

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	862
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCRP)
Titel:	Atrocity Alert No. 469: Nigeria, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and South Sudan
Udgivet:	11. februar 2026
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	24. februar 2026



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11 February 2026 | **ATROCITY ALERT**

GLOBAL CENTRE
FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT

**GENIE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT
HIGHLIGHTING SITUATIONS WHERE POPULATIONS ARE AT
RISK OF, OR ARE ENDURING, MASS ATROCITY CRIMES.**

DEADLY ATTACKS IN KWARA STATE HIGHLIGHT WORSENING SECURITY CRISIS IN NIGERIA

More than 160 people were killed and dozens abducted in **Nigeria** when an armed group attacked two neighboring Muslim-majority villages in Kwara State on 3 February. According to local officials, community leaders and humanitarian sources, the assault in Woro and Nuku constitutes one of the deadliest attacks recorded in Nigeria in recent months. Some victims were bound and executed at close range, while others were burned alive as attackers set fire to homes, shops and vehicles. Survivors reported that civilians were deliberately targeted after refusing to comply with the armed group's demands. A local official also confirmed that at least 38 people, primarily women and children, were abducted during the attacks.

The Kwara State Governor suggested the attack in Woro and Nuku may have been carried out in retaliation for recent counterterrorism operations. Federal lawmaker Mohammed Omar Bio attributed the violence to Lakurawa, an armed group alleged to have links to the so-called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), whose members were reportedly targeted by United States airstrikes in north-western Nigeria in December 2025, prompting fighters to flee southward into Kwara State.

The security situation in Kwara State has steadily deteriorated since 2024 and the region has become part of a broader north-central battleground linking northern and south-western Nigeria. The attack highlights a **sharp escalation** in violence by non-state armed groups across Nigeria's north-west and north-central regions, where Boko Haram and ISWAP, as well as various splinter factions and criminal bandits, increasingly overlap and threaten civilians. Atrocities are becoming increasingly normalized in poorly governed regions where armed groups exploit security vacuums to assert control. These groups routinely raid villages, loot livestock and abduct civilians for ransom.

Priscila Vazquez, Nigeria expert at the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, stressed, "While military operations and international support may temporarily disrupt armed groups, they have repeatedly failed to address the structural drivers of violence and often increased risk to populations as armed groups retaliate against civilians. The intensifying violence and continued mass abductions underscore the limited effectiveness of militarized responses in the absence of sustained civilian protection, accountability and governance reforms."

Federal and state authorities must urgently develop and implement a coordinated civilian protection strategy that strengthens early warning and rapid response mechanisms, expands community-based protection initiatives and ensures prompt, impartial investigations into all attacks against civilians. The government must also address the underlying drivers and enablers of the violence, including weak state presence, impunity, poverty, competition over scarce resources and limited access to protection in rural areas.

ISRAEL ACCELERATES MOVES TO ANNEX WEST BANK AND UNDERMINE PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD

On 8 February Israel's security cabinet approved a series of measures that would further entrench its control as an unlawful occupying power in the **Occupied West Bank**. These measures permit the direct purchase of land in the Occupied West Bank, expand Israeli

authority in areas administered by the Palestinian Authority and grant Israel sweeping authority over several religious and historical sites in the territory. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on Israel “to reverse these measures,” stressing that “such actions, including Israel’s continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are not only destabilizing but – as recalled by the International Court of Justice – unlawful.”

The newly approved measures expand Israel’s authority to demolish homes under the guise of environmental, heritage or archeological protection in Areas A and B of the West Bank. Since 1967 Israel has weaponized archeological excavations to assert exclusive Jewish roots, advance territorial control, expand settlements and undermine Palestinian development. Over the years, millions of dollars have been allocated to these activities, settler organizations have been recruited to manage archeological sites and countless Palestinians have lost or been denied access to their homes and land. While most excavations have occurred in Area C, which remains under Israeli control, the new excavations have been approved for areas that fall under Palestinian administrative control.

In parallel, Israel has eased restrictions on land acquisition in the West Bank, effectively opening what has been described as a “real estate market.” Several long-standing laws have been repealed, removing administrative barriers for Israeli’s seeking to directly purchase land in the West Bank and reviving a government mechanism responsible for purchasing Palestinian land.

These decisions accelerate Israel’s further annexation of Palestinian land, stripping away any semblance of safeguards for Palestinian communities and directly undermining Palestinian sovereignty. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich welcomed the measures, describing them as instrumental in “burying the idea of a Palestinian state.” Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called on the international community, including the UN Security Council, to intervene to halt Israel’s actions. In a joint statement, several Muslim-majority countries – including Jordan, Pakistan and Egypt – condemned Israel’s “illegal actions.”

Israel’s annexation efforts are unfolding alongside an increased assault on the West Bank. Since the start of 2026 settler attacks have displaced nearly 700 Palestinians. Israeli forces have also largely demolished the compound of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Occupied East Jerusalem and the UN has documented over 130 Israeli operations, including raids, across the territory.

Israel must immediately repeal the illegal measures approved for the West Bank, rapidly withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and refrain from annexation of Palestinian land. All states – including those with influence – must act decisively to defend international law and halt Israel’s actions, including by imposing sanctions and two-way arms embargoes.

ESCALATING VIOLENCE DEEPENS HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Intensifying violence across **South Sudan** is deepening an already dire humanitarian situation, placing civilians at heightened risk and driving increased displacement, food insecurity and protection needs.

Repeated attacks on humanitarian convoys and infrastructure have forced UN agencies and humanitarian organizations to suspend critical operations in parts of South Sudan. Between 30 January and 1 February armed youth repeatedly targeted and looted a 12-boat humanitarian convoy in Baliet County, Upper Nile State, carrying over 1,500 metric tonnes of food and other essential aid. Meanwhile, in Jonglei State, attacks on humanitarian and health facilities – including 11 health centers, a hospital run by Médecins Sans Frontières and a Save the Children field office – have disrupted vital services since late December. Aid convoys continue to be targeted and essential vehicles, including an ambulance, have been seized.

South Sudan is at serious risk of **returning** to widespread armed conflict amid escalating **political tensions** and increasing ethnically motivated violence, particularly in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states, and Central Equatoria. Since December 2025 clashes between the government’s army – the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces – and opposition groups, including the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-In Opposition, alongside strategic troop movements, point to a coordinated military campaign and broader mobilization. These developments significantly heighten the risk of further escalation and atrocities against civilians.

More than 370,000 people – the majority women and children – have reportedly been displaced by fighting across the country since the start of this year alone, including over 280,000 people in Jonglei State. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, renewed violence in Jonglei between 1 December and 23 January reportedly claimed at least 200 lives, including 40 civilians.

Underscoring the urgency of the situation, Adham Effendi, the World Food Programme's acting Country Director in South Sudan, warned, "This military escalation could not have come at a worse time. Our window to reach the most vulnerable is quickly closing. The time to act is now, and we urge all parties to protect civilians, aid workers and ensure the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance."

All warring parties must immediately guarantee safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access without delay, cease attacks on humanitarian infrastructure, respect International Humanitarian Law and uphold obligations to protect civilians and humanitarian actors. Increased flexible funding is essential to ensure that humanitarian actors can adapt to the escalating crisis, reach those most in need and sustain critical programs. As the viability of the 2018 peace agreement continues to erode, the international community, including the UN Security Council, must act decisively and in a coordinated manner by prioritizing political de-escalation, applying unified diplomatic pressure and supporting credible mediation efforts.

SOURCE

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