

Trump says US military struck ISIS terrorists in Nigeria

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By  Kevin Liptak



President Donald Trump speaks at his Mar-a-Lago club, Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, in Palm Beach, ...



West Palm Beach, Florida — President Donald Trump said Thursday he'd ordered a deadly strike on Islamic State terrorists in Nigeria, who he has accused of persecuting Christians in the country.

In a post on social media, Trump said he'd directed a "powerful and deadly strike against ISIS Terrorist Scum in Northwest Nigeria," who he said had been killing innocent Christians.

US Africa Command said it conducted the strikes in Sokoto state, which borders Niger to the north, “in coordination with Nigerian authorities.” AFRICOM’s initial assessment is that “multiple ISIS terrorists were killed in the ISIS camps,” according to a news release.

In another statement posted to X on Thursday, which was later deleted, AFRICOM said it had conducted the attack at the request of Nigerian authorities.

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CNN has reached out to AFRICOM and the White House for additional comment. In a separate post on social media, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said he was “grateful for Nigerian government support & cooperation.”

In a statement shared with CNN, the Nigerian Foreign Ministry confirmed cooperation with the US on air strikes on “terrorist targets” and reiterated the country’s commitment to upholding the rights of all citizens, “irrespective of faith or ethnicity.”

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An image taken from video released by the US Department of Defense shows a strike on what President Donald Trump called "ISIS Terrorist Scum" is seen on Thursday, December 25. (*Dept. of Defense*)

Daniel Bwala, special advisor to Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, told CNN: "The US and Nigeria are on the same page in the fight against terrorism."

"I have previously warned these Terrorists that if they did not stop the slaughtering of Christians, there would be hell to pay, and tonight, there was," Trump wrote on Truth Social Thursday evening. "The Department of War executed numerous perfect strikes, as only the United States is capable of doing."

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“Under my leadership, our Country will not allow Radical Islamic Terrorism to prosper. May God Bless our Military, and MERRY CHRISTMAS to all, including the dead Terrorists, of which there will be many more if their slaughter of Christians continues,” concluded the president, who is spending the Christmas holiday at his estate in Palm Beach.

Trump has focused for the last several months on the plight of Christians in Nigeria, including calling in November on his secretary of defense to “prepare for possible action” and warning the US would enter Nigeria “guns-a-blazing” to protect the Christian population of Africa’s most populous country.

On Christmas Eve, Tinubu shared a “Christmas Goodwill Message” in which he wished Christians across his nation and the world a merry Christmas and prayed for peace among individuals of differing religious beliefs.

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“I stand committed to doing everything within my power to enshrine religious freedom in Nigeria and to protect Christians, Muslims, and all Nigerians from violence,” Tinubu said in a [post on X](#).

The West African nation has grappled for years with deep-rooted security problems that are driven by various factors, including religiously motivated attacks. Observers say other violent conflicts arise from communal and ethnic tensions, as well as disputes between farmers and herders over limited access to natural resources.

In the fall, Trump accused Nigeria of religious freedom violations claiming that “Christianity is facing an existential threat in Nigeria” and designating the nation as a “Country of Particular Concern” under the **International Religious Freedom Act**. The label is a suggestion that his administration has found that Nigeria has engaged in or tolerated “systematic, ongoing, (and) egregious violations of religious freedom.”

Both Christians and Muslims — the two main religious groups in the country of more than 230 million people — have been victims of attacks by radical Islamists, experts and analysts say.

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The plight of Nigeria’s Christians has been an animating subject for American conservatives for years, with some of Trump’s top allies, including Sen. Ted Cruz, in recent months calling for US intervention after claiming Nigeria’s government wasn’t doing enough to prevent attacks on Christians.

Trump has cast himself a peacemaker, and entered office vowing to limit US military intervention abroad. Since returning to power, however, he has also ordered strikes on Iran’s nuclear program and overseen a massive military buildup around Venezuela, with the threat of strikes on land there.

This story has been updated with additional details.

CNN’s Aleena Fayaz and Zain Asher contributed to this report.



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