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Recent attacks on Christmas Eve in Plateau State in Nigeria

European Parliament resolution of 8 February 2024 on the recent attacks on Christmas Eve in Plateau State in Nigeria (2024/2552(RSP))

(C/2024/6337)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the security situation in Nigeria has been aggravated by an escalation of religious, ethnic and intercommunal conflicts, particularly in the country's Middle Belt, where the conflict between farmers and nomadic herders over land and water resources has resulted in an unprecedented death toll since Christmas;

B. whereas between 23 and 25 December 2023, gunmen launched a large-scale attack on more than 160 villages in the Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Magu authority areas of Plateau State, causing the deaths of over 335 people, including at least 200 members of Christian communities;

C. whereas many of the displaced are currently living in temporary camps with limited access to water, sanitation, food, medication and healthcare, including mental health services;

D. whereas according to Nigerian NGOs, 52 000 Christians and 34 000 Muslims have been killed since 2009, and 18 000 churches and 2 200 Christian schools have been destroyed;

E. whereas violence by Islamic terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province, who target both Christians and Muslims in north-east Nigeria, has already displaced over two million people;

F. whereas the factors fuelling the clashes overlap and are rooted in, among other things, territorial disputes, ethnic tensions, access to scarce resources and environmental degradation;

1. Strongly condemns the acts of violence over Christmas targeting Christians and other communities, which resulted in an unprecedented number of deaths, injuries and displacements, and expresses its solidarity with those affected;

2. Calls on the Nigerian authorities to take action against militant Islamist groups exploiting the farmer-herder conflict, and urges them to address its root causes; warns that the conflict may be instrumentalised to spread religion-based hatred; acknowledges the role of climate change, competition for scarce resources and the disappearance of effective mediation schemes in aggravating the farmer-herder conflict, pushing the herders to move south;

3. Calls on the Nigerian authorities to conduct a thorough, independent investigation of the Christmas attacks and ensure that those responsible are held to account;

4. Urges all humanitarian actors to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to addressing the crisis;

5. Welcomes the Nigerian Parliament's debate on the issue and encourages the Nigerian Government to enhance the security of communities, to foster dialogue and conflict mediation and to reaffirm its commitment to socio-economic recovery;

6. Welcomes the strong partnership between the EU and Nigeria and calls for it to be deepened further in the areas of security, mediation, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and peace-building; encourages the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to visit Nigeria; welcomes the announcement of a EUR 900 million Global Gateway package for Nigeria in October 2023;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Government and Parliament of Nigeria.