



U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing

Religious Freedom, Violence, and U.S. Policy in Nigeria

Panel



Oge Onubogu is the director of the West Africa program at the U.S. Institute of Peace, where she leads programming in Nigeria, Coastal West Africa, Lake Chad Basin and the Gulf of Guinea. In this position, she provides leadership and oversees the design and implementation of projects to mitigate violent conflict, promote inclusion and strengthen community-oriented security by partnering with policymakers, civic leaders and organizations. Prior to joining USIP in 2015, she managed governance, citizen engagement, and election programs in countries across West and Southern Africa with the National Democratic Institute. Before that, she was the program officer for West Africa at the National Endowment for Democracy, where for several years, she oversaw and managed a multi-million-dollar grants portfolio to civil society organizations in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Cameroon. She has consulted for the World Bank, Freedom House, and the Carter Center. She has a bachelor's in international and area studies from the University of Oklahoma and a master's in international development from Brandeis University. She is also in the Public Leadership Credential program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.



Dr. Olusola O. Isola is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He was the Spring 2018 Visiting African Peacebuilding Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC, United States of America. His research interests strands the Media and Peacebuilding, Ethno-religious Conflicts, Security and Strategic Studies. During his last stay in Washington, he researched into how hate speech impacts on elections and did a comparative investigation of negative consequences of hate media on post-election peace building in Africa and America. He obtained a B.Sc (Hons) in Mass Communication from University of

Lagos in 1987; MA in Communication Arts from University of Ibadan in 1997 and Ph.D Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan in 2008. Dr Isola has authored and co-edited five books, including: *Mass Media and Election Violence* (2010); *Journalism Practice and Terrorism in Nigeria* (2015); *Communicating Peace and Conflict* (2016). He has published many researched articles in journals within Nigeria and internationally. His primary responsibility, apart from research, is teaching post-graduate classes and supervising MA and Ph.D research students.



Emmanuel Ogbudu is a humanitarian and development expert with nine years of experience providing technical expertise to multi-million-dollar donor-funded projects. He has a certification in Project Management, a B.Sc., and M.sc in Psychology. He is currently the Senior Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Manager for the Community Initiatives to Promote Peace Activity with Mercy Corps Nigeria. He is one of the lead researchers for the research on Religion, Identity, and Conflict in Northern Nigeria conducted in 2020. He has conducted a Youth-Led Action Research on violent extremism and is also leading a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) study for the CIPP

program on mediation and dialogue activity. Emmanuel also has extensive experience working to build the Project Management capacity of local agencies and government partners.



James Barnett is a researcher, journalist, and consultant based in Lagos, Nigeria, and a non-resident fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C. His work covers conflict, terrorism, and geopolitics, primarily in Africa. In 2021 he was a Fulbright fellow at the Institute of African and Diaspora Studies at the University of Lagos and he additionally holds a research fellowship with the Centre for Democracy and Development in Abuja, Nigeria, where he specializes in Nigeria's banditry crisis. In addition, James has consulted on Nigerian security issues with a variety of international NGOs and the diplomatic community. Prior to joining Hudson, James held research or analyst

positions with the United States Institute of Peace, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, and the American Enterprise Institute's "Critical Threats Project." He holds a B.A. with Highest Honors in

History and Plan II Liberal Arts Honors from the University of Texas at Austin and an MA with Distinction in War Studies from King's College London.