

# NFL Star Benjamin Watson, Thought Leaders to Faith Community: Nigeria Needs Justice, Americans Must Help

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, October 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [International Committee on Nigeria \(ICON\)](#) convened NFL star Benjamin Watson, along with thought leaders Jonathan Stonestreet and Dr. David Anderson and Dr. Gloria Puldu of the Leah Sharibu Foundation today, to discuss the ongoing persecution of Nigeria's Christians. Their message was clear, Nigeria

“

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*Stephen Enada, co-founder of  
ICON*

needs justice and Americans must help. The group discussed things the U.S. faith community can do to achieve that goal.

“Whether it's in the U.S. or abroad, violations of justice are a threat to us all,” said NFL star Benjamin Watson. “Our common humanity necessitates intentional involvement. We have people in pain right now and we must protect them. We need to send a special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region to oversee efforts to restore peace, Beyond that, we as people of faith need stand together as

one unified body to support ministries on the ground and also actively advocate for justice and peace, not just in our own country, but in Africa and worldwide. We have voices, we need to use them.”

Since 2000, more than 90,000 innocent lives – mainly women and children – have been killed as a result of terrorist attacks throughout Nigeria. Astoundingly, ICON's tracker shows that nearly 3,000 more have been killed already this year. The violence has reached the threshold of genocide and is on track to become the Rwanda of this decade.

“The truth of the matter is that more people are talking about the atrocities in Nigeria, no one is arguing about what is happening, yet no one is stepping in to put a stop to the killing,” said Stephen Enada, co-founder of ICON. “Meanwhile, day after day, month after month, the death count is growing. It's unconscionable. Our leaders need to act and until that happens, we need to continue to tell them that this is critically important.”

The awareness event comes as violence in Nigeria continues to capture headlines worldwide as widespread protests against police brutality in Nigeria have turned violent. It's been alleged the

Nigerian government hired armed attackers to break up the protests injuring and even killing innocent people.

“Only an irresponsible government would hire people to engage its own citizens,” said Kyle Abts, co-founder of ICON. “Unfortunately, this attitude seems to be emblematic of the Buhari administration’s treatment of the Nigerian people which is why the United States needs to step-in to help stop the mass genocide taking place in the country.”

In December, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended designating Nigeria a Country of Particular Concern, effectively calling out the government for tolerating human rights and religious freedom violations, sending a strong signal that our government will not stand for these abuses. ICON and others close to the issue, including members of Congress and advocacy groups, say there is more to be done. Specifically, they’re asking President Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to appoint a special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.

Last month, ICON [released a survey](#) that found two-thirds of North Carolina voters are more likely to vote for President Trump if he sends a special envoy to Nigeria to address the persecution.

A special envoy is a senior official appointed by the U.S. Department of State to deal with a specific set of issues. In this case, the specific charge would be to oversee discussions with the Nigerian government to restore peace to the country. With the full backing of the U.S. government, the special envoy would have the power to hold perpetrators of religious violence and other crimes accountable.

“We cannot allow this to continue. Without intervention, I am confident Nigeria is headed down a road similar to Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Darfur, and Myanmar,” Enada explained. “This is one of the most consequential issues we face. It’s critical that we act now to move toward a more peaceful and unified Nigeria.”

[Click here](#) to view video from today’s awareness event.

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About International Committee on Nigeria (ICON)

International Committee on Nigeria is a consortium of Nigerians and other nationalities who have combined efforts to help Nigeria. Our mission is to create a community where rule of law guides every facet of societal interactions in Nigeria. ICON promotes human dignity, the right to live, religious freedom, and the protection of the vulnerable against all forms of persecution.

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