



U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing
Religious Freedom, Violence, and U.S. Policy in Nigeria

Opening Remarks as prepared for delivery

Nury Turkel, USCIRF Chair

Good morning and thank you for attending the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's hearing today on *Religious Freedom, Violence, and U.S. Policy in Nigeria*. I would also like to thank our distinguished witnesses for joining us.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, or USCIRF, is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, or IRFA. The Commission uses international standards to monitor freedom of religion or belief abroad and makes policy recommendations to the U.S. government. Today, USCIRF exercises its statutory authority under IRFA to convene this virtual hearing.

For today's hearing, we will be discussing the impact that instability and violence by nonstate actors is having on religious freedom conditions in Nigeria, and how the U.S. government can adjust its policy approach to ameliorate the situation for religious or belief communities in the country.

I will now turn it over to Vice Chair Cooper for his opening remarks.

Thank you, Vice Chair Cooper. Before we turn to our distinguished witnesses, I want to ask Commissioner Davie, who led the most recent USCIRF delegation to Nigeria this summer, to share some brief reflections from the visit to frame our discussion today. Commissioner Davie, the floor is yours.