

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#### MEDIA INQUIRIES

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#### ABOUT

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is the only international Catholic charity dedicated to the service of suffering Christians wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. Founded in 1947, ACN is a pontifical foundation and provides vital aid for pastoral projects, religious education, and emergency relief in areas affected by conflict and poverty. ACN operates solely on benefactor donations, with no funding from Church or State.

[www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)