

MOTHERS' UNION - WAVE OF PRAYER LINK
KUTIGI DIOCESE
LOKOJA PROVINCE

Bishop - The Rt Rev Jeremiah Ndana Kolo

Kutigi Diocese is based in Kutigi Town and is in Niger State which has Minna as it's capital. CMS was first in the area in 1903. Niger State is the largest in Nigeria which has a total of 36 States. Niger State is named after its main river, the River Niger.

THE NIGER RIVER

The Niger River is a very important body of water located in West Africa. Approx 2600 miles in length it is the third longest river in Africa after the River Nile, 4100 miles and the River Congo, 2900 miles. The river has a presence in 5 West African countries; Guinea, Mali, Niger, Benin and Nigeria. The significance of the Niger River cannot be over emphasised. For centuries it has sustained powerful West African Empires such as the Old Ghana Empire, the Songhai Empire and the Mali Empire.



The source is in the Guinea Highlands near Kissidougou in south eastern Guinea, near the Sierra Leone border, 150 miles inward from

the Atlantic Ocean. The River runs in a crescent through Mali, Niger, on the border with Benin and then through Nigeria, discharging through a massive delta, known as the Niger Delta (or the Oil Rivers), into the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.

For centuries the Niger River has sustained a thriving population of animals such as Antelope, Elephants, Gazelles, Giraffes, Lions, Monkeys and Hyenas. Many of the 5 countries the River Niger passes through have built hydro electric dams; an important source of energy. Eg. Kainji 1968, Jebba 1985, Shiroro 1990 all in Niger State.

In addition to Fishing and Farming the Niger Delta has for decades been a big boost to the economy of Nigeria as it is an area rich with vast oil deposits. For this reason the area is sometimes called "Oil Rivers". It has been estimated that millions of barrels of oil get extracted on a daily basis in the Niger Delta.; this oil alone accounts for a huge portion of Nigeria's exports.

A PRAYER SUGGESTION FOR OUR MEMBERS IN NIGERIA

The persecution facing Christians in Nigeria is extreme and often brutally violent, as Islamic militants and armed bandits attack with increasing impunity. This mostly affects believers living in the Muslim-majority north and middle belt, but it's also spreading to the south. Although all civilians are subject to threats and violence, Christians are often specifically targeted because of their faith. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), for example, want to eliminate the presence of Christianity in Nigeria. More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than in the rest of the world combined - 14 every day on average.

Men and boys are often specifically targeted by extremist groups, with the aim of destroying livelihoods and stifling Christian population growth. Christian women and girls in Northern Nigeria, and increasingly further south, are vulnerable to persecution for their faith and gender - they are frequently targeted for abduction, sexual assault and forced marriages by armed groups. Christians are dispossessed of their land and their means of livelihood, and many live as internally displaced people or refugees.

In northern states that operate under Sharia (Islamic Law) Christians can be treated as second-class citizens, whilst Christians who convert from Islam are also at risk of pressure and persecution, Christians from a Muslim background also face rejection from their own families, pressure to give up their faith, and often physical violence.

PLEASE PRAY - Father God, the violence and brutality across Nigeria is unimaginable. Please intervene to stop these evil attacks and work in the hearts of the militants to turn them from hatred to your love. Heal your people who are traumatised by attacks. Give them fresh hope for the future and the means to support themselves financially and socially. Bring about change in the government to protect Christians, and help the president and state governors to work transparently to find lasting solutions to the deepening security crisis in Nigeria. In Jesus name, **Amen**