

- WND - <http://www.wnd.com> -

## U.S. blocks Christian governor from Nigeria peace talks

Posted By [Michael Carl](#) On 03/28/2014 @ 8:47 pm In [Faith, Front Page, Politics, U.S., World](#) | [No Comments](#)

The United States Institute for Peace recently brought together the governors of Nigeria's mostly Muslim northern states for a conference in the U.S., but the State Department blocked the visa of the region's only Christian governor, an ordained minister, citing "administrative" problems.

The visa of Plateau State Gov. Jonah David Jang, has been held up by the Obama administration for more than a year, according to Ann Buwalda of the Jubilee Project, which focuses on Nigerian human rights.

Of the 19 states northern states, 12 have implemented Islamic law, or Shariah, noted Buwalda.

Jang's visa has been tied up in security background checks described as "administrative processing" since July 2012," she said.

"This is despite the fact that he has never violated the terms of his visa," Buwalda said.

The USIP confirmed that all 19 northern governors were invited, but the organization did not respond to requests for comments on holding the talks without the region's only Christian governor.

Emmanuel Ogebe, a human rights lawyer and counsel for the U.S. Nigeria law group, said the Christian governor's "visa problems" are because of bias in the U.S. government.

"The U.S. insists that Muslims are the primary victims of Boko Haram. It also claims that Christians discriminate against Muslims in Plateau, which is one of the few Christian majority states in the north. After the [governor] told them that they were ignoring the 12 Shariah states who institutionalized persecution ... he suddenly developed visa problems," he said.

While the State Department confirmed that the USIP conference took place, the federal bureaucracy there had no comment regarding Jang's visa issues, citing confidentiality rules.

Buwalda said it's not unusual for the U.S. government to exclude Christians in Nigeria discussions and meetings.

"My personal observation and view is that some staff within the [State Department] have an unbalanced perception that somehow raising the persecution of Christians minimizes the persecution of Muslims or even favors Christians over Muslims," she said.

Buwalda said that in the State Department's "current mandate to limit reporting to 'trends,' a distortion results in that the ongoing violence against Christians is underreported or not reported because it is not a new trend."

"Another contributing factor is the reporting efforts by some groups, including Western human rights reporting groups, to report only on acts of violence against Muslim communities often based on anecdotal information while whitewashing or ignoring the acts of violence perpetrated on the Christian minority community," she said.

She said she's found "in meetings that there is often a shallow or a distorted understanding of the dynamics on the ground relying on sources of information which are dubious and unreliable."

"It is our goal to provide accurate and factual reporting which truthfully describes acts of violence, the religious identity of the victims, and root causes which does not shy away from referencing the declarations of the persecutors as to why they are carrying out the acts of violence."

Center for Security Policy Senior Fellow Clare Lopez said that based on the administration's actions regarding Islamic issues, exclusion of the Christian governor is not a surprise.

"Remember how long it took for the State Department to add Boko Haram to the Foreign Terrorism

Organizations list? This is despite evidence of its relationships with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Shabaab," Lopez said.

She said the State Department "is steadfastly refusing to admit, even now, that Boko Haram's rampages against Christian communities in Nigeria have anything whatsoever to do with Islam."

Lopez said the Obama administration effectively is complicit with Islamic law.

"This [administration] knowingly and deliberately has subordinated its decision-making to the Islamic jihad and Shariah narrative," she said. "We know that all training that would educate DoS (DHS, DoD, DoJ, etc.) officials and employees on down to local law enforcement about the threat from Islamic jihad and Shariah systematically has been purged from the ... curriculum. Trainers and instructors who formerly taught such subjects are blacklisted," Lopez said.

Lopez emphasized that the administration's actions are deliberate and an abrogation of members' oaths of office, adding: "It may well be prosecutable – material support to terrorism as well as aiding and abetting the enemy in time of war."

The White House has not responded to WND's request for comment.

Buwalda said the U.S. government blames the Christians for the violence.

"In fact, unrelated to the governor's visa issue, three of our Nigerian colleagues including a former congresswoman from Plateau State and I participated in a Department of State meeting with high level officials last year in May or June [who] very bluntly declared how the governor of Plateau State was to blame for unrest in his state," Buwalda said.

"I was shocked at the hostility."

Ogebe wrote in his blog, "Justice for Jos," that Boko Haram has made clear that it will not attack mosques.

"Boko Haram has gone out of its way to emphasize that it does not attack Islamic places of worship. However it does assassinate Muslim critics after worship when they are vulnerable. Boko Haram's first attack inside a mosque in the five-year insurgency occurred in 2013. Their targets were Muslims who had cooperated with the authorities against the terrorists. It was not a random attack on Christians as has been the case," Ogebe wrote.

Ogebe said there are specific circumstances for Boko Haram to attack a Muslim.

"Recently, Boko Haram acknowledged killing a Muslim cleric who had been critical of them. It is likely the terrorists' first claim of responsibility for the killing of a fellow Muslim," Ogebe said. "The question remains – why is the U.S. downplaying or denying the attacks against Christians?"

To support the claim, Ogebe cites the executive summary of the State Department Human Rights report, which referenced Boko Haram violence but neglected to mention the victims' religious identity, except for the reference to a mosque attack.

"Throughout much of the country, Boko Haram perpetrated numerous killings and attacks, often directly targeting civilians," the summary said.

"During the year, the sect, which recruited child soldiers, claimed responsibility for coordinated assaults on social and transportation hubs in Kano; an attack on the town of Baga; multiple attacks on schools and mosques; an attack on the town of Benesheik; and the killing of government, religious, and traditional figures," the summary also said.

On Feb. 17, the terrorist group Ansaru, believed to be a Boko Haram faction, kidnapped seven foreigners in Bauchi State, he pointed out.

Ogebe emphasized the State Department frequently neglects to mention how many targets are Christian.

---

Article printed from WND: <http://www.wnd.com>

URL to article: <http://www.wnd.com/2014/03/u-s-blocks-christian-governor-from-nigeria->

**peace-talks/**

© Copyright 1997-2013. All Rights Reserved. WND.com.