

This Time, In Nigeria, Will Christians Be Helped?

by Hugh Fitzgerald

The heartbreaking [video of a Christian pastor](#) in Nigeria last year begging the West to help the Christians who are being systematically slaughtered by Muslims – mostly Hausa and Fulani tribesmen – in the north and northwest of Nigeria, deserved to be disseminated everywhere. But the Western world paid no attention. No one at the U.N. called for a special session to discuss the long series of massacres of Nigerian Christians. No Western leaders called publicly for an end, at meetings of NATO or the G-7, to the murders of helpless Christians. No Western military have been sent to help protect the Christians. In the West, governments are too busy trying to find ways to accommodate Muslims now living in, or moving in ever greater numbers to, the West, and do not wish to antagonize Muslims in their midst by protecting Christians under Muslim attack elsewhere. The Christian clerics in Iraq have long deplored the West's indifference to their fate. Now it seems, it is the turn of Christians in Nigeria, who are left without any outside Christian aid to help them survive in parts of north-central Nigeria where they once felt safe, but now are under constant attack .

It was no different during the first great war made by Muslims on Christians in Nigeria: the Biafra War of 1967-1969. This was a classic Jihad. Hostilities began when Muslims from the Hausa and Fulani tribes conducted a sudden pogrom against Christians living in the North, killing many thousands. The Christians, chiefly of the Ibo tribe, realized that they could no longer defend themselves within the framework of the Nigerian nation, for both the national government, and its army, were dominated by Muslims. Islam had originally spread

in northern Nigeria through the Jihad declared by Othman Dan Fodio in 1804, but then came a period when Christianized Africans in the south had held their own, sustained in the 19th century by the British who naturally favored the Christians. After all, there was little point in converting Africans to Christianity if they were then to be massacred by Muslims. The British were their proselytizers and their protectors. Things had completely changed by 1967, when the Christians declared the independent state of Biafra.

Now no Western country helped the Biafrans in their desperate struggle. Tens of thousands of Biafran civilians were murdered by Egyptian pilots flying Migs, who repeatedly bombed and strafed the Christian villages. Up to a million Biafrans died of starvation.

Col. Ojukwu, the Biafran leader, declared in his Ahiara Declaration of 1969 that the Biafrans were fighting off a "Jihad" that was being waged against them – and the word was not being used figuratively.

But the reaction in the West was one of studied indifference toward Biafra, or even hostility.

Great Britain, France, the United States, the rest of Europe, did nothing to help the Christians during the Biafra War. Only two states recognized Biafra during the war: Ghana and Israel. The rest of the Infidel world turned its back, pretending to believe that it was more important to "keep the most populous black African country as one nation" even if this meant the subjugation of the Christians, and the appropriation of southern oil wealth by the Muslims, who controlled the army, and repeatedly attacked the Christians of Nigeria wherever they were to be found. Another consideration in the West was no doubt oil: the sooner the conflict ended, the sooner that Nigerian oil could come back on the world market. The West, then, didn't want the Biafrans to hold out, but to capitulate.

Now the Christians in Nigeria are again under attack. Boko Haram has kidnapped hundreds of Christian girls in north-central Nigeria, forcibly converting many, using others as sex slaves. Fulani herders have attacked Christian villages in a steady campaign of terror in northwestern Nigeria. One attack involved the burning to death of a Christian pastor, his wife, and three children. The Christians are helpless, reduced to posting videos pleading with the West's Christians to help them.

For a long time, the Muslims in Nigeria have been enforcing their own rules, and threats, as to acts of supposed blasphemy, even outside the Muslim-dominated north. When a Christian journalist back in 2003 made an innocent joking remark about how "Muhammad would have appreciated the girls in the Miss World Contest" (which contest was closed after violent Muslim protests), she had to flee for her life to England. The suppression of the Christians in the south, with many of their population centers occupied by the Muslim-dominated army, continues, largely unreported by a Western media that does not want to hear about, much less have to report on, still other examples of Muslim violence and aggression that can, that media fears, serve only to increase "Islamophobia."

The West should study how it behaved during the Biafra War, and the consequences of its abandoning, as it did during that war, the Nigerian Christians. Nigeria remained one state, but the Muslims clearly dominate that state. Life for Christians has become ever more uncertain and physically dangerous. There is no "convivencia."

The West ought to intervene now, as it shamefully did not during the Biafra War, both by sending weapons to the most imperiled of Nigerian Christians, and by dispatching, too, its own troops to help protect them from what is clearly a Jihad, conducted intermittently, but genocidal in its intent. The last time around, the West did not intervene, but that non-

intervention was not met with gratitude by the Muslims. They simply continued their Jihad without fear of such intervention. Rather, the West's refusing to intervene in the Biafra War was interpreted, correctly, by Muslims as a sign of Western pusillanimity masquerading as statecraft.

Given the constant series of Muslim attacks on Nigeria's Christians, it's time to rethink the Western view that Nigeria must not be made into two states. Why not? Why should Christians be forced to endure remaining in one state with Muslims who do not wish them well, and who attack and kidnap and murder them? The notion that Nigeria "must stay in one piece" in order to remain the most populous black African country, for were it to be split into Christian and Muslim states, it would no longer be "Africa's most populous state," and that this would offend the amour-propre of too many black Africans, is absurd. Why should someone in Burkina Faso or Angola care whether Nigeria was the most populous African state or not? And there was no similar objection raised when Sudan, then the largest state by land area in Africa, was divided in June 2011 between two states: Sudan, dominated by northern Muslims, and a new state, Southern Sudan, dominated by black African Christians and pagans.

The Western nations shamefully let the Biafrans down during their unsuccessful war for independence. Had they stepped in, during that war, had they sustained the independent state of Biafra by supplying it with military aid, especially with both airplanes and defenses against Egyptian Migs, the continued spread of Islam in West Africa might have been slowed, if not halted. The West has had nearly a half-century to consider the consequences of its decision not to help the Biafran Christians. In Nigeria, the Christians are still, or are rather, yet again, the targets of murderous Jihadis. Outside Nigeria, the Western countries did not win Muslim hearts and minds by refusing to help the Biafrans; rather, they aroused Muslim contempt. And the Western passivity encouraged the

Nigerian Muslims in their mass murdering, including the deliberate starvation of between half a million and 2 million Biafrans.

It's time to try something new. If the Christians in Nigeria today ask the West for troops and weapons to protect them from Jihadis, this time the correct response – Yes, we will supply both – should be given. We have nothing to gain by way of Muslim sympathy, which as Infidels we cannot win no matter what, and a lot to lose in the continued mass murdering of Christians. This time, we must help them. The current administration has shown itself willing to unshackle itself from failed policies. Look at how unceremoniously it ended all American aid to both UNRWA and to the Palestinian Authority, and then shut down the Washington office of the Palestinian Authority. That reverses decade of failed policies. Let's hope the Administration takes a new tack in Nigeria.

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