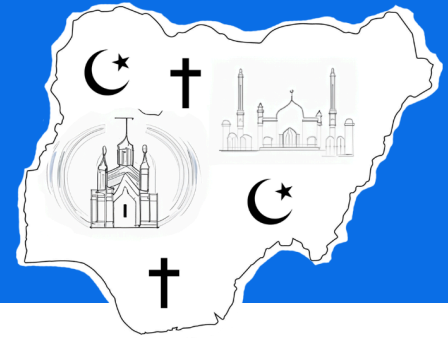


# Digital Pulse: Key Actors and Narratives in Nigeria's Inter-Religious Dialogue



*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 first in a series of social media analytical reports by the Build Up with participatory insights and contributions from local partners - seeking to empower youths in Bauchi, Plateau, and Gombe to advance inter-religious tolerance and freedom of religion and belief (FoRB). 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 initial snapshot/ baseline landscape mapping and research:

- a. **Social media platforms:** Facebook is the dominant platform used by 80.6% of internet users in Nigeria, significantly influencing digital habits and information dissemination.
- b. **Information flow:** Infomediaries<sup>1</sup> such as local radio stations and community leaders play a crucial role in bridging the digital divide, spreading online narratives to offline audiences who often cannot verify the content.
- c. **Plateau State violence:** Extremist attacks and the call for self-defence by religious leaders have sparked mixed reactions, reflecting deep divisions and the need for government intervention and peacebuilding efforts.
- d. **Government and military response:** Allegations of military complicity in Plateau State's violence have elicited significant debate, with some accusing the government of failing to protect vulnerable communities.
- e. **Religious cleansing claims:** Discussions on inter-religious issues in Gombe State have been prominent, highlighting deep-seated tensions and grievances within the region.
- f. **Anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments:** Arrests at an alleged gay wedding in Gombe State have sparked hateful and polarising comments online, reflecting the region's cultural and religious stance against homosexuality.
- g. **Kidnappings in Bauchi:** Despite significant incidents, online engagement is low possibly due to low internet penetrations in the state, with commenters praising government efforts to counter kidnappings and related crimes.
- h. **Influential actors on social media:** Media-related pages dominate inter-religious discussions, followed by personal accounts, while government and NGO pages show lower engagement. Influential accounts on X play a crucial role in shaping inter-religious dialogue, with high engagement levels highlighting their impact on public discourse.

Key recommendations provided include enhancing digital peacebuilding initiatives by investing in hyperlocal platforms and creating community-specific dialogues, implementing continuous social media monitoring to understand content trends and address social divides, and addressing religious polarisation and anti-LGBTQ+ narratives through youth-led digital narratives.

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<sup>1</sup> See Glossary section for definition

The digital ecosystem in the three Nigerian states is extremely dynamic, with the rapid growth of messaging apps and social media, alongside expanding digital media on the open web.

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 May 2023 and 30 April 2024.

The analysis team used a number of tools, including:

1. **Apify**: This is a web scraping and automation platform that allows users to extract data from websites, automate workflows, and integrate the results into various applications. Apify was used to obtain data from TikTok for analysis.
2. **CrowdTangle**: This social monitoring tool, developed by Meta, can be used to detect trends and spikes in activities on Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, and X. CrowdTangle has limited functionality, but the tool enables partners to set up early warning alerts for sudden increases in mentions on these platforms.
3. **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.

The analysis used specific Boolean<sup>2</sup> 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](#).

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:

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<sup>2</sup> See Glossary section for definition

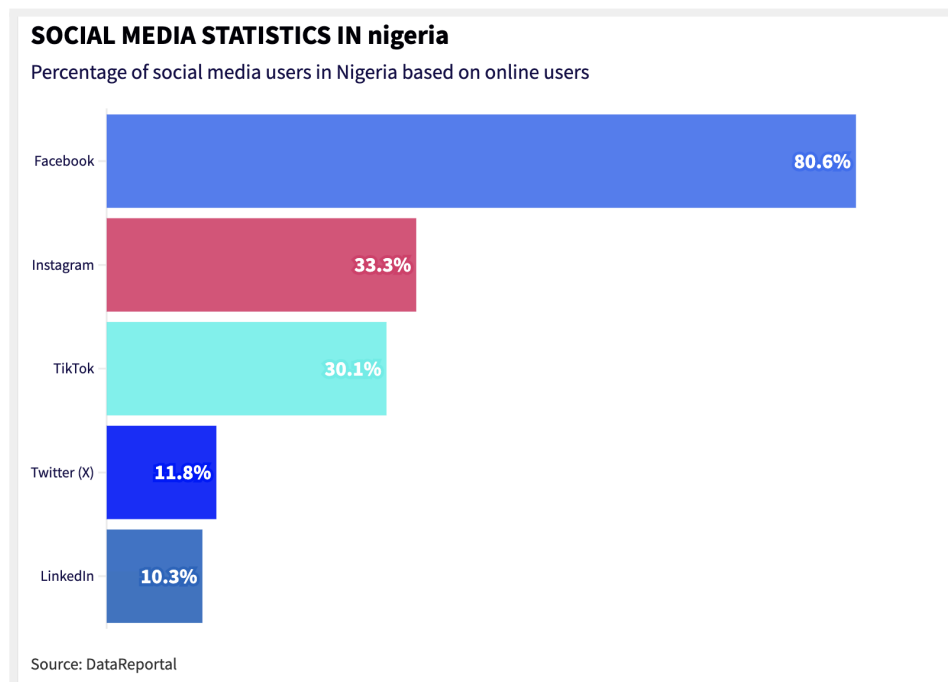
1. The reliance on publicly available information on social media platforms.
2. The possibility of missing data from private accounts or restricted platforms.

### 3. Local context

The inter-religious tensions in Nigeria have been reported to be driven by the discriminatory systems in regions such as Plateau, Bauchi, and Gombe, which have fueled communal clashes and social fragmentation<sup>3</sup>. Extremist groups like Boko Haram and bandit groups such as the Fulani herdsmen further exacerbate the violence, alleged to be targeting both Christians and Muslims. Local youth-led initiatives to promote inter-religious dialogue and reconciliation through joint activities and civic education have been observed to be effective means of combating the situation. Efforts at both the governmental and community levels are crucial to addressing these complex issues and fostering peaceful coexistence<sup>4</sup>.

#### 3.1. Social media assessment

DataReportal analysis offers some additional insights into what platforms social media users prefer in Somalia. As of 2023, Somalia was home to 1.95 million internet users, which represents 11.3% of the total population. A substantial 80.6% of these internet users in Somalia are active on Facebook, translating to approximately 1.57 million users. Instagram follows with a 33.3% uptake among internet users, equating to about 650,000 people. TikTok holds the third position with a 30.1% usage rate, representing around 590,000 users. LinkedIn sees a 10.3% uptake, translating to roughly 200,000 users, while Twitter (now X) is used by 11.8% of online users, equating to about 230,000 people. The data shows that social media platforms play a significant role in the digital habits of Somalis, with Facebook remaining the dominant platform.



Social media statistics for Nigeria for the period January 2023 to January 2024 (Source: [DataReportal](#))

<sup>3</sup> Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflict, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, July 2011, <https://africacenter.org/publication/nigerias-pernicious-drivers-of-ethno-religious-conflict/>

<sup>4</sup> Religion as a Catalyst for Peacebuilding in Jos, Plateau State North Central Nigeria, Ezekiel Abdullahi Babagario, Sep 2016 [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-56851-9\\_10](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-56851-9_10)

Statcounter and other analysis tools are also unable to measure the reach of ‘dark social’<sup>5</sup> platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, or Signal.

### 3.2. Information flow from online to offline audiences

Low internet penetration rates don’t shield offline citizens from harmful online content: it instead makes them more vulnerable, because those with access to the internet disseminate harmful information to recipients who have no way to validate or contextualise it<sup>6</sup>.

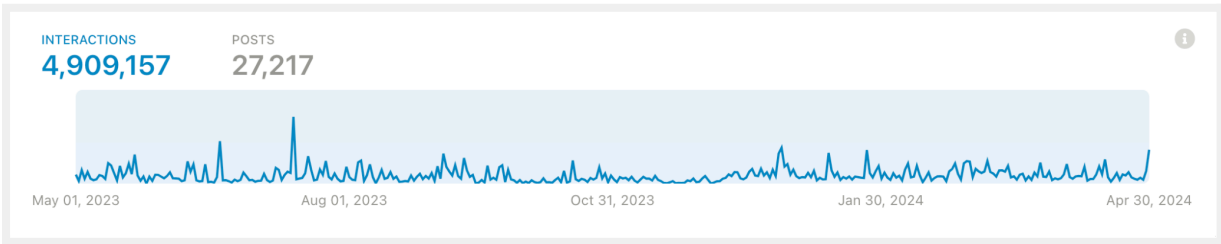
The dissemination of digital content to offline audiences is significantly influenced by infomediaries, who bridge the gap between the online information sphere and those with limited or no internet access. These infomediaries, including local radio stations, religious leaders, social media influencers, and distributors of printed materials, play a crucial role in amplifying digital narratives across the population. Local radio, trusted for its accessibility, broadcasts information sourced online to a wider audience, often without the means to verify the content's authenticity. Similarly, community leaders and influencers, revered within their communities, relay digital content in their discussions and public speeches, embedding online narratives into the local discourse.

Through these various channels, digital narratives, whether harmful, accurate, or manipulated, become part of the collective social understanding, highlighting the complex challenges in mitigating the effects of harmful online content in regions like Nigeria, where the digital divide amplifies the potency of infomediaries in shaping public perception and social dynamics.

## 4. Dominant/ Notable narratives

*This section examines the ‘meta’ narratives that were most popular over the review period, citing specific examples.*

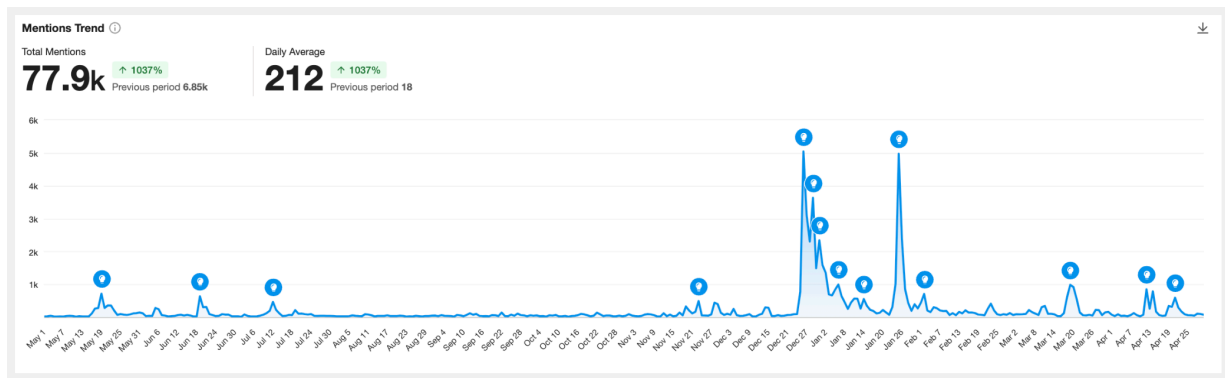
The analysis is based on a total of 27,217 Facebook posts from public Facebook pages and 77,869 posts from X. Due to the complexities involved gathering data from TikTok, Build Up is developing scrapers to collect data from the platform for analysis, and will be available in future reports.



*A line graph representing the total Facebook posts gathered from public Facebook Pages from May 2023-April 2024 (Source: CrowdTangle)*

<sup>5</sup> See Glossary section for definition

<sup>6</sup> Low Internet Access Driving Inequality, IMF <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2020/06/29/low-internet-access-driving-inequality>



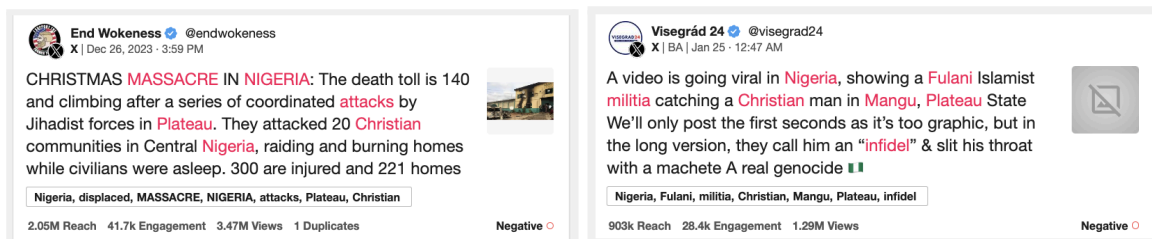
A line graph representing the total Facebook posts gathered from public Facebook Pages from May 2023-April 2024 (Source: Meltwater)

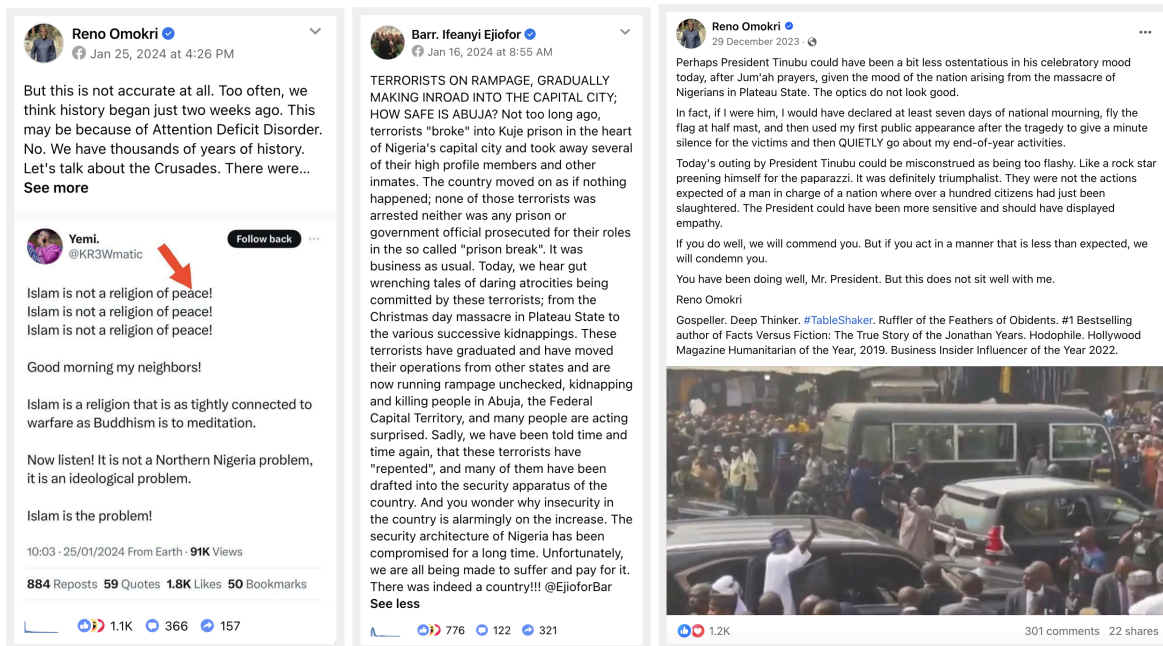
The following are the key narratives observed on both platforms:

#### 4.1. **Plateau state:** A series of extremist attacks elicits mixed reactions from online communities

On 25 January 2024, a video went viral depicting a brutal attack by a Fulani Islamist militia on a Christian man in Mangu, Plateau State, Nigeria. This incident, where the victim was called an "infidel" before being killed, generated significant outrage online and was labelled as an act of genocide. This video spurred intense discussions on social media, with divided opinions on how to address the violence. Some users called for the government to arm citizens for self-defence, while others stressed the need for non-violent solutions.

This event was part of a series of violent incidents in Plateau State that have sparked heated debates online. For example, a tweet on 06 January 2024 reported a protest in Jos against the mass killing of Christians by Fulani militias, and another on 10 January 2024 highlighted over 200 Christian deaths during the Christmas massacre in Plateau State. Each attack reignites discussions, with some advocating for increased armament of civilians and others pushing for government intervention and peacebuilding efforts. These events underscore the urgent need for addressing inter-religious tensions and ensuring justice and security for all communities involved.



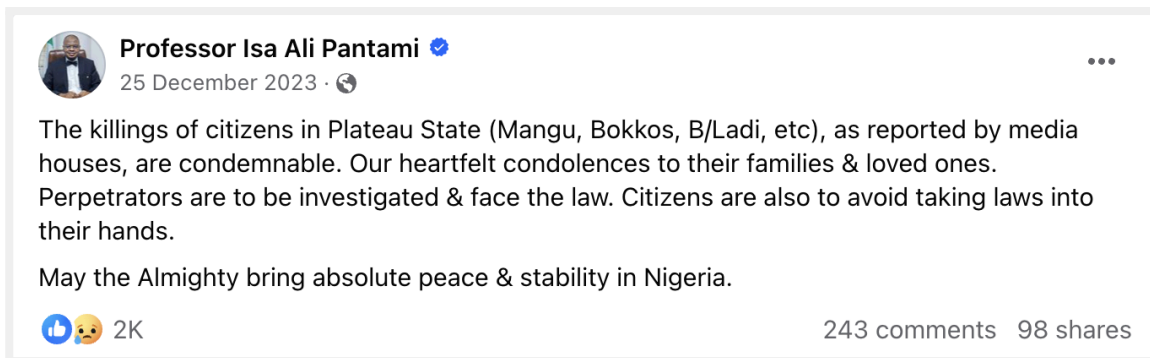


Social media posts sharing about the Plateau attacks ([top left](#), [top right](#), [bottom left](#), [bottom centre](#), [bottom right](#)) (Source: X & Facebook)

#### 4.2. Plateau state: Religious leaders advocate for ‘Self-defence’ against killings

Similarly, we observed a moderate spike in social media conversations between 25 December 2023 and 10 January 2024, on social media after the killings in Plateau State, following religious leaders' strong advocacy for self-defence, urging communities to protect themselves amidst ongoing terror attacks. The comments elicited mixed reactions, with some users criticising the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) as a toothless organisation, while others supported their decision to advocate for self-defence. For instance, a cleric's call to defend families against killers was supported by some, who echoed sentiments that the government had failed to protect the people. On the other hand, critics expressed frustration with CAN, calling it ineffective and accusing it of inaction. These mixed reactions highlight the deep divisions and the desperate search for solutions among affected communities in Nigeria.





Posts either supporting or condemning religious leaders' comments on killings ([top left](#), [top centre](#), [top right](#), [centre](#), [bottom left](#), [bottom right](#)) (Source: X & Facebook)

#### 4.3. **Plateau state: Government/ military response to the plateau attack elicits mixed reactions online**

In early 2024, a tweet by Chude Nnamdi on 25 January drew significant attention to the government's response to the attacks in Plateau State. The tweet included a video in which the Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Mangu LGA, accused the military of aiding Fulani jihadists in killing locals and destroying properties. He alleged that the military had killed boys from the community while failing to arrest any Fulani jihadists. This claim, supported by video evidence, sparked a wave of reactions online, reflecting deep mistrust and anger towards the government and military.

The narrative elicited mixed reactions from online audiences. Many expressed outrage, accusing the government and military of complicity in the violence and failing to protect vulnerable communities. On the other hand, supporters of the government dismissed these allegations as unfounded and defended the administration's efforts to maintain peace and security. The high engagement with Chude Nnamdi's post, which garnered over 145,000 views and thousands of interactions, underscores the sensitivity of the issue.

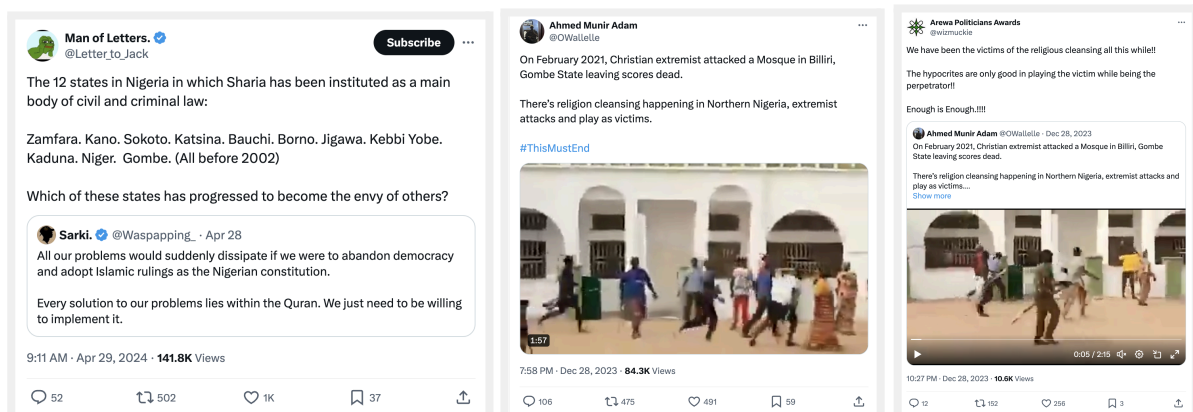


Tweet sharing about CAN's Chairman comments on military response ([link](#)) (Source: X)

#### 4.4. Gombe state: Emerging claims of religious cleansing in northern Nigeria

In late December 2023, social media experienced a spike in discussions related to inter-religious issues in Nigeria, particularly following events in Gombe State. A tweet on 28 December 2023 highlighted a 2021 attack by Christian extremists on a mosque in Billiri, Gombe State, resulting in numerous deaths. This incident, described as religious cleansing, reignited debates and accusations, with some users claiming hypocrisy and victim-playing by the perpetrators. This post received significant engagement, reflecting the deep-seated tensions and grievances within the region.

Additionally, conversations around Sharia law in Northern Nigeria's states like Gombe also gained traction. A tweet listing the 12 states where Sharia is implemented questioned their progress and invoked responses that linked the region's challenges to the need for adopting Islamic rulings more broadly. These posts collectively highlight the complex and often contentious nature of inter-religious dynamics in Nigeria, underscoring ongoing debates about governance, religious law, and societal progress.



Sample X posts discussing the inter-religious conversations related to Gombe state ([left](#), [centre](#), [right](#)) (Source: X)

#### 4.5. Gombe state: Anti-LGBTQ+ comments following the arrest of 76 at an alleged gay wedding

In late October 2023, posts on Facebook reported the arrest of 76 individuals at an alleged gay wedding in Gombe state by the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). The arrests

were made following a tip-off. The Gombe State NSCDC Commandant, Muhammad Bello Mu'azu, disclosed that 59 males and 17 females were arrested, with some alleged to have confessed to being involved in same-sex relationships.

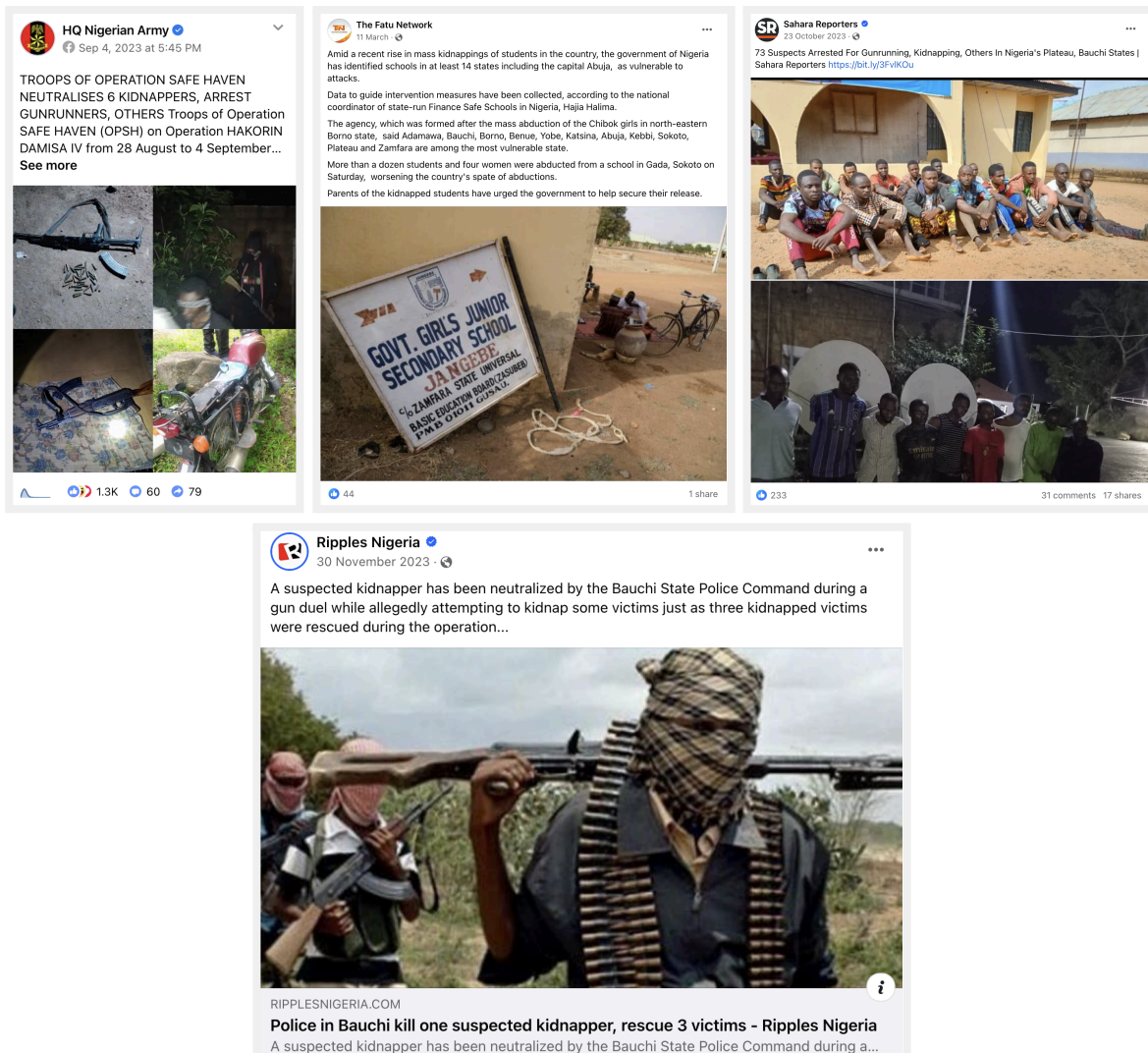
Gombe, a Muslim-dominated state in Nigeria, views the practice as unacceptable and a 2014 antigay law took effect despite international condemnation. This incident therefore sparked significant online discussions with a wave of hateful and polarising comments on these posts, targeted at the LGBTQ+ community. Majority of the commenters expressed support for the arrests, citing moral and religious justifications.



Sample posts sharing about the arrest of 76 at a gay wedding (Left, right) (Source: Facebook)

**4.6. Bauchi State: Kidnappings and gun running as key discussion points online**

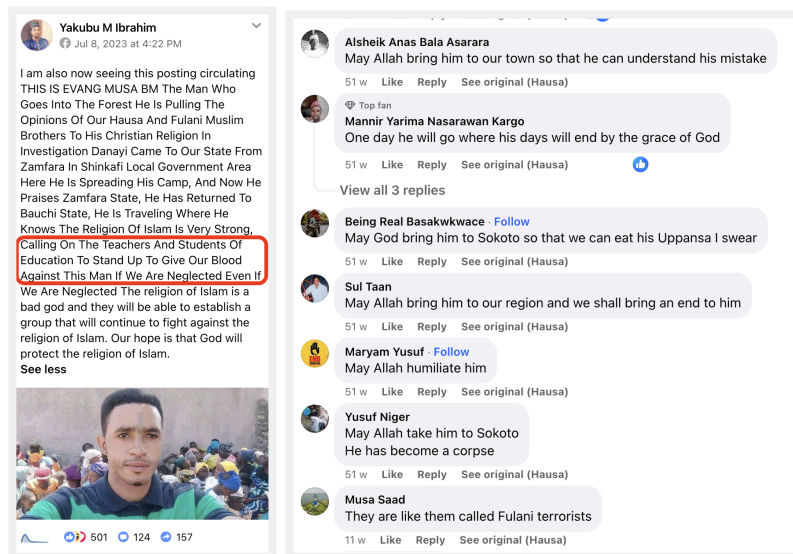
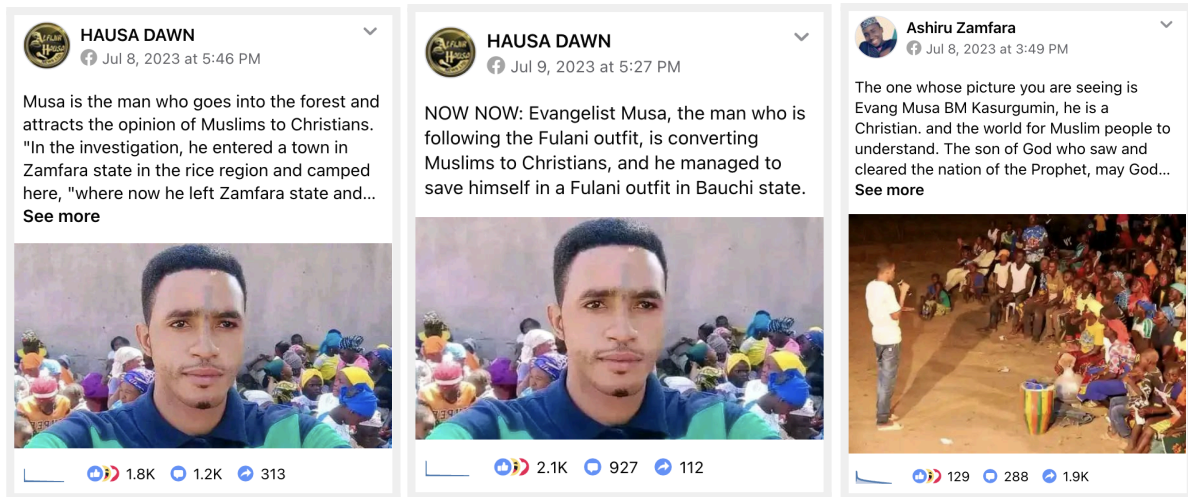
In Bauchi State, social media engagement with content related to inter-religious events has generally been low, despite significant incidents such as kidnappings and arrests reported. Reports highlight a rise in mass kidnappings, with schools identified as vulnerable to attacks. The arrest of 73 suspects for gunrunning and kidnapping have elicited quite some engagement with the majority of commenters praising the government for its efforts to counter these vices. Posts involving the arrests are primarily channelled through government accounts with the governor's posts tending to receive slightly higher engagement. This underscores the need for more effective communication strategies to bring attention to critical issues facing the state.



Sample posts highlighting kidnappings and arrests in Bauchi (left, centre, right, bottom) (Source: Facebook)

#### 4.7. **Bauchi State:** Viral claims of conversion of Muslims to Christian ignite criticism and intolerance

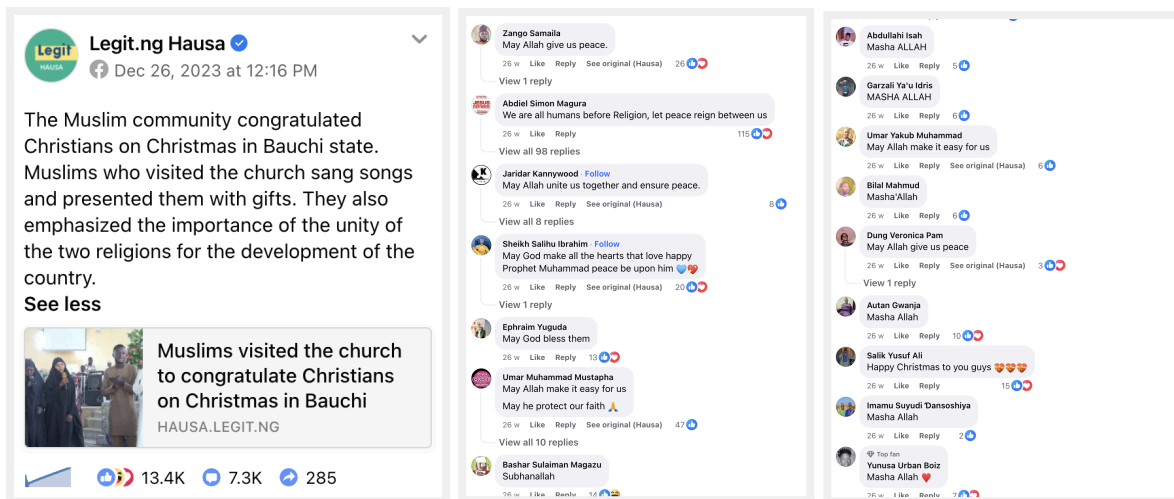
In July 2023, Facebook posts highlighting claims that Evangelist Musa BM Kasurgumin, a Christian, was converting Muslims to Christianity, sparked intense discussions. These posts, depicting Musa with groups of people and alleging his covert operations in Fulani attire, incited significant hostility and intolerance. A particularly inflammatory post by Yakubu M Ibrahim urged resistance against Musa, even to the extent of shedding blood, reflecting deep-seated religious tensions. This underscores the need to monitor such claims and engage young, influential religious leaders to promote tolerance in such instances.



Posts and comments with claims of a Evangelist Musa converting Muslims to Christians ([top left](#), [top centre](#), [top right](#), [bottom left](#), [bottom right](#)) (Source: Facebook)

#### 4.8. **Bauchi State:** Muslim-Christian cooperation and inclusiveness gain attention online sparking mixed reactions

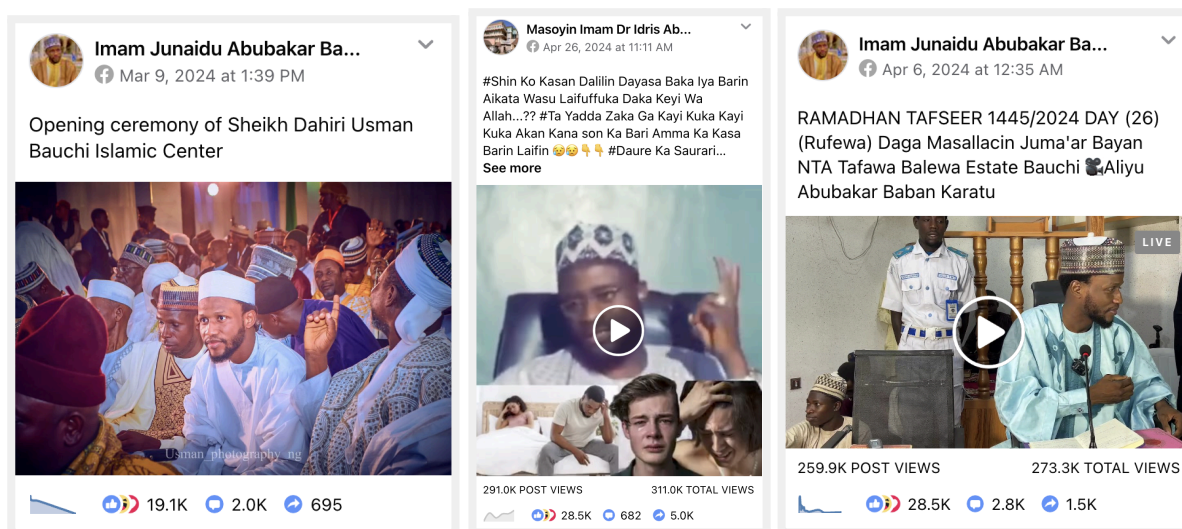
In December 2023, the Muslim community in Bauchi state visited a local church to congratulate Christians on Christmas, an event that was well-received on social media. Muslims sang songs, presented gifts, and emphasised the importance of unity between the two religions for the development of Nigeria. This positive interaction highlighted the potential for fostering tolerance and inclusiveness in the region. Promoting more content like this can significantly contribute to bridging religious divides and encouraging peaceful coexistence among different religious groups in Bauchi state and beyond.



Sample post and comments of the event (Source: Facebook)

#### 4.9. Bauchi State: Religious leaders drive major social media engagement and conversations

In Bauchi State, religious leaders have consistently shown the highest engagement on social media platforms such as Facebook, particularly during the Ramadan season. This heightened engagement can be attributed to the significant role these leaders play in guiding their communities through spiritual practices and communal activities during this holy month. The content shared by religious leaders, including prayers, sermons, and messages of unity, resonates deeply with the followers, leading to increased interactions, shares, and comments on their posts.



Sample posts from religious leaders with high engagement (Left, middle, right) (Source: Facebook)

#### 4.10. General: Allegations of government support for terrorist groups

In early 2024, social media saw a surge in discussions surrounding allegations that the Nigerian government is supporting terrorist groups, particularly in states like Plateau, Gombe, and Bauchi. A tweet from 25 January by Babatunde Gbadamosi accused the government of funding and supporting Fulani terrorist jihadists, linking this support to prominent political figures. This post, which included

video evidence purportedly showing security forces aiding Fulani terrorists, sparked significant debate online. Further, a press release from the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) on 01 January accused Nigeria's Vice President of being a sponsor of Boko Haram. These posts illustrate the deep mistrust and accusations against the government, suggesting that officials are complicit in perpetuating violence and instability.

The narrative elicited mixed reactions, with government supporters dismissing these allegations as baseless and defending the administration's efforts to maintain peace and security.

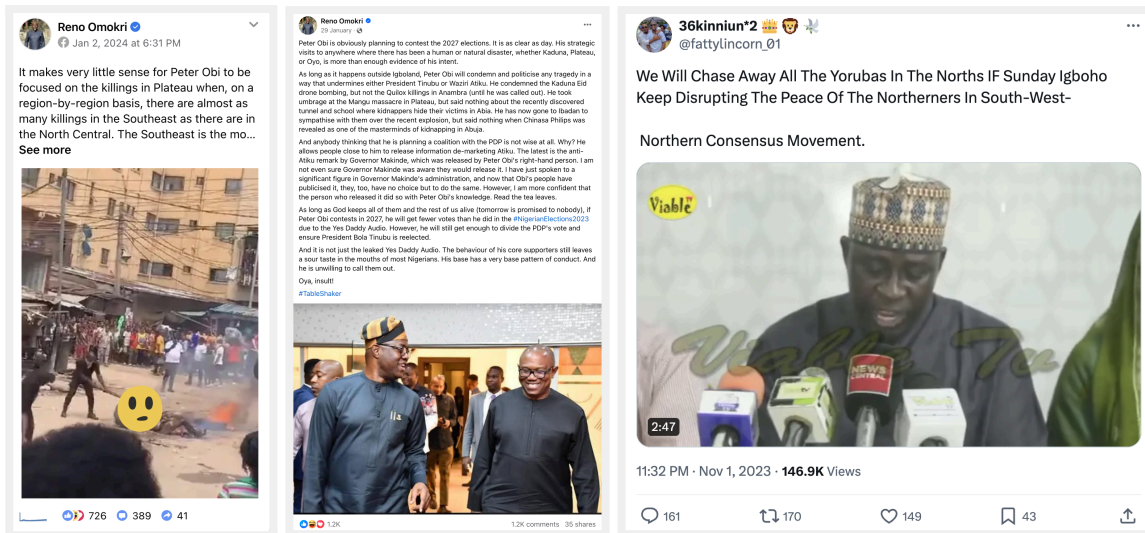


X posts alleging government support of terrorist groups (left, right) (Source: X)

**4.11. General: Claims of political leader politicising terrorist attacks in the North**

A Facebook post from 02 January 2024 by Reno Omokri targeted former presidential candidate Peter Obi, criticising him for focusing on the killings in Plateau while allegedly ignoring similar violence in the Southeast. This post ignited significant discussions in the comments, with commenters debating on the perceived hypocrisy and regional biases, with some defending Obi's actions and others condemning him for not addressing violence in his home region. This discourse reflects the deep-seated ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria, highlighting the challenges in addressing and resolving inter-regional conflicts.

Similarly, a tweet from 01 November 2023 by @fattylincon\_01 had threatened to expel all Yorubas from the North if Sunday Igboho continued to disrupt the peace of Northerners in the Southwest. This statement, made by the Northern Consensus Movement, further intensified the ethnic tensions and showcased the volatile nature of inter-regional relationships between the North and the South in Nigeria.

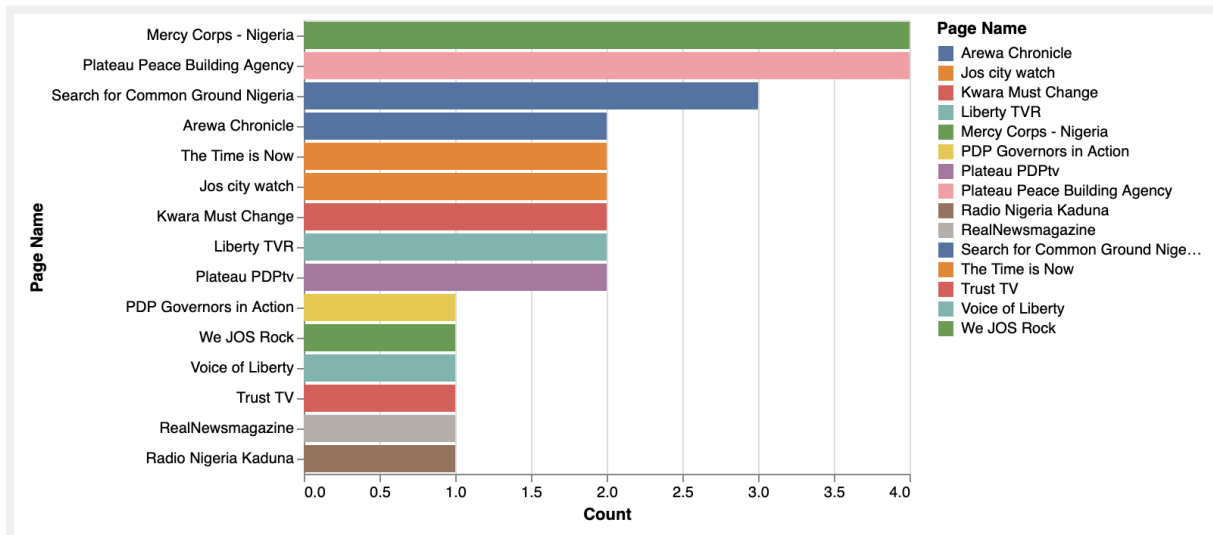


Sample posts from Facebook shared by Reno Omokri and related to Yorubas in the north (left, centre, right). (Source: Facebook)

#### 4.12. General: Peace Initiatives by Local NGOs/ CSOs in Bauchi, Gombe, and Plateau States

The graph below highlights the number of posts mentioning peacebuilding, primarily from NGOs and CSOs operating in the region, such as Mercy Corps - Nigeria, Plateau Peace Building Agency, and Search for Common Ground Nigeria. Despite the critical role these organisations play in promoting peace and countering inter-religious narratives, the low engagement on their posts indicates a significant gap in online influence and outreach.

This low level of online interaction underscores the need for more robust and effective digital engagement strategies to ensure that peacebuilding efforts resonate with the broader audience.



A bar chart representing the number of posts mentioning 'peacebuilding' on Facebook Pages from May 2023-April 2024 (Source: CrowdTangle)

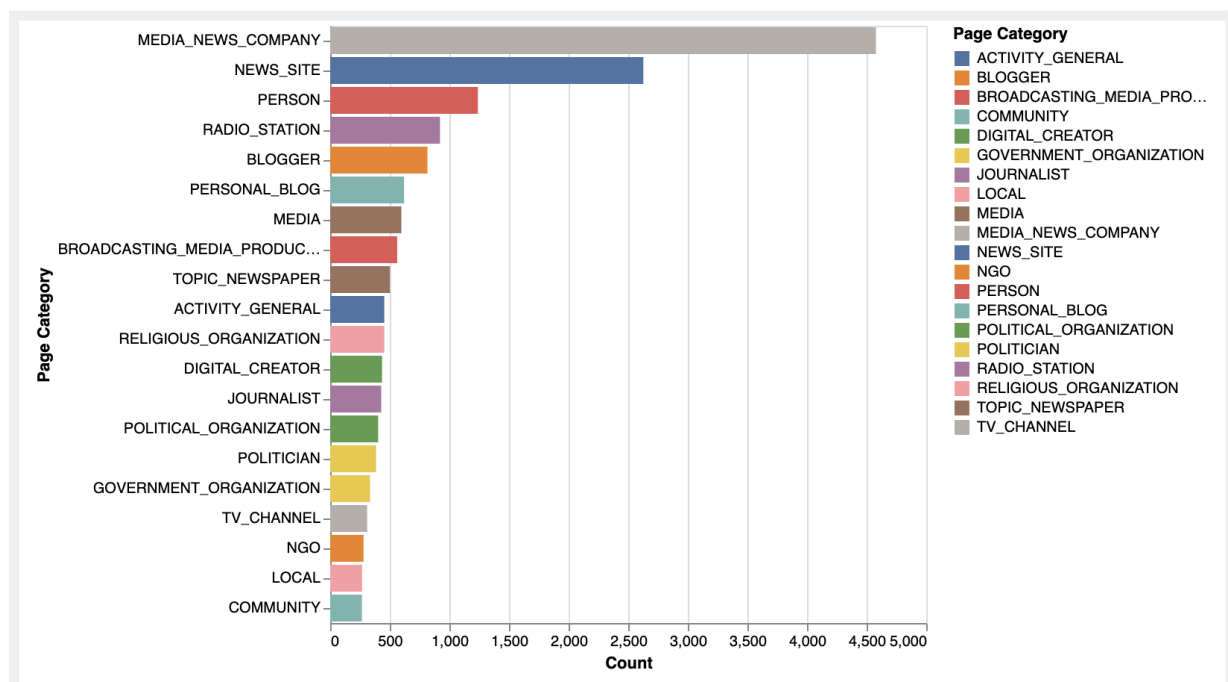
## 5. Noteworthy Actors

This section examines the key actors on social media that were most active over the review period, citing specific examples.

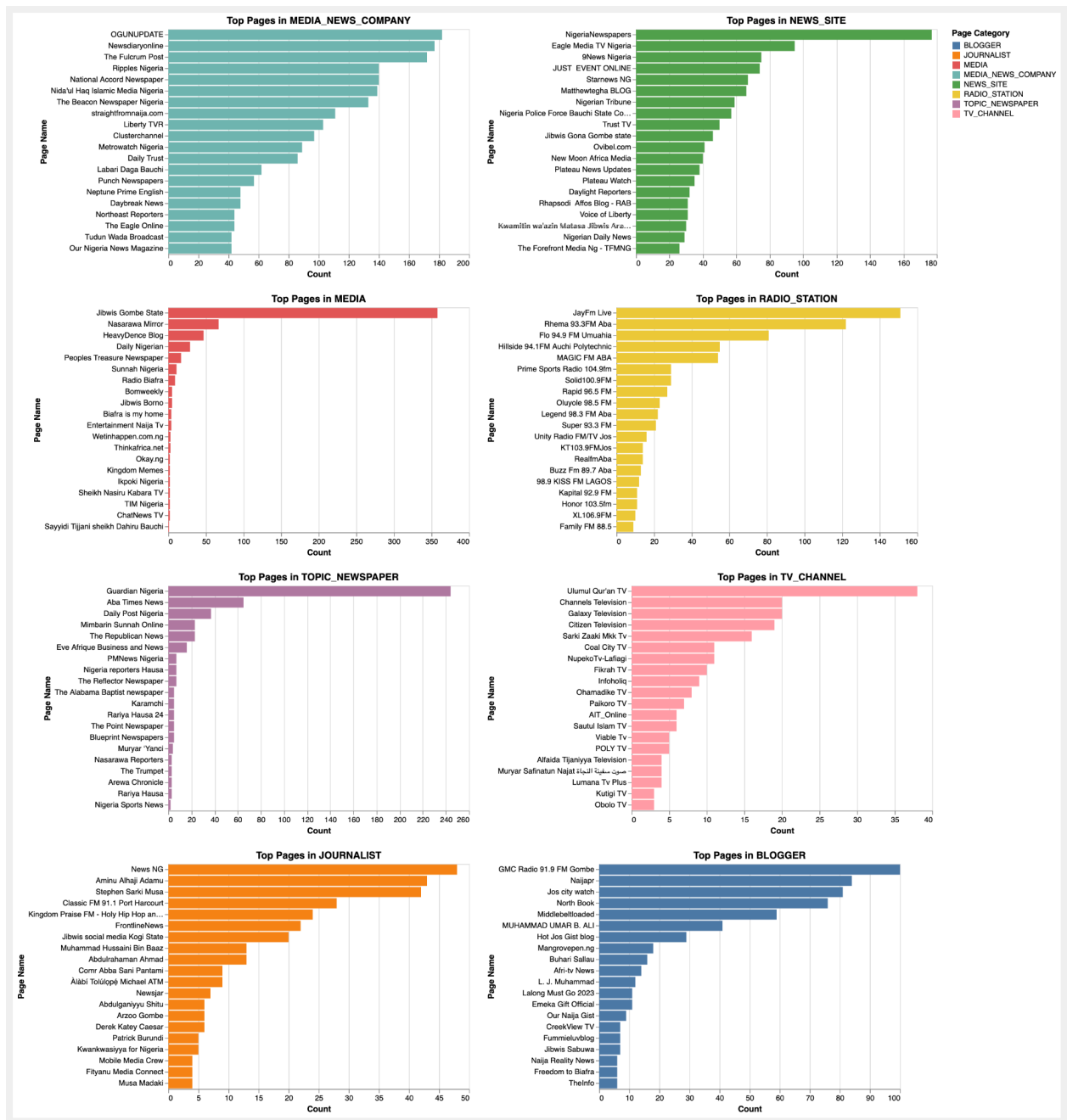
### 5.1. Key actors on Facebook

On Facebook, media-related pages, including media news companies, news sites, radio stations, and newspapers, dominate inter-religious discussions. These pages have the highest activity levels, reflecting their central role in the discourse.

Following media pages, individual or personal accounts, such as digital creators, bloggers, personal blogs, individual journalists (who are still media related), and individual profiles, are also highly active in sharing content about inter-religious issues. Religious organisations, government pages, and NGOs, along with local community-based accounts, participate but are less prominent. Notably, online audiences do not engage much with government, political, civil society, NGO, or religious organisation pages. This lack of engagement indicates the relatively low influence these pages have in shaping public opinion on inter-religious matters compared to media-related and personal accounts. Understanding these dynamics can help tailor communication strategies to effectively address and mitigate inter-religious conflicts in the three states and Nigeria as a whole.

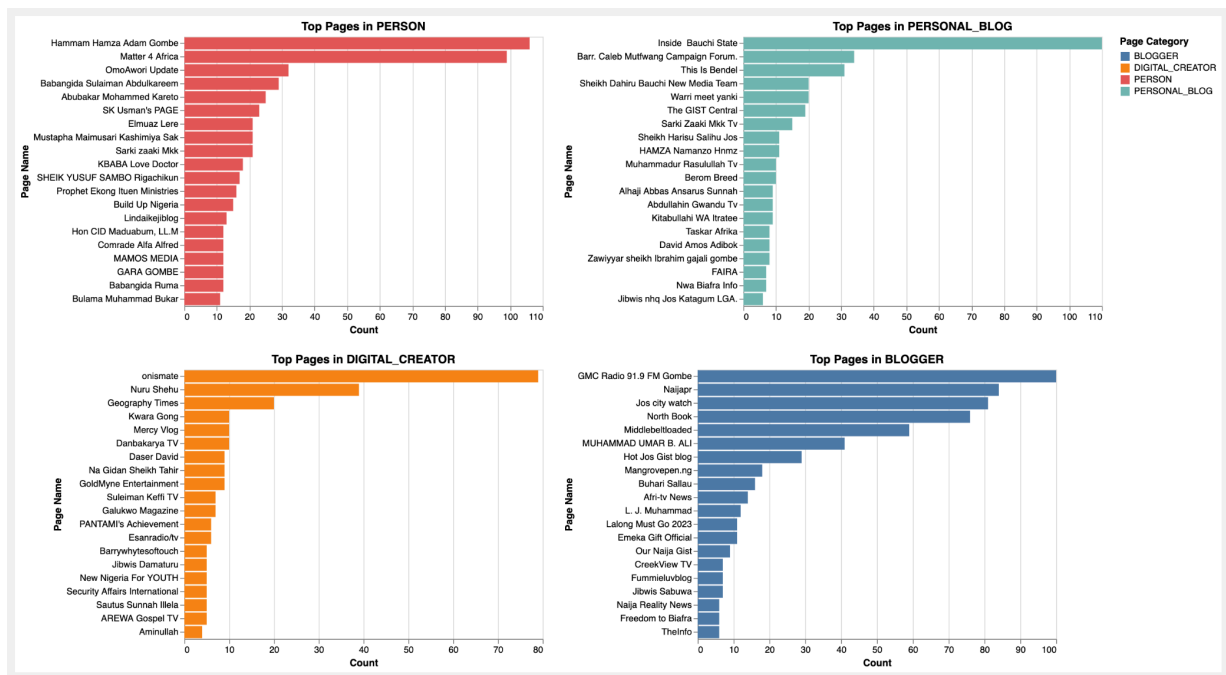


Media-related accounts include pages categorised as media news companies, news sites, radio stations, journalists, TV channels, newspapers and bloggers. Their dominance is likely due to their extensive resources and large audiences, which enable them to cover and disseminate information widely and quickly. The programme should therefore aim to target these types of pages to ensure visibility. Some of the pages that had the highest level of engagements in each category of media pages are shown below. The top five most dominant accounts across these media-related categories are: Ogunupdate, Nigeriannewspapers, Jay Fm Live, Guardian Nigeria, and Umaru Curler TV.



Personal or individual includes pages tagged as Person, Personal Blog, Digital Creator, and Blogger. These categories are dominant not only due to their engagement but also because some of these pages are media-related, amplifying their reach and influence. For example, pages like "GMC Radio 91.9 FM Gombe" under Blogger and "Muhammad Rasulullah TV" under Personal Blog can be media outlets in their respective categories.

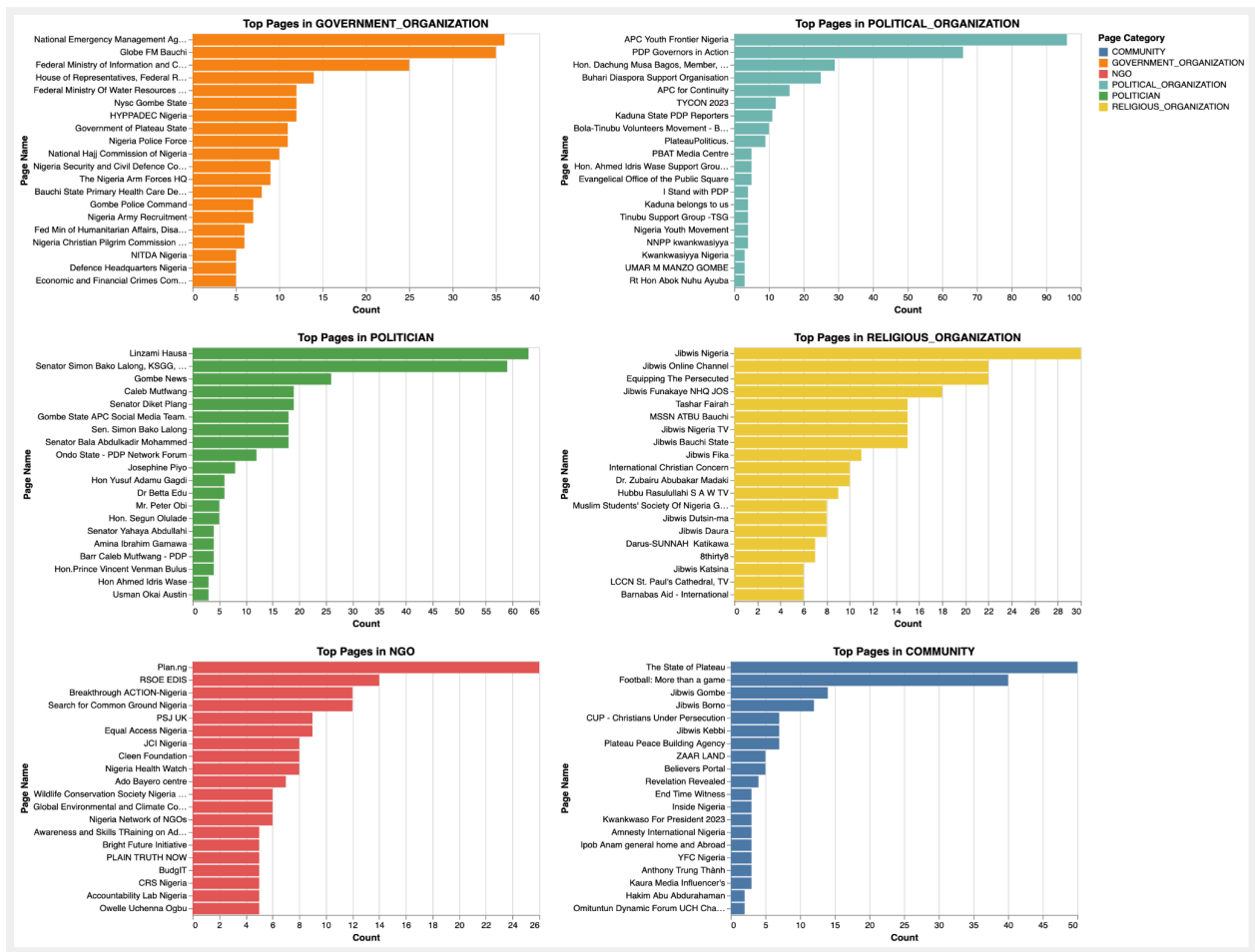
The top five most dominant accounts across these four charts are: Hammam Hamza Adam Gombe, Matter 4 Africa, Inside Bauchi State, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang Campaign Forum and GMC Radio 91.9 FM Gombe (Blogger). These accounts post a lot of content and are pivotal in driving discussions on inter-religious issues.



Finally, pages in other relevant categories include Government organisations, political organisations, politicians, religious organisations, NGOs, and communities. The most active government-related pages include the National Emergency Management Agency, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, and Federal Ministry of Water Resources. These pages are crucial for official updates and policies regarding inter-religious issues. Political organisation pages, such as APC Youth Frontier Nigeria and PDP G-Force, are also significant, often engaging in mobilising and advocating for their respective political agendas. Politician pages, like those of Lianzami Hausa and Senator Simon Bako Lalong, show high activity levels, indicating their role in shaping public discourse and policy responses to inter-religious conflicts.

NGO pages, such as Plan.ng and Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria, are active in grassroots initiatives and community-level interventions. These pages focus on promoting peace and addressing the root causes of inter-religious tensions through various programs and campaigns. The top five most dominant accounts across these categories are: APC Youth Frontier Nigeria (Political Organization), National Emergency Management Agency (Government Organization), Lianzami Hausa (Politician), Plan.ng (NGO) and The State of Plateau (Community).

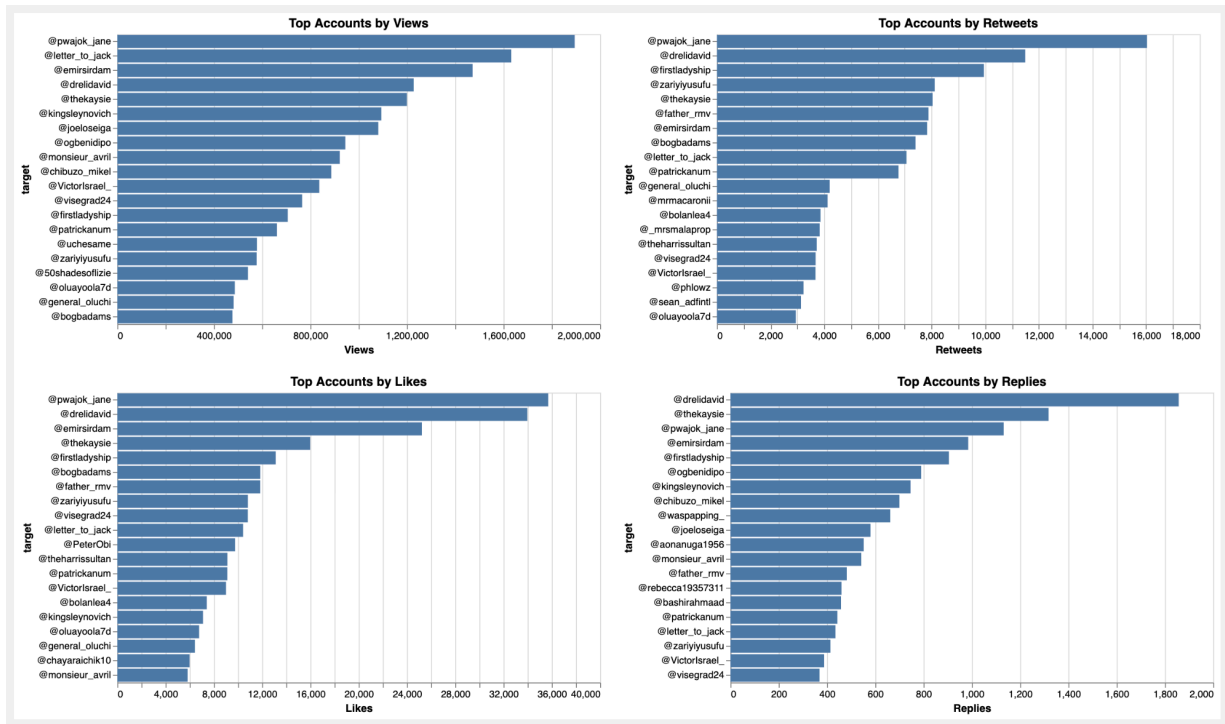
Below is a list of top pages identified in each category.



**Disclaimer:** It is important to note that 'Page Categories' are self-selected by users when creating a Page on Facebook. Consequently, some pages may be mislabelled and involved in activities or conversations that do not align with their assigned categories, potentially affecting the interpretation of the data.

## 5.2. Key actors on X

In the context of inter-religious dialogue related to Bauchi, Gombe, and Plateau states, influential X accounts play a crucial role in shaping and driving discussions. The charts below highlight the top accounts by various engagement metrics, including views, retweets, likes, and replies. These accounts, such as @pwajok\_jane, @dreildavid, and @firstladyship, have garnered significant attention and interaction, underscoring their impact on public discourse. Their ability to attract high engagement levels makes them instrumental in disseminating information, framing narratives, and influencing opinions on inter-religious issues within these regions. Leveraging their reach and engagement, could enable these accounts to contribute to the ongoing dialogue and efforts to address and resolve inter-religious tensions in Nigeria.



Here are a sample of account profiles for four accounts, and recommendations for possible engagement, as part of this project or for visibility of the project team. Similar assessments will be done to identify the top influencers to be engaged under the project:



The account's 44 tweets produced over the review period have received a total of approximately 1.8M views, 16K retweets, 35K likes and 1.8K replies.

High Following

High organic Engagement

This indicates significant engagement on its content which are primarily related to religious and ethnic attacks.

Recommended for Engagement

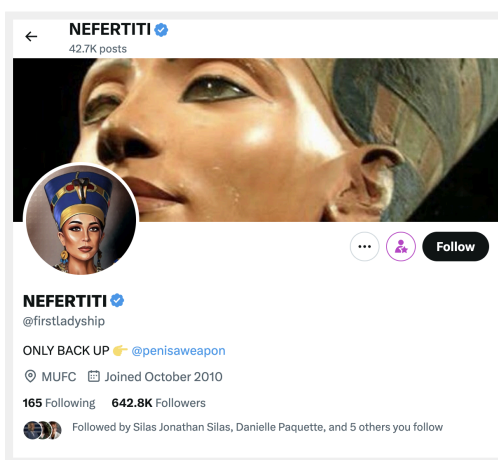


This is one of the top influential accounts on Twitter. His three replies on content highlighting the Fulani militia killing a Christian man in Plateau State and the Christmas Massacre received a lot of engagement, with over 1.2M views, 11K retweets, 33K likes and 1.8K replies.

High Following

High organic Engagement

Probably not possible to Engage



This account is also influential on Twitter. Its 11 tweets and replies highlighting failure of the government to deal with insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria received over 700K views, 9K retweets, 13K likes and ~900 replies.

High Following

High organic Engagement

Probably not possible to Engage



This account is also influential on Twitter. Its 13 tweets and replies highlighting the extremist attacks and insecurity situation in Nigeria received over 1.6M views, 7K retweets, 10K likes and 435 replies.

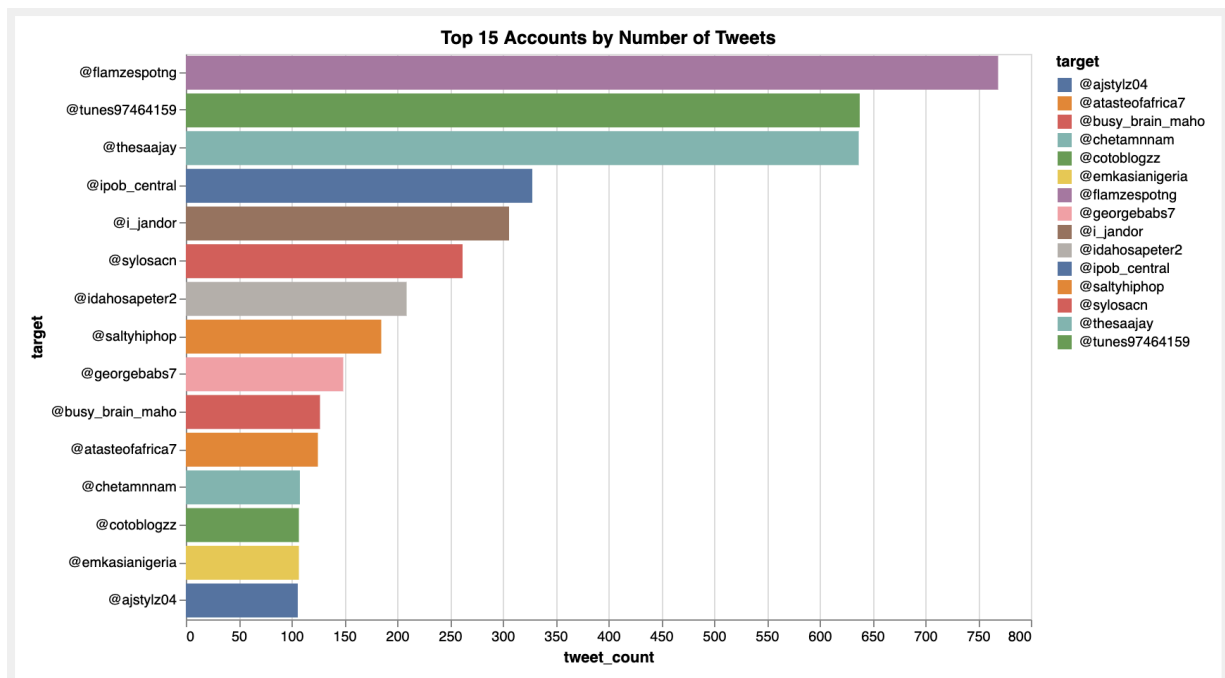
High Following

High organic Engagement

Recommended for Engagement

The following chart highlights the top 15 accounts that have posted the highest number of tweets within the inter-religious social media dataset obtained from X. These accounts have therefore been instrumental in driving conversations and shaping narratives related to inter-religious issues in Nigeria.

These accounts do not necessarily have the highest engagement on content, however, they could be suitable for amplifying content developed by micro/nano influencers. This is because they tend to share the highest number of content related to religious issues in the three states.



Here are the account profiles for the top four accounts and recommendations for possible engagement:



The account has produced over ~770 tweets over the review period primarily focused on re-sharing media reports of attacks in Plateau state.

Minimal Following

High organic Engagement

A background check might be required to validate additional information about the user.

Recommended for Engagement

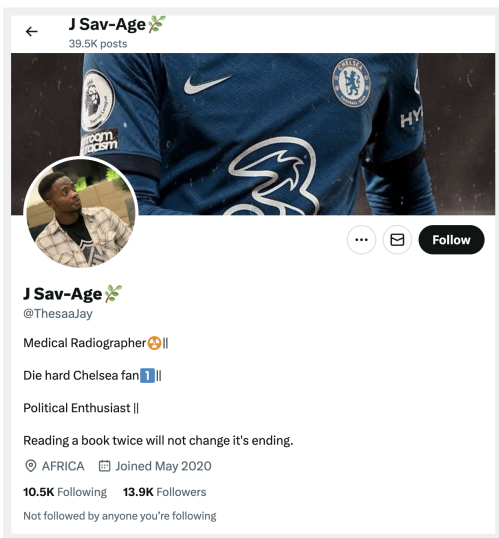


The account randomly tags trending topics, making it meet the search criteria in our dataset.

Minimal Following

High inorganic Engagement

*Not recommended for Engagement*



The account reshares its content in reply to multiple user posts to boost visibility of its post..

High Following

High inorganic Engagement

*Not recommended for Engagement*



An account associated with IPOB group. The account reshares its content in reply to multiple media/ user posts to boost visibility of its post..

Minimal Following

High inorganic Engagement

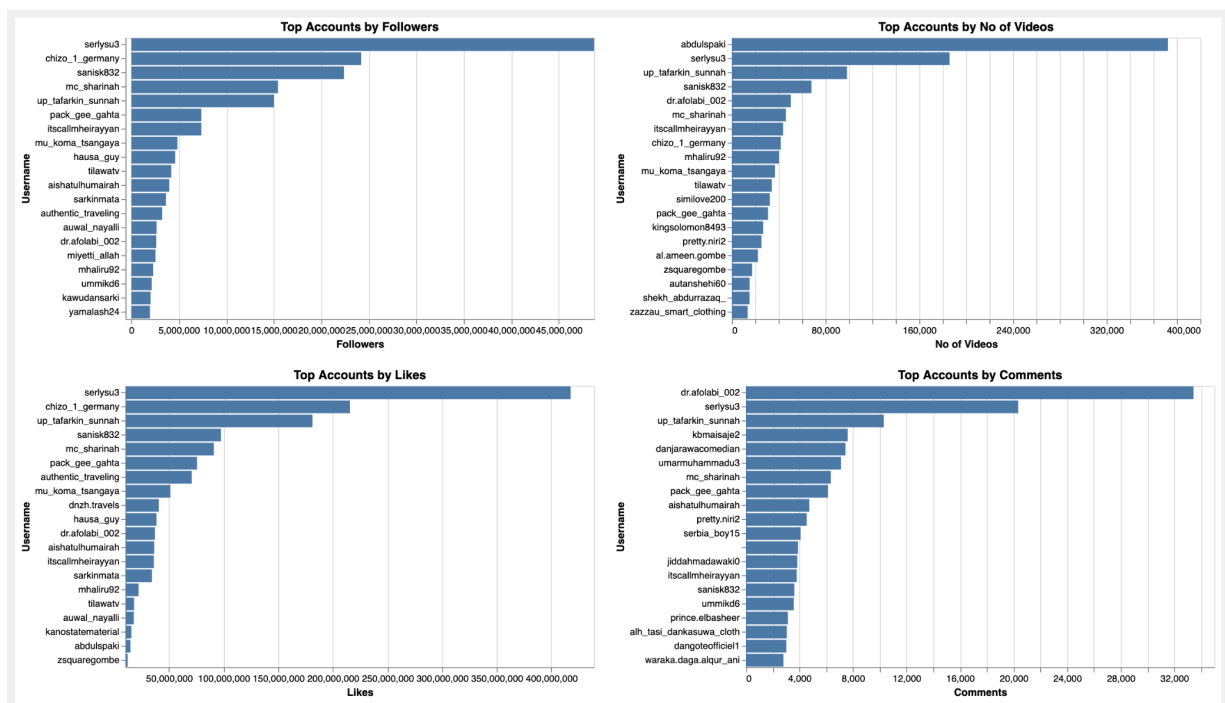
*Not recommended for Engagement*

### 5.3. Key actors on TikTok

TikTok has become an influential platform in Nigeria, including in states like Plateau, Gombe, and Bauchi. The platform’s popularity is evident in the rise of numerous Nigerian influencers who shape trends and engage with a large audience. Given its significant reach and impact, engaging with TikTok influencers, especially those who resonate with local communities, can be a powerful strategy for promoting interreligious dialogue and addressing social issues in these regions

TikTok data collection is difficult, therefore Build Up used Apify to scrape data using the following hashtags #BauchiTikTok, #GombeTikTok and #PlateauState from the platform. The following accounts have the highest level of engagement using these hashtags.

The charts below highlight the top accounts by various engagement metrics, including followers, number of videos, likes, and comments. These accounts, such as @serlysus3, @chizo\_1\_germany, and @sanisk832, have garnered significant attention and interaction, underscoring their impact on public discourse.



Since the accounts are not particularly sharing content related to religion in the three states, Build Up is conducting additional data analysis, to filter the content that can be considered relevant for our analysis, and subsequently select influencers that match the required profiles.

## 6. Recommendations

- 1) The team recommends in-depth social media listening through the dashboard to more intricately show patterns in narratives, and to show trends in engagement across full datasets from multiple platforms.
- 2) There is also a need for participation from the core team on SfCG’s side to uncover more specific topics, develop a problem statement for the dashboard-driven research, and therefore work with an effective data pipeline.

- 3) On the programmatic side, we encourage the ideation of community-centred initiatives that can respond to larger trends in polarisation found in the data upon uncovering them more clearly. The Build Up team looks forward to more targeted conversations on planning initiatives that can respond to harmful practices and polarisation online. Below are some examples of programmatic recommendations that can respond to key findings that will be elaborated in future reports and milestones of this engagement.
- a) Localised Digital Peacebuilding Initiatives: Invest in and support hyperlocal platforms that reflect the daily lives and concerns of Nigerian communities, as these platforms often succeed in organically bringing together diverse voices. Create spaces for community-specific dialogues that address issues such as misinformation and societal divides. This integrated approach not only facilitates local peacebuilding efforts but also promotes a sense of ownership among local communities, who are key in driving these dialogues and content creation on digital platforms.
  - b) Continuous Social Media Listening Efforts: Implement social media monitoring techniques to gain a deeper understanding of content trends. This should encompass both content creators and commenters to provide a holistic view of the digital landscape. Such monitoring is vital for gaining insights into social divides, tensions, and conflicts, reflecting offline realities. Reflecting on the report, recognizing how the online space contributes to and shapes these dynamics is crucial. This approach will enable stakeholders to identify and respond to evolving narratives, potentially mitigating conflicts and fostering more constructive online interactions.
  - c) Engaging with young and upcoming religious leaders, such as sheiks, presents a valuable opportunity for projects aimed at fostering inter-religious dialogue and peacebuilding. These leaders not only command respect and attention within their communities but also have a strong presence on social media, making them influential voices in both online and offline spaces. Collaborating with these religious figures will enable the project to leverage their platforms to promote messages of tolerance, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence, thereby amplifying its reach and impact during critical periods such as Ramadan and beyond.
  - d) Responding to religious polarization and anti-LGBT narratives online: Depending on what the key narratives are as uncovered in upcoming work, it is imperative to address and work on these divides with a combination of facilitative online practices, and uncovering any myths or stereotypes to be debunked for their contribution to mis and disinformation. The project team is encouraged to discuss addressing the complexities of religious cleavages and subsequent violence through youth-led digital narratives. It is crucial to support initiatives where youth can share stories and perspectives on tolerance and community integration, fostering a more nuanced understanding of its challenges and opportunities.

## 7. Appendix 1: Glossary: List of terms and definitions

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boolean                 | A search technique that uses Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) to limit or widen your search. Boolean operators define the relationship between your search terms, allowing you to refine and focus your results.                                                                                                            |
| ‘Dark social’ platforms | "Dark social" platforms refer to communication channels where content is shared privately and cannot be tracked by social media listening or traditional web analytics. This includes private messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, and Facebook Messenger, as well as direct messages on social media platforms. |
| Infomediaries           | These are actors/ entities that transmit information from online to offline spaces including local radio stations, religious leaders, social media influencers, and distributors of printed materials, who play a crucial role in amplifying digital narratives across the population.                                      |
| Peacebuilding           | Peace is not just the absence of violent conflict, but a society in which everyone can thrive. To build peace is to use non-violent means to reconcile differences and to collectively transform relationships and structures in a way that is inclusive, just, and sustainable.                                            |