



Christian Solidarity International (CSI)
Zelglistrasse 64
P.O. Box 70
CH-8122 Binz
Switzerland
Tel +41 44 982 33 33
Fax +41 44 982 33 34
info@csi-int.org
www.christian-solidarity-international.org

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Press release

CSI Calls on President Biden to Intervene for Imprisoned Nigerian Journalist

Luka Binniyat has been imprisoned since November 4 for reporting on attacks on Christians

ZURICH – Christian Solidarity International today called on President Joe Biden to intervene in the case of Luka Binniyat, a Nigerian Christian journalist who has been [imprisoned](#) for nearly a month for his reporting on massacres of Christians in his native Kaduna state.

In a [letter sent](#) to the president on Wednesday, CSI's international president, Dr. John Eibner, asked Biden to use his "Summit for Democracy" next week to urge Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to release Binniyat. Binniyat is expected to appear in court again on December 6.

The Committee to Protect Journalists has also called for Binniyat's immediate release and the dropping of all charges against him.

In his letter to the president, Dr. Eibner wrote that Binniyat's arrest "followed the journalist's reporting on the Nigerian security establishment's consistent failure to either halt genocidal assaults carried out by Fulani Muslim militias against the Christian communities of Nigeria's Middle Belt, or to arrest the perpetrators of those assaults."

Genocidal violence against indigenous Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt has become a regular occurrence in recent years. On November 26, Fulani militias killed ten Christians, including three children, in Nigeria's Plateau State. On October 31, gunmen abducted 66 Christians from a worship service in Kaduna State. Last month, the captors released a video showing the killing of some of the abductees.

Despite this extreme violence, on November 15, the U.S. decided to remove Nigeria from its list of "Countries of Particular Concern" with respect to religious liberty, ahead of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Nigeria. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom decried this decision as "unexplainable." [Reverend John Hayab](#), one of five Nigerian civil society representatives selected to meet with Blinken in Nigeria, said the decision was the equivalent of "telling a sick man to go home and die."

The State Department did not publish remarks from Hayab or any other Nigerian civil society representatives present at the meeting, some of whom raised Binniyat's case with Blinken.

Eibner warned President Biden that these decisions would “give the Nigerian authorities further encouragement to persecute non-violent political dissidents” and “embolden the perpetrators of atrocity crimes against Christians and other non-Muslims.”

He concluded that the message Biden sends to President Buhari at the Summit “will be a litmus test of the United States’ resolve to promote democracy in authoritarian countries with which the United States has strategic partnerships.”

Christian Solidarity International is an international human rights group campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity. It runs a website, www.nigeria-report.org, to draw attention to the violence and religious cleansing taking place in Nigeria.

Contact: Joel Veldkamp | joel.veldkamp@csi-int.org