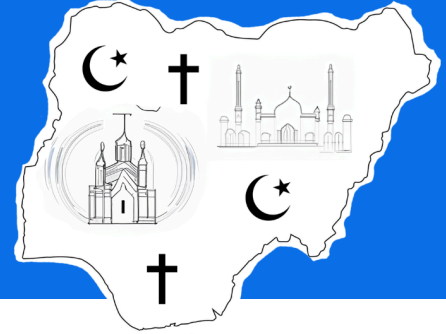


June analytical report

15 July 2025

Digital Pulse: Key Findings in Nigeria's Online Inter Religious Dialogue



This snapshot is intended to offer an overview of inter-religious issues present in Nigeria's digital ecosystem, identifying emerging narratives, key actors, tactics, or techniques used in conversations related to communal clashes and religious groups. The overview is the sixth in a planned series of social media analytical reports by the Build Up and local partners that seek to empower youths in Bauchi, Plateau, and Gombe to advance inter-religious tolerance and freedom of religion. The report was written by Allan Cheboi, Data and Digital Technology Lead at Build Up.

1. Executive Summary

The following are the main findings of Build Up's social media analysis in the months of January to June 2025:

- **Recurring religious massacre allegations in Plateau:** Viral posts allege repeated Christmas- and Palm Sunday-season massacres targeting Christians in Plateau State by Islamist Fulani militias. These narratives, framed with religious imagery and claims of global neglect, foster a sense of victimhood and abandonment among Christian communities.
- **Bokkos and Kidan Ado attacks spark outrage and self-defence calls:** Highly engaged content recounts alleged mass killings and destruction in Bokkos and Kidan Ado, triggering calls for Christian communities to arm themselves. The rise in self-defence rhetoric underscores a growing mistrust in state protection.
- **Secessionist and media bias claims:** Nnamdi Kanu is portrayed as a prophetic figure warning against Fulani domination, while other posts accuse Nigerian and international authorities of selectively ignoring Christian suffering. These narratives deepen regional and religious alienation.
- **Bauchi polarisation intensifies:** Influential users such as @LabaranDawa promote exclusivist religious identities, asserting Bauchi as a "Muslim land." Content across platforms reveals a surge in territorial and identity-based boundary-making, mutual accusations of violence, and selective outrage over incidents involving Christians and Muslims.
- **Gombe as a symbol of religious vulnerability:** Resurfacing of past killings (e.g., Christiana Oluwasesin) and recent incidents (e.g., Pastor Amos' death and the Easter truck crash) reinforce a narrative of impunity and injustice. This is juxtaposed against official narratives of peaceful coexistence, fueling distrust.
- **Education and governance fuel division:** Debates over the Almajiri bill and Ramadan-related school closures reflect broader anxieties around religious bias in policy-making. These are seen as emblematic of systemic exclusion of minority religious communities.

We recommend that Influencers and CSOs prioritise coordinated responses to counteract sectarian narratives, promote inclusive governance, and amplify credible interfaith voices. Key attention should be paid to the emotional resonance and spread of grievance-based content which increasingly drives offline tensions.

The section below expands on the core narratives, the main actors identified and the main social media channels used to propagate them. At the end of the report, we make suggestions for particular narratives or techniques that warrant ongoing monitoring.

2. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology and tools the team uses to identify and map key events in the Nigerian information ecosystem and the actors or networks behind them.

This analysis uses social media listening and mainstream media monitoring tools to scan emerging trends and narratives in the Nigerian information environment. The report focuses on content primarily published in English between 01 January 2025 and 22 June 2025.

The analysis team used a number of tools, including:

1. **Phoenix**: This is Build Up's social media monitoring tool tracks and maps mentions of specific keywords and individuals across various social media platforms. It provides access to data feeds from Facebook and TikTok.
2. **Meltwater**: This social media monitoring tool tracks and maps mentions of specific keywords and individuals across various social media platforms. It provides access to data feeds from X, blogs, and online news sources.
3. **CivicSignal**: This media monitoring tool tracks and maps mentions of specific keywords and individuals across African media sources. It provides access to data feeds from online news sources.

The analysis used specific Boolean¹ search terms to gather relevant data for monitoring and analysis. These search terms were carefully selected to capture relevant content related to the topic of interest. Here is an example of a Boolean search query used:

Query: (("nigeria" OR "nigerians") AND ("plateau" OR "bauchi" OR "gombe") AND ("christian" OR "islamic" OR "boko" OR "haram" OR "Boko Haram" OR "apc" OR "muslim" OR "ethnic" OR "terrorists" OR "children" OR "insecurity" OR "insurgency" OR "alhaji" OR "terrorism" OR "killings" OR "kidnapping" OR "violence" OR "fulani" OR "bandits" OR "taraba" OR "tribe" OR "criminal" OR "army" OR "shettima" OR "armed" OR "el-rufai" OR "deaths" OR "kidnappers" OR "crisis" OR "banditry" OR "massacre" OR "mourn" OR "islamists" OR "displaced" OR "customary" OR "suspects" OR "perpetrators" OR "killers" OR "abduct" OR "victims" OR "threats" OR "territorial" OR "soldiers" OR "islam" OR "terrorist" OR "kidnap"))

The full list of keywords used for the data collection can be found on this [link](#).

¹ See Glossary section for definition

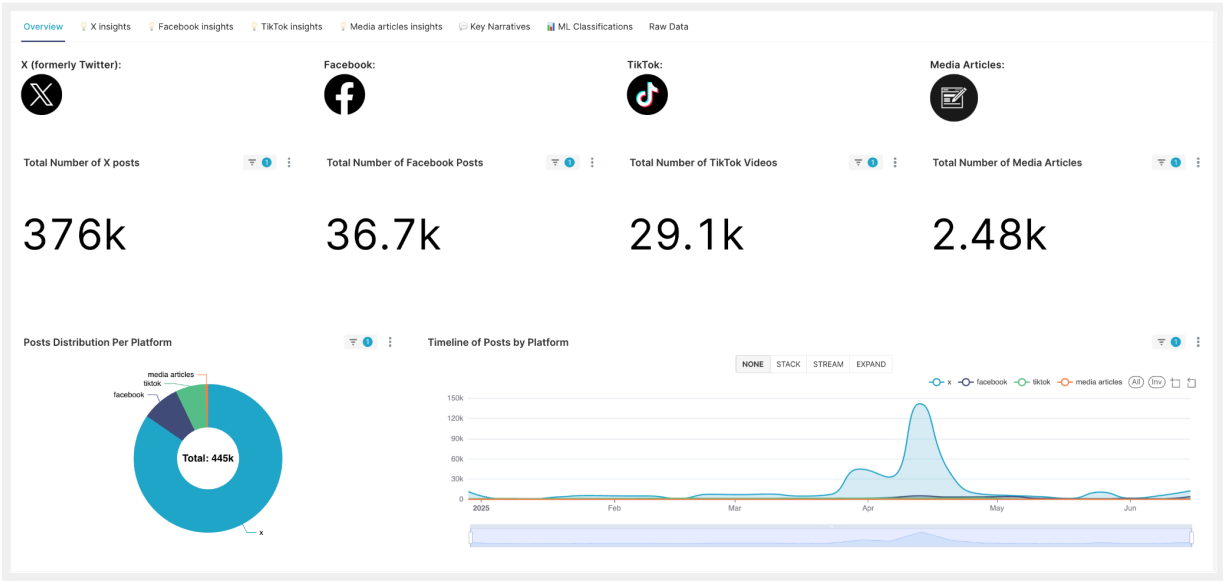
It is important to note that the general query is used only for an initial search. Based on the results, it is then customised to conduct more specific searches. Although we aim to capture a broad range of relevant content, there is always the possibility of missing posts that do not explicitly match the selected search terms. Additionally, the effectiveness of the Boolean search terms may be influenced by factors such as variations in language use, slang, or evolving terminology. It is important to note that the data gathered for this analysis may have certain limitations. These include:

1. The reliance on publicly available information on social media platforms.
2. The possibility of missing data from private accounts or restricted platforms.
3. The inaccuracy of certain information even if shown on profiles such as location, gender, or identity in general.

3. General findings

This section examines the key findings that were identified over the review period, citing specific examples.

The analysis is based on a total of 445k pieces of content from X, Facebook, TikTok and Media Articles, published between 01 January 2025 to 22 June 2025.



Dashboard for the S/CG Youth For CARE Project (Source: Phoenix/ Build Up)

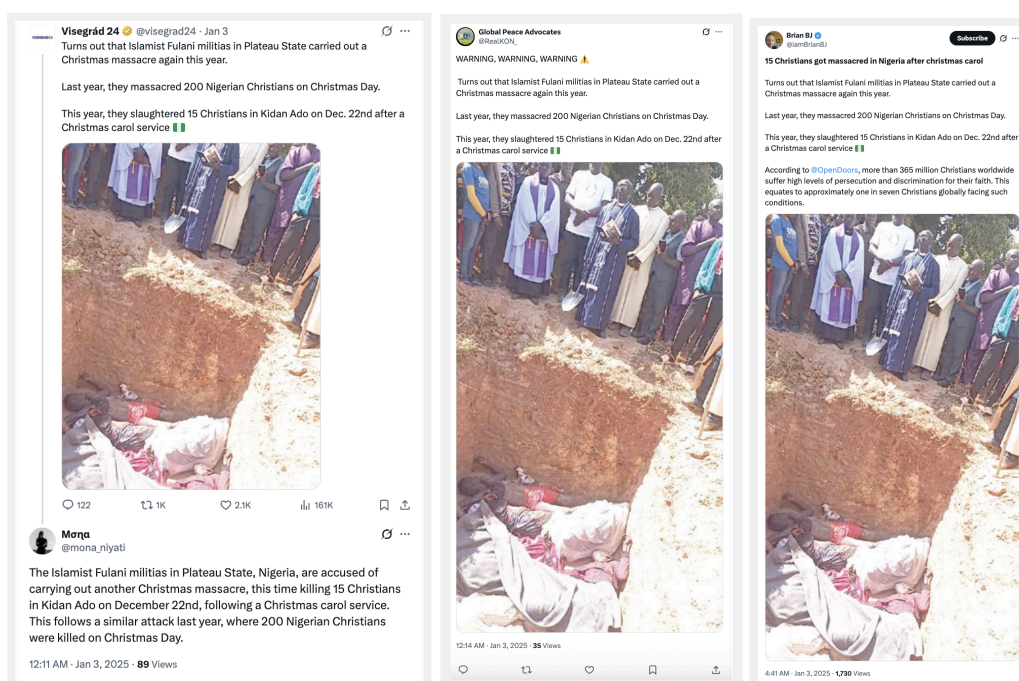
4. Findings by state

The following are the key narratives observed with findings divided by state, both in terms of where events took place throughout this timeline, and how specific mention of states affected narratives of online users in comments, thereby allowing the team to track general patterns of polarisation:

3.1. Plateau state:

3.1.1. Religious massacre allegations: Claims of Christmas massacres as symbols of persecution

Between 14 and 18 June 2025, a total of 1.43k posts which garnered over 2.97k likes on X, alleged that Islamist Fulani militias had carried out another Christmas-season massacre in Kidan Ado, Plateau State, killing 15 Christians following a carol service. This is presented as a continuation of a previous year’s killing of 200 Christians on Christmas Day. Accompanying burial photos and priestly figures frame the killings within a religious lens, suggesting a targeted pattern of violence. These posts do not cite independent verification but reflect public trauma and a perception of recurring religiously motivated attacks.



Sample post highlighting Claims of Christmas massacres ([link](#)) (Source: X)

3.1.2. Bokokos massacre outrage: Users claim 100+ Christians killed in Plateau attacks

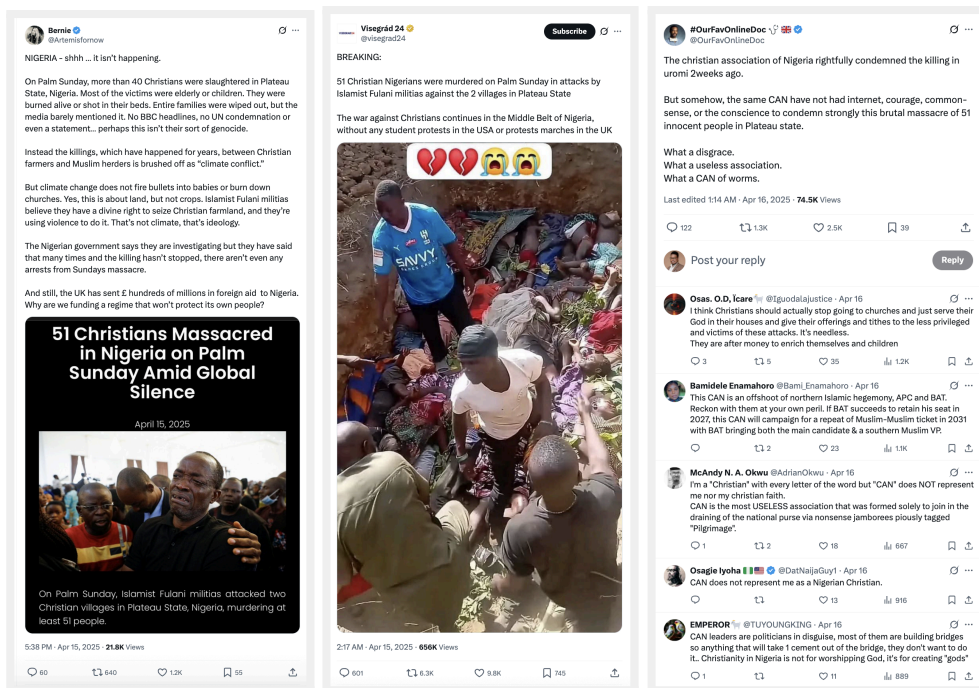
Between 01 and 12 April 2025, 7.57k posts on social media, garnering 27.1k likes, 6.98k comments and 10.5k reshares, claimed that Islamist Fulani militias killed over 100 Christian civilians in Bokokos, Plateau State in early April. Graphic photos, video clips, and personal testimonies described entire families—women, children, and pregnant women—being slaughtered. Some users claimed the attacks lasted hours and involved the burning of over 200 homes, forcing thousands to flee. Prominent voices like Peter Obi and the Christian Emergency Alliance amplified the incident, with several posts characterizing it as “pure evil” or “religious cleansing.” These narratives reflect deepening ethnic and religious tensions, though the details remain unverified on official channels.



Sample post related to Iran & Nigeria support for Islam ([link](#)) (Source: X)

3.1.3. Global neglect: Claims of indifference to April 2025 Palm Sunday and Bokoos attacks

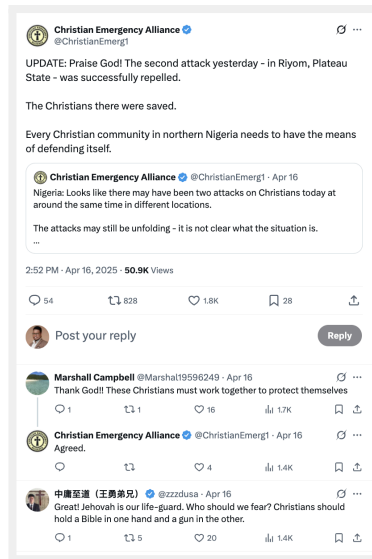
Between 13 and 17 April 2025, 2.67k high-visibility posts that garnered 9.1k likes, 2.28k comments and reshared 3.84k times on Facebook, TikTok and X, mentioned that over 50 Christians were killed in coordinated attacks on Palm Sunday in Plateau State by suspected Islamist Fulani militias. Graphic photos, lists of names, and references to the Christian calendar amplify emotional weight. Users claim that while these events unfolded, there was minimal reaction from Western governments, international organizations, or mainstream media. Some contrast this with global activism for other crises, interpreting the lack of coverage as evidence of religious bias or geopolitical apathy. Similarly, several posts criticized the perceived lack of international media coverage and global advocacy around the earlier massacre in Bokoos. Posters contrasted the silence on Nigerian Christian deaths with what they described as swift coverage of crises involving other religious groups. Phrases like “the world looks away” and “no emergency UN meetings” appeared repeatedly, suggesting a sentiment of selective global empathy. This media bias narrative reinforces broader claims of neglect and marginalization, especially among Christian communities in central Nigeria.



Sample post highlighting Claims of Palm Sunday massacres ([link](#)) (Source: X, Facebook)

3.1.4. Community resistance: Calls for armed Christian self-defence citing Riyom example

In reaction to the reported attacks in Plateau, 1.48k posts called for Christian communities to defend themselves militarily garnering 7.91k likes, 2.65k comments and reshared 2.52k times. These posts praised the alleged repelling of a second attack in Riyom and urged every Christian community in northern Nigeria to acquire the means for self-defence. Religious justification was invoked, with one post suggesting believers “hold a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other.” Though these are expressions of opinion, they signal a significant shift toward grassroots militancy, revealing growing distrust in the state’s capacity or willingness to provide security. Following the Bokokos violence, posts once again emphasized the need for Christian communities to defend themselves. Statements like “they must be capable of defending themselves” and “Christendom must not tolerate this” appeared alongside emotional appeals and condemnation. Though not always explicit, some comments implied readiness for retaliatory action or community-based security. This trend also seen in earlier April posts shows how the security vacuum is increasingly being met with calls for localized resistance, rather than reliance on state protection.



Sample post highlighting self-defence narrative following Palm Sunday massacres ([link](#)) (Source: X, Facebook)

3.1.5. Secessionist claims: Nnamdi Kanu framed as prophetic voice Against Fulani Agenda

Pro-Biafran accounts position detained separatist leader Nnamdi Kanu as a prophetic figure who allegedly warned of a “Fulani jihadist agenda.” With a total of 234 posts on X, TikTok and Facebook, garnering 11.3k likes, 1.28k comments and reshared 1.1k times, the posts claim that his warnings about land grabs, religious expansionism, and elite betrayal are now visibly playing out in regions such as Plateau, Benue, and Enugu. The narrative asserts that Kanu’s imprisonment enabled further violence and calls for Nigeria to be dissolved for regional safety though these remain political positions, not verified policy proposals.

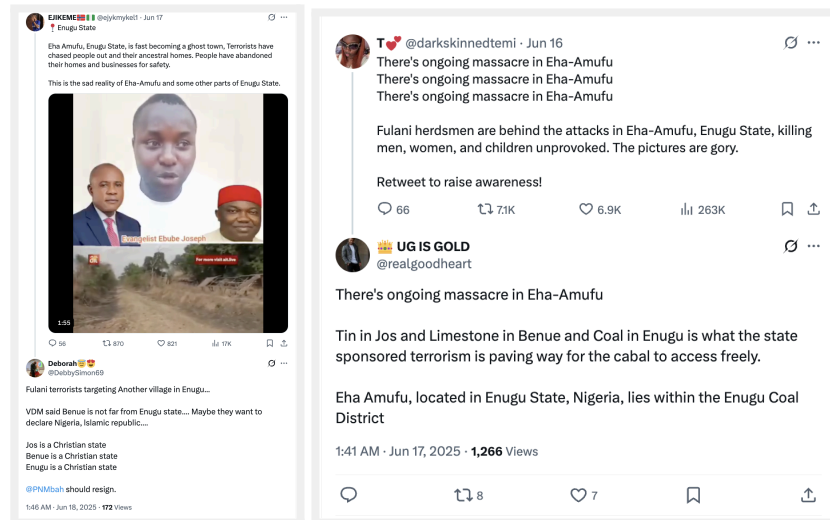


Post about Nnamdi Kanu as a prophetic voice ([link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#)) (Source: X)

3.1.6. Ethno-religious siege: Posts claim spread of violence into Enugu

21 posts on X and Facebook describe Eha-Amufu in Enugu State as a “ghost town,” allegedly emptied due to Fulani-led attacks. Commenters link this to violence in Plateau and Benue, portraying an expanding siege against Christian-majority regions. These claims, though lacking in verified sourcing,

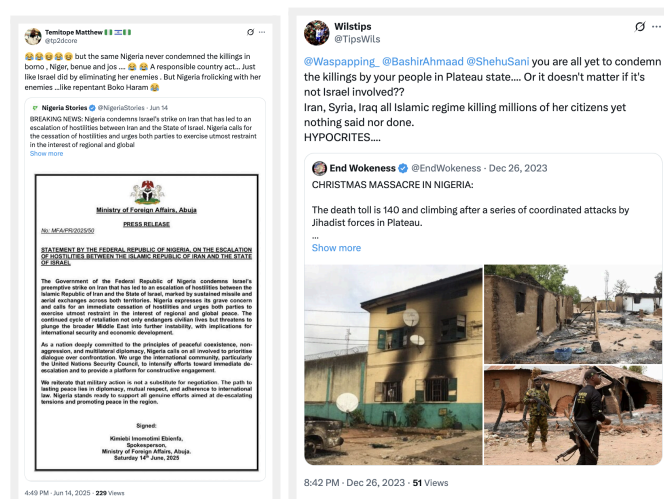
highlight a shared sense of existential threat and regional solidarity among Christian communities across the Middle Belt and southeast Nigeria.



Sample post related to Enugu conflict claims ([link](#)) (Source: X)

3.1.7. State hypocrisy narrative: Claims of prioritizing foreign affairs over domestic crises

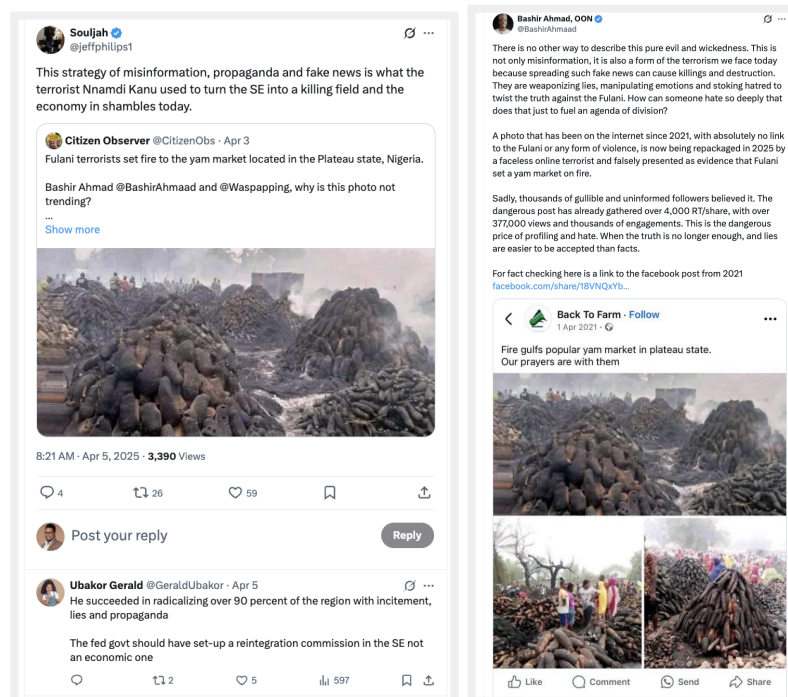
22 posts mocked Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs for condemning Israel’s actions in Iran while allegedly remaining silent on attacks in Plateau, Borno, and Benue. These posts, although did not gain significant interactions, suggest a double standard in moral positioning calling out external military aggression while allegedly failing to address internal bloodshed. The implication is that Nigeria’s diplomatic credibility is undermined by perceived domestic inaction, though these claims are largely rhetorical.



Sample post related to Iran & Nigeria support for Islam ([link](#)) (Source: X)

3.1.8. Disinformation backlash: Accusations fly over false narratives about Fulani attacks

Between 02 and 05 April 2025, a photo showing a burnt yam market, originally posted in 2021, was falsely repurposed in April 2025 to suggest that Fulani militias had torched food markets in Plateau State. User Bashir Ahmad and others condemned this as a dangerous example of “weaponized lies” and “ethnic hate-mongering.” Critics argued that such misattributed content contributes to communal division and misinformation. Some also connected these tactics to broader political manipulation, referencing Nnamdi Kanu and the alleged destabilization of Southeast Nigeria. The disinformation pushback adds complexity to the Plateau narrative, revealing internal contestation over truth and narrative ownership.



Sample post debunking the fake fulani attack photos [link 1](#), [link 2](#) (Source: X)

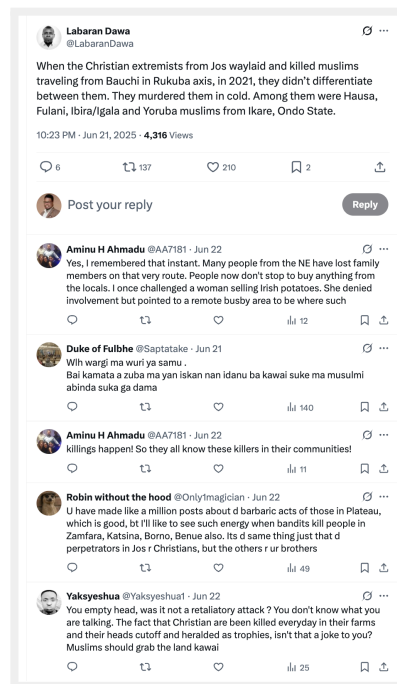
3.2. Bauchi state:

One account that has gained notable prominence in driving incendiary narratives related to Bauchi is [@LabaranDawa](#). The user consistently frames Bauchi as an exclusively Muslim territory, repeatedly issuing inflammatory statements such as “Bauchi is Muslim Land” and mocking Christian presence and influence. His posts feature a mix of religious supremacy, territorial absolutism, and personal abuse, often directed at Christian users who challenge his views. With dozens of replies, retweets, and engagements per post, [@LabaranDawa](#) appears to be a central node in reinforcing sectarian divisions online, actively shaping the discourse around ethno-religious identity and perceived territorial entitlement in the Middle Belt.

The following are the key narratives observed, that the account also participates in:

3.2.1. Mutual victimhood: Competing claims of systemic violence by both Christians and Muslims

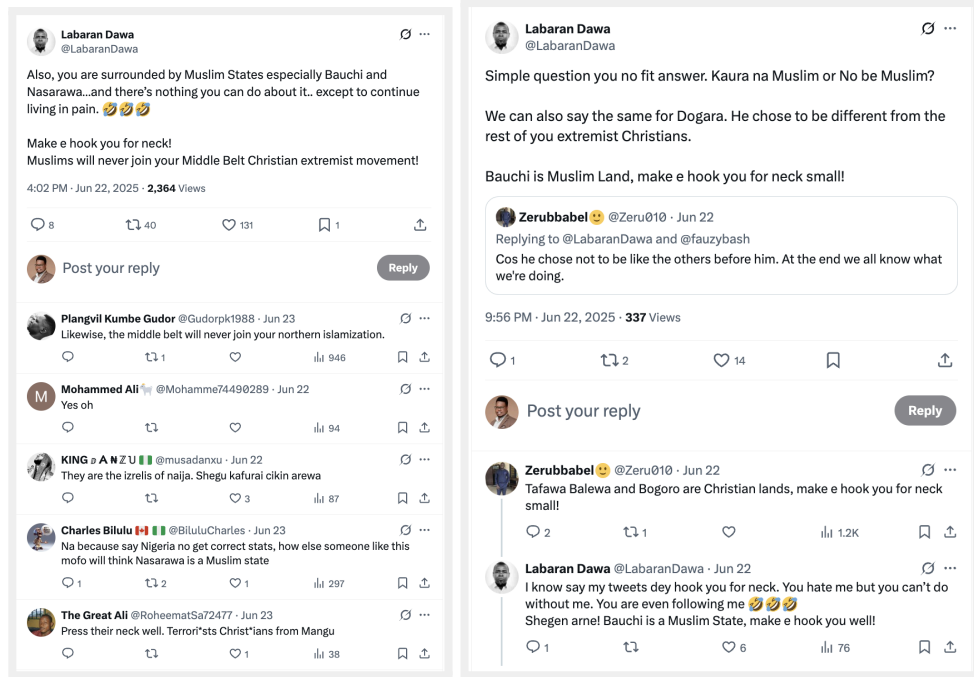
Posts from both Muslim and Christian users alleged long-standing, targeted attacks by the other group, each presenting themselves as persecuted communities. Muslim users claimed repeated killings of travelers by Christians in Jos, Southern Kaduna, and Plateau State, referencing incidents from both past years and recent days. Christian users pushed back, citing alleged past attempts by Muslim communities to displace Christian populations in Bauchi and surrounding areas. These mutual accusations, often couched in historic grievances, reveal how each group views itself as the primary victim of a sustained campaign of ethnic or religious violence.



Sample posts about mutual victimhood (link 1, link 2, link 3) (Source: X)

3.2.2. Escalation of ethnic polarization: Online discourse portrays regions as religiously 'owned'

Nine posts, primarily from [@LabaranDawa](#) reinforced the idea that regions like Bauchi, Nasarawa, and Plateau should be seen as exclusively “Muslim land” or “Christian land.” Even though it did not gain significant attention on social media, some debates erupted in the replies section over whether figures like Kaura and Dogara (political actors from the region) had aligned with the “right” religious identity. Assertions like “Bauchi is Muslim land” and “Bogoro is Christian land” suggest intensifying ethno-religious boundary-making. The dispute over the proposed shift from “state of origin” to “state of residence” was also framed as a potential threat to minority groups’ survival, especially in volatile regions.



Sample posts about regions religiously owned ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.2.3. Route-based fear and travel warnings: Christians and Muslims accuse each other of highway ambushes

A total of 1.67k posts, gaining over 6.27k likes, 1.26k comments and reshared 2.52k times, highlighted claims of dangerous travel routes in central Nigeria, particularly around Jos, Kafanchan, and Bauchi. Muslim users alleged that Christians along these routes consistently ambushed and killed Muslim travelers, particularly at night. Specific highways such as the Jere–Jos or Bauchi–Jos roads were described as “traps” or “no-go zones.” These warnings, while anecdotal, reflect real fear narratives circulating within communities and may influence future patterns of movement, avoidance, or even reprisal actions.



Sample posts about route-based fear ([link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#)) (Source: X)

3.2.4. Frustration with selective solidarity: Accusations of silence by influencers and double standards

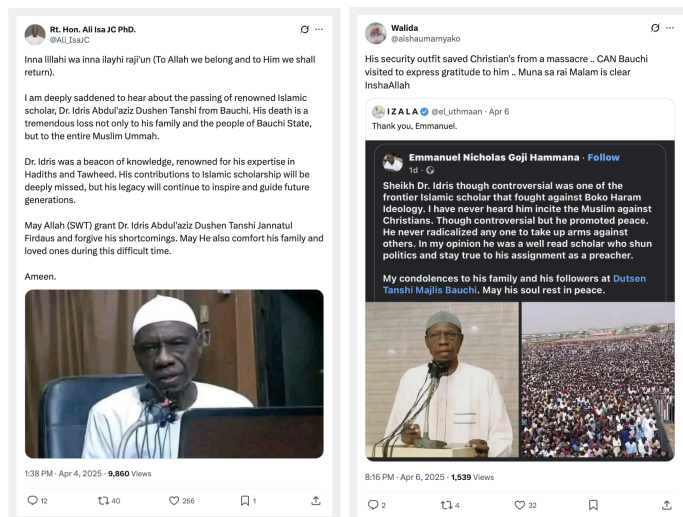
Users, particularly from northern Muslim communities, expressed anger that alleged killings of Muslims in Jos and Mangu had not sparked outrage from southern influencers or major online figures. They claimed a double standard where Christian deaths receive more sympathy or advocacy. The issue of media silence or “agenda-driven” reactions was also raised, echoing older patterns seen earlier in April. This sense of selective empathy has intensified distrust across regional and religious lines.



Sample posts about influencers silence ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.2.5. Martyrdom and legacy: Sheikh Idris Tanshi’s death fuels spiritual unity and political memory

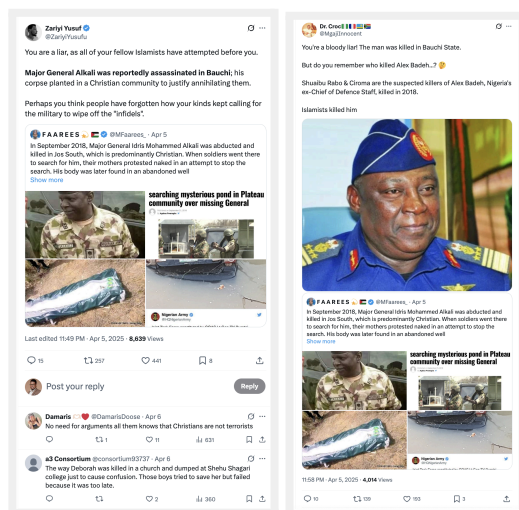
Between 01 April and 10 April 2025, the passing of Sheikh Dr. Idris Abdul'aziz Dutsen Tanshi triggered widespread online mourning, particularly among Northern Muslim users. A total of 168 posts on Facebook and X garnering a whopping 109k likes, 18.2k comments and reshared 3.04k times, highlighted his community contributions, his stand against Boko Haram, and his commitment to Islamic scholarship. His funeral drew large crowds, and narratives emphasized both his personal piety and public service. Mentions of Christian leaders (e.g. CAN Bauchi) visiting to pay respects signaled rare interfaith recognition. However, references to harassment by state authorities and comparisons to other slain clerics positioned his legacy within a longer arc of persecution and martyrdom, reinforcing communal grievance.



Sample posts about Sheikh Tanshi's death ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.2.6. Counter-narratives to state-sanctioned history: General Alkali's death becomes a contested symbol

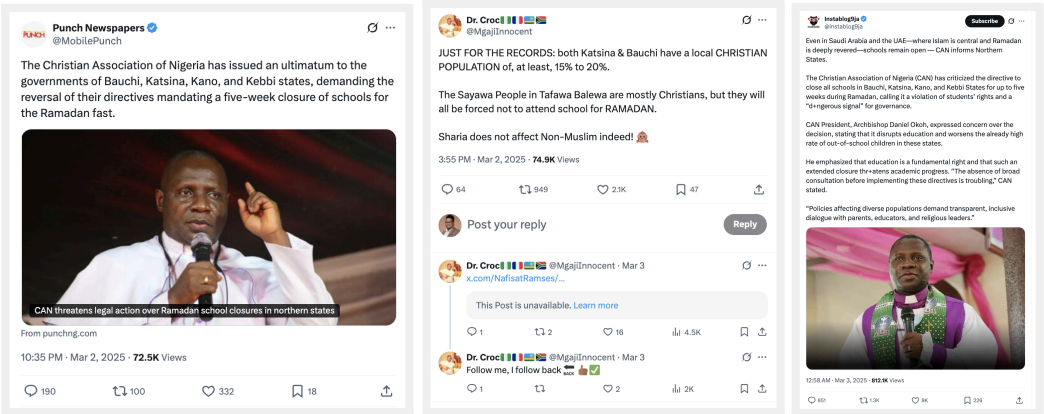
Conflicting accounts of General Idris Alkali's 2018 murder re-emerged with a total of 107 posts shared on Facebook, X and TikTok between 01 January and 22 June 2025, gaining 8.09k likes, 2.18k comments and 1.48k reshares. While some reaffirmed the established version, that he was killed in Jos South, others alleged he was assassinated in Bauchi and that his body was planted in a Christian area to justify violent reprisals. This revisionist framing, notably pushed by verified user @ZariyiYusuf, suggests coordinated manipulation and deepens distrust in official narratives. The incident remains a flashpoint, with its memory repurposed to justify both Christian and Muslim grievances, depending on the framing.



Sample posts about Alkali's death ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.2.7. Religious backlash: Ramadan school closures provoke online debate

The decision by several northern state governments including Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, and Kebbi, to close schools for five weeks during Ramadan sparked significant online criticism. A total of 205 posts identified on Facebook, X, TikTok and the media, reported on, and some questioned the imposition of religious observance on non-Muslim populations, especially schoolchildren from Christian or secular backgrounds. These posts garnered significant engagement with a total of 1.82k likes, 1.31k comments and reshared 160 times, while critics cited global Islamic nations (e.g., Saudi Arabia, UAE) that do not close schools during Ramadan, highlighting the policy as a uniquely local overreach. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) condemned the move as discriminatory and harmful to educational access, warning of long-term consequences for pluralistic governance and learning outcomes.

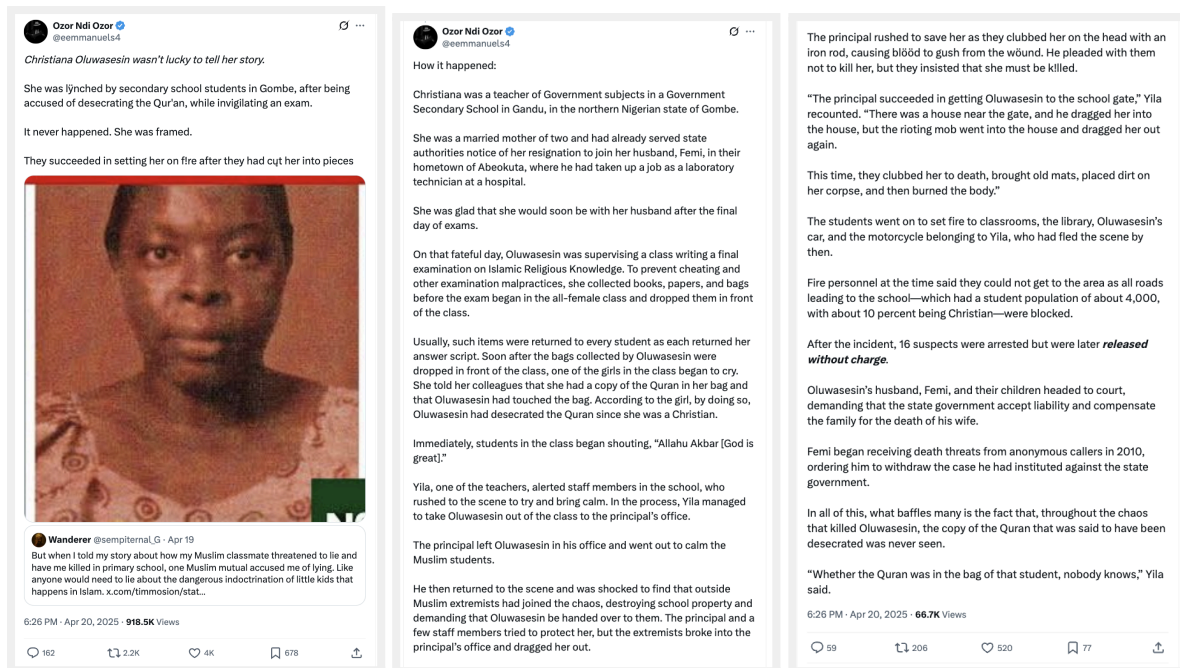


Sample posts about Alkali's death ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.3. Gombe State:

3.3.1. Recurring violence: Gombe emerges as symbol of Christian vulnerability in Northern Nigeria

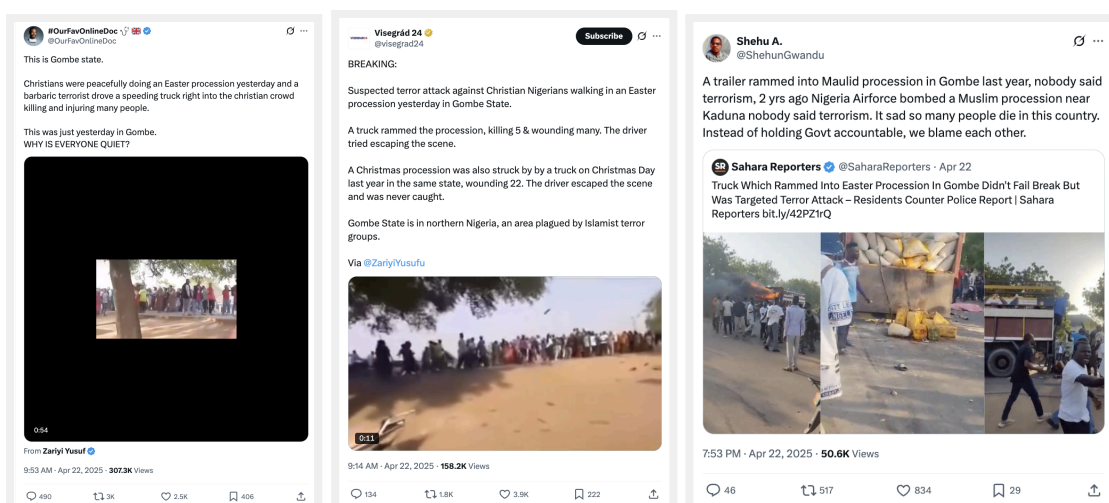
The lynching of Christiana Oluwasesin in a Gombe secondary school, recounted in graphic detail, resurfaced online following a deadly Easter procession incident, reinforcing a narrative of religiously motivated violence against Christians. A total of 924 posts made on Facebook and X during our review period drew direct parallels between past mob actions and current events, portraying Gombe as a hotspot of impunity and targeted aggression. The re-circulation of Oluwasesin's story, including failures of justice and the absence of physical evidence for the alleged desecration-fueled perceptions of institutional complicity and entrenched sectarian injustice. Oluwasesin's story and the Easter procession deaths were folded into a broader narrative of Christians in Northern Nigeria being systemically targeted and denied justice. References to false accusations, mob violence, and unpunished killings underscore a prevailing belief that Christians are both vulnerable and unsupported by the state. These perceptions risk deepening intergroup alienation, particularly when past cases of violence resurface without evidence of institutional change or accountability.



Sample posts about Christiana Oluwasesin ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) (Source: X)

3.3.2. Terror or accident? Truck incident splits narrative along sectarian lines

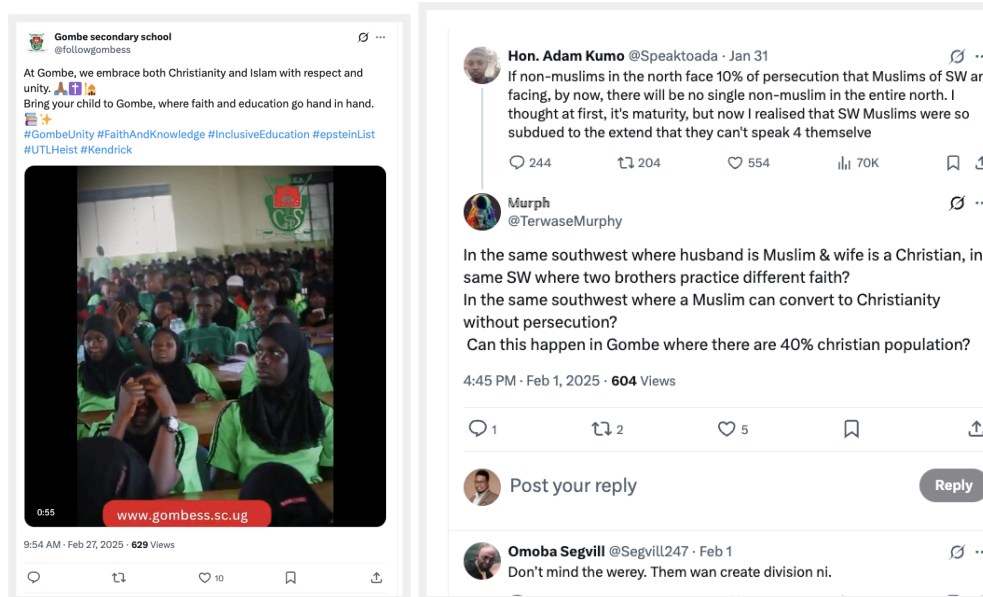
A fatal truck crash that killed five and injured eight during an Easter procession sparked sharply polarized interpretations. 3.15k posts on Facebook, X, TikTok and the media, garnering 8.84k likes, 1.55k comments and reshared 3.87k times, described the event as a terrorist attack targeting religious minorities, pointing to previous similar incidents and the location's pattern of attacks on Christian gatherings. Others, including some Muslim voices, contested this framing by citing analogous attacks on Muslim events that were not labeled terrorism. The clash reveals deep fractures in public trust toward state authorities, who were accused of downplaying targeted violence when victims are Christian.



Sample posts about xxx ([link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#)) (Source: X)

3.3.3. Narrative conflict: Competing visions of Gombe’s religious coexistence fuel tension

Posts from Gombe primarily oscillate between narratives of peaceful religious coexistence and deep-seated mistrust. While an official school account projects interfaith harmony and unity, this is sharply contradicted by others who question whether Gombe truly tolerates Christian freedoms, particularly in comparison to the religious pluralism in Nigeria’s southwest. This tension reveals a growing perception gap between official messaging and lived experience, with critics portraying state-led portrayals of unity as superficial or strategically selective.



Sample posts about religious coexistence ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) (Source: X)

3.3.4. Distrust over policy equity: Almajiri bill sparks concern about exclusionary governance

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) publicly questioned Gombe State’s Almajiri education bill, demanding clarification on its implementation and inclusivity. This reflects longstanding anxieties that state policy may favor Islamic frameworks while sidelining Christian interests, especially in mixed-faith regions. The reaction, with a total of 163 posts on Facebook and X, suggests that issues of education, when linked to religious identity, are increasingly seen not as neutral service delivery but as potential instruments of marginalization.



Sample posts about Almajiri bill ([link 1](#)) (Source: X)

3.3.5. Perceived cover-ups: Frustration over framing of pastor's murder as 'robbery'

The killing of Pastor Daniel Amos reignited suspicions about the state's unwillingness to classify attacks on Christians as terrorism. Official hesitancy to label the incident as ideological was met with cynicism by international and domestic commentators who argued that this downplays systematic violence. 250 posts on Facebook and X which garnered 1.24k likes and 330 comments, suggested that growing numbers of Nigerians believe state and media narratives are manipulated to avoid acknowledging religiously motivated attacks.



Sample posts about pastor's murder ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) (Source: X)

4. Recommendations

Recommendations to Social Media Influencers:

- ***Counter polarising narratives with shared humanity messaging*** - Develop and share content that acknowledges the pain and loss experienced by all religious and ethnic communities. Emphasise collective healing and unity, especially during periods of heightened tension or following incidents of violence.
- ***Debunk disinformation using calm, credible voices*** - Use verified accounts to fact-check and correct false or misleading content (e.g., outdated massacre photos). Ensure debunks are non-confrontational and empathetic to reduce backlash and increase effectiveness.
- ***Promote interfaith messages during high-risk religious periods or events*** - Publish coordinated, proactive posts during Christmas, Ramadan, and Easter that highlight coexistence and shared values. Collaborate across religious lines for joint messaging.
- ***Uplift Positive Interfaith Moments and Leaders*** - Amplify stories of cross-religious respect, such as visits across faith lines during mourning or recognition of peacebuilding figures. These narratives challenge the dominant cycle of hate and retaliation.

Recommendations to Civil Society Organisations (e.g. SfCG and local partners):

- ***Continue investing in social media monitoring and analysis systems/ processes*** -Track high-influence accounts and trending narratives to detect early signs of online incitement or harmful mobilisation. Platforms like Phoenix and CivicSignal continue to be useful for proactive analysis that inform responses and offline initiatives.
- ***Expand community-based dialogue and trust initiatives*** - Facilitate interfaith forums and safe spaces in Plateau, Bauchi, and Gombe where grievances can be aired and addressed constructively. Prioritise areas affected by recent tensions like Riyom, Bokkos, and Gombe.
- ***Amplify undervalued voices of tolerance*** - Provide technical support, visibility, and training to community influencers who promote coexistence but lack digital reach. Help them grow their platforms to compete with divisive actors.
- ***Clarify complex policy issues through localised campaigns*** - Develop informational campaigns around misunderstood government actions, such as the Almajiri education bill or Ramadan school closures, to prevent narratives of exclusion from taking hold.