The Sokoto Caliphate's Hidden Holocaust, Finally Counted

NIGERIA: 222 YEARS, ONE MACHINE

Data Methodology and Sourcing White Paper

A Companion Document to the Interactive Timeline

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Executive Summary

This white paper documents the sourcing and methodology behind every cumulative figure presented in the interactive timeline "Nigeria: 222 Years, One Machine," covering three metrics tracked continuously from 1804 to 2026: persons killed, persons enslaved, and persons displaced. Its purpose is to make the evidentiary basis for each number fully inspectable — which figures are drawn directly from named historical events and official statistics, and which are derived estimates built to bridge gaps where no primary count exists.

The headline totals are as follows:

Metric	Total (2026)	Primary Composition
Killed	~4.3 million (range ~4.1–4.7M)	Named historical episodes + Biafran War (editorial position, § 3.3) + modern documented conflict deaths + raiding-capture mortality only (§ 3.2; deaths in bondage reported separately, not included)
Enslaved	~13.2 million (range ~11.7–16.0M)	Historical Caliphate-era stock-flow reconstruction + modern trafficking/abduction, GSI-covered slavery and jihadist captivity modeled as separate populations (§ 4) + Biafra-era sexual slavery
Displaced	~20.5 million reported displacement events / affected populations (distinct-persons figure unverified — see § 5.3)	Historical wholesale displacement (incl. a separate 1967–70 war-displacement wave, see § 6) + modern IDP figures, sourced directly to Intersociety's own published reporting

Table 1. Summary totals by metric.

Throughout this document, every figure is labeled by evidentiary tier:

- Tier 1 — Directly documented: a named historical event, an official statistic, or a figure published by a named, citable source (a government agency, an academic historian, an international NGO with public methodology).
- Tier 2 — Author-derived estimate with disclosed methodology: a figure calculated by the author using a stated, reproducible method and at least one Tier 1 input, clearly flagged as an estimate rather than a count.
- Tier 3 — Interpolation for chart continuity: a value inserted between two Tier 1 or Tier 2 anchor points solely to draw a continuous line on the chart, not independently sourced.

Readers should treat Tier 1 figures as the load-bearing evidence in this timeline, Tier 2 figures as transparent, labeled estimates suitable for illustrating scale and trend but not for citation as historical fact, and Tier 3 figures as visual scaffolding only.

1. Why This Document Departs From Official Government Figures

This document does not treat figures published or endorsed by the United States, United Kingdom, or Nigerian governments as the default baseline for the Biafran War death toll, and states that position openly here rather than leaving it implicit. This is not a general claim that governments lie about everything; it is a specific claim, backed by documentary evidence, that these three governments each have a demonstrated record of misrepresentation or non-accounting specifically regarding this conflict, and each had (and in Nigeria's case, continues to have) a material interest in minimizing it. The evidence for each is laid out below, with sources, so a reader can verify it independently.

1.1 United Kingdom: Documented Deception of Parliament, Tied to a Stated Financial Motive

Declassified British government files, reported on by historian and journalist Mark Curtis (drawing on UK National Archives records) and by the investigative outlet Declassified UK, show that Prime Minister Harold Wilson's government secretly and substantially increased arms supplies to the Nigerian federal government throughout the war, while denying to Parliament that anything had changed. On 16 May 1968, Wilson told the House of Commons: “We have continued the supply… of arms by private manufacturers in this country exactly on the basis that it has been in the past, but there has been no special provision for the needs of the war.” The declassified files show this was false — supplies were, in Curtis's words, being “massively stepped up” at the time.

The documented motive was explicitly financial. A senior official, George Thomson, privately advised Wilson that Britain could not withdraw support because doing so would put at risk “about £200 million of British investments in non-Biafra Nigeria,” and internal correspondence around the fall of Port Harcourt in mid-1968 noted that “having gone this far in supporting the FMG, it would be a pity to throw away the credit we have built up with them.” A further declassified file from mid-1968 — while the war's worst famine phase was still ahead — described a casualty estimate of 70,000–100,000 as “realistic,” a figure the government did not publicly revise upward as the toll grew into the hundreds of thousands and then millions.

This is not an allegation of hypothetical bias. It is a documented case of a head of government lying to his own Parliament, in writing, about British involvement in the specific conflict this document covers, with an explicit financial motive on the record in the government's own files.

1.2 United States: Documented Avoidance of the Term “Genocide” for Policy Reasons

The United States officially maintained a policy of neutrality toward the war, treating it as “essentially a Nigerian, African, and Commonwealth matter” — a position inherited from Britain's “One Nigeria” framing. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's own published research project, “By Any Other Name: U.S. Government Statements about Genocide,” lists Biafra among a small number of historical cases in which internal U.S. government deliberations specifically avoided or delayed use of the word “genocide” for policy reasons — a finding from a serious, non-partisan institutional source, not an activist one.

This avoidance occurred despite internal and quasi-official findings to the contrary: the International Committee on the Investigation of Crimes of Genocide, formed in response to a

Biafran government complaint, found evidence of genocide and genocidal intent against the Igbo. A 1969 U.S. Senate fact-finding mission led by Sen. Charles Goodell stated its purpose was to "fill America's factual void" on Biafra — an implicit acknowledgment, from within the U.S. government's own process, that official information channels up to that point were inadequate — and its report warned of "an indirect form of genocide." The official policy position did not reflect this.

1.3 Nigeria: A Postwar Policy Designed to Avoid Formal Accounting, With Present-Day Continuity

At the war's end, the federal government under General Yakubu Gowon adopted "No Victor, No Vanquished" as its official position — a reconciliation framing that scholarly treatments (e.g., Roy Doron's Biafra, a serious academic history published by a university press) explicitly characterize as designed "to minimize further conflict" rather than to produce a formal reckoning. No war crimes tribunal was convened. No independent federal casualty commission was ever established. Seized Igbo bank accounts were returned at a flat rate of £20 per account holder regardless of prior balance — a policy widely documented in Biafra historiography and treated in this timeline's own Eras record (§ 5).

This is not only a historical pattern. No Igbo head of state has led Nigeria since the war ended, in a country where Igbos are the third-largest ethnic group. The present Nigerian government continues to treat Biafra remembrance itself as a security matter rather than a subject of open historical reckoning — the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is proscribed as a terrorist organization, and its leader Nnamdi Kanu has been imprisoned on charges connected to Biafra advocacy. A government that structured its own postwar settlement specifically to avoid formal accounting, and that continues to criminalize the memory politics of the war today, has an ongoing, present-tense interest in the historical total remaining unresolved — not merely a decades-old one.

1.4 What This Document Does Instead

Given a documented record of parliamentary deception tied to financial interest (UK), documented internal avoidance of the term genocide for policy reasons (US), and a documented policy designed to prevent formal accounting, with present-day continuity (Nigeria), this document treats government-associated figures from all three states as informed by interested parties — a floor shaped by minimization pressure, not a neutral ceiling. It does not, however, swing to the opposite extreme and adopt the highest available number by default either. For Biafra specifically (§ 3.3), this document sets 3,000,000 as the stated middle position: above what interested governments have been willing to formally acknowledge, below the approximately 5,500,000 cited by some on-the-ground missionary and observer accounts. That reasoning is disclosed in full at § 3.3, with the same transparency applied to every other estimate in this document.

2. A Note on Reading the Interactive Chart

The interactive timeline this document accompanies is not a single static chart — each of the three metric panels (Killed, Enslaved, Displaced) rescales its own vertical axis to fit whatever year-range is currently in view. This is deliberate, and readers should understand it before drawing conclusions from any single screenshot or view.

2.1 Why the Vertical Scale Changes

These are cumulative totals, not annual figures. By 2009, the killed total already stood at roughly 6.5 million from historical events — so the actual 2009–2026 increase (about 190,000) is genuinely small against that backdrop, and a chart fixed to the full range will correctly show that period as nearly flat. That is an accurate representation at that zoom level, not an error. Once the view is zoomed to the 2009–Today window specifically, the vertical axis refits to that window's own range, and the same 190,000-person increase — including each Intersociety milestone — becomes clearly visible as a rising line. Both views are correct; they answer different questions ("how big is this against all of history" versus "what happened within this specific period").

2.2 The Four Preset Views

Four buttons jump to fixed ranges, each rescaling all three panels to fit:

- Full Timeline (1804–2026) — the complete picture, showing true relative scale across all 222 years.
- Biafra (1965–1970) — starts one year before the 1966 pogrom, so the pre-war baseline is visible alongside the war-era spike, not just the spike in isolation.
- 1960–Today (1959–2026) — starts one year before independence, same reasoning.
- 2009–Today (2008–2026) — starts one year before the Boko Haram insurgency began, so the pre-insurgency baseline is visible before the rise.

Each preset's start year is intentionally offset one year earlier than the nominal period it names, so that every zoomed view shows a flat "before" segment leading into the change, rather than a line that appears to start abruptly at the left edge of the frame with no baseline for comparison. This offset is a presentation choice for legibility; it does not change any underlying data point.

2.3 Manual Zoom

The zoom slider and +/− buttons rescale continuously rather than jumping between the four presets, and the vertical axis refits to whatever range is visible at every step. A screenshot taken at an arbitrary zoom level should be read with this in mind — the same data point can appear anywhere from imperceptible to dramatic depending solely on how the view is framed, which is an inherent property of visualizing cumulative totals spanning vastly different orders of magnitude, not a sign that the underlying numbers changed.

3. Killed: Cumulative Total ~4,260,896 (Central)

This metric tracks the cumulative number of persons killed as a direct result of violence — conquest, raiding, massacre, and war — associated with the Sokoto Caliphate and its successor Nigerian state, from the founding jihad of 1804 through March 2026.

3.1 Data Table (Central Scenario)

Year	Cumulative	Increment	Tier	Source / Event
1804	250,000	+250,000	2	Usman dan Fodio's jihad against the Hausa kingdoms; founding conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate. Widely repeated in general historical writing; no single precise scholarly citation exists for this exact aggregate figure, so it is held at Tier 2. Two additional real, individually-documented battle casualties from within this same conquest are not yet reflected in this figure: the Battle of Tsuntsua (Dec. 1804, ~2,000 dead on the Sokoto/allied side) and the Alwassa–Gwandu campaign (Nov. 1805, 1,000+ killed at Alwassa).
1810–1880	270,574 → 897,493	(gradual)	2	Raiding-capture mortality accruing continuously across the 19th century — see § 3.2. Decade-points are plotted so the chart's slope matches the underlying math.
1836	+25,000 at this point	+25,000	1	Battle of Gawakuke: Sokoto crushes a Gobir/Tuareg coalition. Wikipedia's article states two sources estimate 20,000–25,000 Gobir/Tuareg dead; the most specifically relevant works in its bibliography are Smaldone, Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate (Cambridge University Press, 1977) and Last, The Sokoto Caliphate (Longmans, 1967).
1890	1,037,900	(raiding-capture total reaches 762,900)	2	Raiding-capture mortality across 1804–1890 reaches its full central estimate here. See § 3.2 for methodology and the low/high range. Deaths in bondage are tracked as a separate figure, not included here — see § 3.2.
1903	1,038,700	+800	1	British conquest campaign: Battle of Sokoto (~100 killed, 15 Mar 1903) and the Burmi campaign (700+ killed, incl. Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru I).
1906	1,040,700	+2,000	1	Satiru massacre: British colonial forces suppress a Mahdist uprising near Sokoto, ~2,000 killed.
1953	1,040,746	+46	1	1953 Kano riot: 46 killed in four days of ethnic violence in Kano's Sabon Gari district.
1966	1,070,746	+30,000	1	Anti-Igbo pogrom: 30,000 killed across northern Nigeria — see § 3.3.
1970	4,070,746	+3,000,000	1	Nigerian Civil War (Biafra), 1967–1970: 3,000,000 dead — a deliberate middle position between distrusted government figures and higher observer accounts; see § 1 and § 3.3.
2009	4,070,746	+0	—	Baseline year for the modern Intersociety cumulative count (Boko Haram insurgency begins).
Dec 2020	4,105,146	+34,400	1	Intersociety cumulative milestone: 34,400 Christian deaths since 2009.
Jul 2021	4,142,746	+37,600	1	Intersociety cumulative milestone: 72,000 total deaths since 2009 (~43,000 Christian + ~29,000 moderate Muslim).
Apr 2023	4,156,996	+14,250	1	Intersociety cumulative milestone: ~86,250 total deaths since 2009 (~52,250 Christian + ~34,000 moderate Muslim).
Aug 2025	4,255,755	+98,759	1	Intersociety cumulative milestone: 185,009 total deaths since 2009 (~125,009 Christian + ~60,000 moderate Muslim).

Year	Cumulative	Increment	Tier	Source / Event
Mar 2026	4,260,896	+5,141	1	Intersociety's most recent cumulative count: 190,150 total deaths since 2009 (128,750 Christian + 61,400 moderate Muslim).

Table 2. Killed — full cumulative series with tier classification (central scenario).

3.2 Methodology: Raiding-Capture Mortality, and Deaths in Bondage

The largest variable component of the killed total — approximately 762,900 of ~4.26 million in the central scenario — is not a historical count but a disclosed, reproducible estimate covering the 1804–1890 buildup of the Caliphate's enslaved population.

What is, and is not, counted as "killed"

This metric counts violent death only: raiding-capture mortality, named battles, massacres, war, and documented modern conflict deaths. It does NOT count deaths in bondage from natural or incidental causes — a person enslaved at twenty who died of old age at seventy was not "killed…as a direct result" of the conquest or slave system in the ordinary sense that phrase carries. Deaths in bondage are real, substantial, and separately documented below, but they are a different kind of harm from violent killing and are reported on their own terms rather than folded into this total.

An explicitly ATTRIBUTABLE estimate — the excess mortality specifically caused by enslavement, above a free-population baseline — would be the more precise quantity, but no age-specific historical baseline mortality rate exists for a comparable free West African population in this era to compute it. Reporting all-cause bondage mortality as its own separate, clearly-labeled figure (below) is the more defensible choice given what can actually be sourced.

Raiding-capture mortality (the only channel counted as Killed)

Hamman Yaji's diary — Emir of Madagali in the Adamawa Emirate, part of the Sokoto Caliphate's own emirate structure — documents 200 killed against 2,016 captured over 100+ raids, analyzed in peer-reviewed scholarship (Van Beek, W.E.A., "Intensive Slave Raiding in the Colonial Interstice: Hamman Yaji and the Mandara Mountains," Journal of African History 53:3 (2012), 301–323) — a documented ratio of 0.10 killed per person captured. Van Beek's own title states his subject is raiding in the colonial interstice: Yaji's diary runs 1912–1927, decades after the 1903 conquest, under firearms and colonial-frontier conditions. This is used as a proxy for 1804–1890 pre-colonial jihad-era raiding — a different period under different conditions, disclosed here rather than left for a reader to discover by pulling the source.

Since this ratio measures deaths during a raid specifically, it cannot describe children born into the existing enslaved population. A disclosed births-share (10% low, 20% central, 35% high) excludes an estimated portion of cumulative entries before the ratio is applied — grounded in two facts established elsewhere in this document: Sokoto's 19th-century stock growth is attributed by Lovejoy and Salau primarily to continuous, documented raiding rather than natural increase, and the umm al-walad doctrine specifically frees children born to a concubine by a free father, removing a pathway that would otherwise produce births into slavery. Both facts push the births-share down, not up.

Captures-only denominator (central): 6,357,500 × (1 − 0.20) = 5,086,000. The documented Yaji ratio (0.10) anchors the LOW scenario; CENTRAL uses 0.15 (a modest, disclosed adjustment for

likely undercounting in a raider's own diary, not a tripling); HIGH uses 0.30 (the outer bound). Applied (central): 5,086,000 × 0.15 ≈ 762,900 raiding-capture deaths.

Deaths in bondage (documented separately — NOT part of the Killed total)

People who survived capture, entered the enslaved population, and then died — of any cause, including but not limited to conditions attributable to bondage — while still enslaved. Of the ~4,407,500 people who cumulatively exited the 1804–1890 stock (via death, escape, or manumission), this document estimates 55% central (40–75% range) died in bondage rather than being freed or escaping: approximately 2,424,125 people (low ~1,763,000; high ~3,305,625). The scale of premature death among an enslaved population approaching 2,000,000 at its peak is not a minor historical footnote, and is disclosed here as a genuinely important figure — but it is reported on its own terms, not as part of a metric about violent killing. Readers who want a combined "total harm" figure spanning both violent death and death in bondage can add this to Table 2's total directly; this document does not perform that addition itself, since the two are different kinds of harm.

Combined total and the range

Scenario	Births share	Ratio	Raiding-capture deaths	Total killed, 2026	Deaths in bondage (separate, not in total)
Low	10%	0.10	~572,175	~4,070,171	~1,763,000
Central (charted)	20%	0.15	~762,900	~4,260,896	~2,424,125
High	35%	0.30	~1,239,712	~4,737,708	~3,305,625

Table 3. Killed — low/central/high scenarios, with deaths-in-bondage reported alongside but excluded from the total.

The fixed, directly-documented components (named battles, the pogrom, Biafra, the modern Intersociety count) total 3,497,996 regardless of which scenario is used. This range varies only the 1804–1890 raiding-capture model's parameters while holding Biafra fixed at exactly 3,000,000 — § 3.3 documents real uncertainty in the Biafra figure itself (roughly 2–5.5 million around the stated center). Combining both sources of uncertainty widens the picture to roughly 3.1–7.2 million. This document reports the narrower, Biafra-fixed range on the chart and in Table 3 because Biafra is a fixed editorial position (§ 3.3), not a modeled variable.

On the double-counting concern between 1804 and the raiding-era model

The 250,000 founding-jihad figure (1804–08) and the raiding-capture model (1804–1890) cover overlapping years by construction. These represent conceptually distinct categories — 250,000 is intended to capture deaths from the conquest war itself, while the raiding-era model captures deaths from the separate, ongoing enterprise of slave-raiding to build the plantation economy — but a small number of deaths in the earliest years plausibly belong to both categories at once and may be counted twice. This document does not attempt to net out that overlap, since neither figure is precise enough to support a confident adjustment; it is disclosed here as a source of (likely modest) upward bias.

3.3 Editorial Positions: Biafra and the 1966 Pogrom

Two of the largest fixed components in Table 2 reflect a stated editorial position rather than a single cited source, following the evidentiary case laid out in § 1 for why government-associated figures on

this conflict specifically should not be treated as a neutral baseline. That position is disclosed here in full rather than left implicit.

- Biafra (1970): 3,000,000. Per § 1, this document treats US, UK, and Nigerian government figures on Biafran War mortality as informed by documented, sourced records of misrepresentation and non-accounting specific to this conflict — not a neutral baseline. On-the-ground missionary and observer accounts run as high as approximately 5,500,000. The published academic range is wider than either pole and is named explicitly here rather than gestured at: Heerten and Moses (2014) place the war's death toll in the range of roughly 500,000 to 2,000,000 in their scholarly treatment of the Biafran genocide question, while other characterizations of this same war circulating alongside this project have separately held that “three million is where the historians sit.” Those two characterizations disagree with each other, not just with this document's figure; both are named here rather than silently reconciled. 3,000,000 sits above the Heerten and Moses academic range and is disclosed as a chosen center between distrusted low-end figures and higher-end observer testimony, not as the scholarly consensus point estimate.
- 1966 pogrom: 30,000. Consistent with contemporary accounts of organized killing across northern Nigeria in the months preceding the war; treated with the same disclosed-position framing as Biafra, though with less documented spread in cited figures.

4. Enslaved: Cumulative Total ~13,242,446 (Central)

This metric is deliberately constructed as a cumulative, additive count — the total number of distinct persons enslaved across the 222-year span, including turnover (persons who died, were freed, or were replaced by newly captured persons), rather than a point-in-time census of how many people were in bondage at a single moment.

4.1 Data Table (Central Scenario)

Year	Cumulative	Increment	Tier	Source / Basis
1804	50,000	+50,000	2	Initial jihad-era captures; author estimate for the founding year, order-of-magnitude only.
1810–1880	221,453 → 5,237,442	(gradual)	2	Cumulative-entries curve using the same stock-flow calculation as § 3.2 (20yr central duration-in-bondage, applied to the real Lovejoy/Salau stock curve 50,000→2,000,000). Decade-points are plotted so the chart's slope matches the underlying math.
1890	6,407,500	(cumulative entries reach 6,357,500 above the 1804 base)	2	Lovejoy and Salau document the Caliphate's enslaved STOCK exceeding 2,000,000 at its 19th-century peak (Tier 1) — roughly half the total population. That 2,000,000 is a point-in-time figure; this cumulative-flow total (6,407,500) counts everyone who ever passed through bondage by this point. See § 4.2.
1903	6,857,500	+450,000	2	Trans-Saharan export stream: captives leaving the domestic stock via export (not death), 3,000–6,000/year sustained roughly a century.
1940	7,057,500	+200,000	2	Residual allowance: chattel slavery in Nigeria persisted in practice into the 1930s–1940s despite formal abolition efforts beginning in the 1900s.
1960	7,057,500	+0	—	Flat; no documented addition through independence.
1970	7,097,500	+40,000	3	Biafra-era sexual slavery/abduction — see § 4.4.
2009	7,347,500	+250,000	2	Modest allowance for early modern trafficking growth prior to the Boko Haram insurgency.
2018	9,842,998	+2,495,498	2 (anchored to 1)	GSI-covered slavery (forced labor and forced marriage, non-conflict) via stock-flow from an estimated 2009 starting stock (~300,000, a rough backward extrapolation) to the Index's real 2018 point-in-time figure (1.3 million), using a 5-year central duration for these specific forms — plus a proportional share of Intersociety's own directly-documented jihadist abduction count since 2009 (~131,100 total, Tier 1). See § 4.2–4.3.
2021	11,039,610	+1,196,612	1 (anchored)	GSI-covered component via stock-flow between the Index's two real point-in-time anchors (1.3M 2018, 1.6M 2021, both explicitly excluding Boko Haram/ISWAP captives), plus a further proportional share of the jihadist abduction total.
2026	13,242,446	+2,202,836	2	GSI-covered component extrapolated forward from the 2018→2021 Index growth rate, plus the full remaining balance of Intersociety's ~131,100 jihadist-abduction count. Not itself a Global Slavery Index figure — an extrapolation from one, combined with a real, separately-sourced count for the population GSI excludes.

Table 4. Enslaved — full cumulative series with tier classification (central scenario).

4.2 Methodology: Two Populations, Modeled Separately for the Modern Era

The modern era (2009–2026) is modeled as two distinct populations rather than one, because they are genuinely different in kind and the sources available for each are different:

- GSI-covered slavery (forced labor and forced marriage, non-conflict): real Global Slavery Index stock anchors (1.3 million in 2018, 1.6 million in 2021), converted to a cumulative-flow total using a 5-year central duration (3–8 year range) justified for these specific forms. Forced labor and especially forced marriage often persist considerably longer than acute conflict captivity, since forced marriage in particular frequently has no clean exit point the way debt-bondage labor sometimes does.
- Jihadist captivity (a population the Global Slavery Index's own methodology explicitly excludes): rather than infer this from a stock-flow model of a population it isn't part of, this uses Intersociety's own directly-documented cumulative abduction count since 2009 (~131,100, Tier 1) — a real count of exactly this population, distributed proportionally across the modern-era chart points to match the GSI curve's own growth shape.

2009's starting GSI stock (~300,000) is a disclosed rough backward extrapolation — no GSI data exists that early in the insurgency. For 1890–2009, this document does not apply a duration-based turnover multiplier to the historical stock curve: the 20-year buildup-era rate reflects continuous aggressive new capture, which Lovejoy and Hogendorn's own scholarship (Slow Death for Slavery) documents was being actively suppressed under British colonial legal reform after 1903. This middle period instead uses the real stock trajectory plus the separately-justified discrete additions in Table 4 (export stream, residual, Biafra-era estimate, modest pre-Boko-Haram growth).

On births into slavery

A child born to enslaved parents is enslaved — this document counts such children as part of the cumulative-ever-enslaved total. The cumulative entries figure should therefore be read as “everyone who was ever enslaved,” not “everyone who was ever captured in a raid.” Those are two different quantities, and the two metrics in this document use them differently, on purpose: the enslaved total (§ 4) uses the full entries figure, because a child born into bondage was enslaved; the killed metric's raiding-mortality ratio (§ 3.2) is applied only to the estimated captures portion, because a ratio measuring deaths during a raid cannot describe a birth.

4.3 Low/Central/High Range

Scenario	Hist. duration	Modern duration (GSI-covered)	Jihadist component	Total enslaved, 2026
Low	30yr	8yr	131,100 (fixed, Tier 1)	~11,706,965
Central (charted)	20yr	5yr	131,100 (fixed, Tier 1)	~13,242,446
High	15yr	3yr	131,100 (fixed, Tier 1)	~15,972,190

Table 5. Enslaved — low/central/high scenarios.

The jihadist-captivity component (131,100) is fixed across all three scenarios, since it is a directly-documented Tier 1 count rather than a modeled quantity — only the GSI-covered component's duration assumption varies.

4.4 Methodology: Biafra-Era Sexual Slavery (Tier 3 — the weakest-footed figure in this document)

Contemporary and postwar academic accounts — studies of prolonged federal-occupation zones (particularly Nkanu/Enugu after the fall of the Biafran capital) and accounts from Asaba and other overrun towns — describe the abduction, forced "marriage," and rape of Igbo women and girls by federal troops as widespread and systematic during the 1967–1970 war. A postwar ICRC-linked survey found that 47 percent of respondents in the southeast said they personally knew someone well who had been raped, versus 7 percent in the rest of Nigeria — strong evidence of dramatically elevated prevalence relative to other regions, but a prevalence indicator, not a victim count.

No source produces a verified total. Unlike more recent African conflicts (Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Boko Haram period), the Biafran War generated no systematic postwar accounting of sexual violence victims. The qualitative literature converges on language of "thousands, scores of thousands" of women and girls.

A network-size calculation from the ICRC-linked survey (population × excess prevalence ÷ an assumed number of people who would personally know a given victim well) was considered and rejected: the result swings from roughly 70,000 to over 280,000 depending entirely on the assumed network-size parameter, which has no empirical basis specific to this context. A calculation that swings four-fold based on an unfounded assumption is not more rigorous than using the literature's own qualitative range directly.

40,000 is used instead as a direct, order-of-magnitude reading of the literature's own "tens of thousands" characterization. This is the least rigorously grounded figure in this entire document. It is included, rather than omitted, because the underlying phenomenon is real and extensively attested, and a chart that showed zero would misrepresent the record as thoroughly as an invented precise figure would. Readers citing this document should attribute this specific figure to "literature-based order-of-magnitude estimate," not to any named historian, survey, or statistical source.

5. Displaced: ~20,500,000 Reported Displacement Events / Affected Populations

This metric tracks the cumulative number of reported displacement events and affected populations arising from conquest, communal violence, and armed conflict, from 1804 to 2026. It is deliberately NOT labeled a distinct-persons figure: as § 5.3 discusses, some individuals were plausibly displaced more than once (the 1966 pogrom exodus and the 1967–1970 wartime displacement being the clearest case), and this document has not attempted an overlap adjustment to convert reported events into a verified count of unique people. Readers wanting a distinct-persons estimate should apply their own overlap discount to the figures below; this document reports what is actually documented — events and affected populations as sources describe them — rather than presenting an unadjusted additive sum as if it were a precise headcount of individuals.

5.1 Data Table

Year	Cumulative	Increment	Tier	Source / Basis
1804	150,000	+150,000	3	Rough order-of-magnitude allowance for conquest-era displacement; no precise historical count exists for this period.
1890	900,000	+750,000	3	Rough allowance for ongoing Caliphate-era raiding displacement across the 19th century; not independently sourced.
1903	1,000,000	+100,000	3	Allowance for displacement during the British conquest campaign.
1966	2,500,000	+1,500,000	1	1966 anti-Igbo pogrom: contemporary accounts describe "one to two million" survivors fleeing south; the midpoint of that range is used here.
1970	5,500,000	+3,000,000	1	Separate, additional wartime displacement (1967–70): as the federal army advanced — Enugu (Oct. 1967), Calabar, Port Harcourt (May 1968) — the shrinking Biafran enclave absorbed successive waves of people fleeing the front line. Independently cited at approximately 3,000,000 Igbo refugees (EBSCO Research Starters, "Nigeria-Biafra Civil War Ends" and "Biafra's Secession Triggers Nigerian Civil War"). This is in addition to, not a repeat of, the 1966 pogrom exodus above. See § 5.2.
2009	5,500,000	+0	—	Baseline preceding Intersociety's own "since 2009" displacement count.
2014	8,500,000	+3,000,000	3	Interpolated point bridging the 2009 baseline toward the sourced 2025 anchors below; not independently sourced for this specific year.
2018	11,500,000	+3,000,000	3	Interpolated, as above.
2021	14,500,000	+3,000,000	3	Interpolated, as above.
Apr 2023	16,000,000	+1,500,000	3	Interpolated, as above.
Aug 2025	17,500,000	+1,500,000	1	Newsweek, August 2025, citing Intersociety directly: "the violence has displaced at least 12 million Christians since 2009." (5,500,000 pre-2009 baseline + 12,000,000 = 17,500,000.)
Nov 2025	20,500,000	+3,000,000	1	Catholic World Report, November 2025, citing Intersociety's subsequent updated report: "an estimated 15

Year	Cumulative	Increment	Tier	Source / Basis
				million people" displaced since 2009, "mainly Christians." (5,500,000 + 15,000,000 = 20,500,000.)
2026	20,500,000	+0	—	Held at the most recent sourced figure.

Table 6. Displaced — full cumulative series with tier classification.

5.2 The 1966 Pogrom and the 1967–1970 Wartime Displacement Are Two Distinct Waves

The pogrom flight south (1966, before the war began) and the wartime displacement caused by the federal army's advance through Biafra (1967–1970, after the war began) are two distinct events, separated in time and cause, and are counted as separate additive lines rather than merged into one. Multiple independent sources describe the wartime displacement specifically as involving approximately 3,000,000 Igbo refugees. One caveat this document states plainly rather than glosses over: two distinct displacement EVENTS do not guarantee two entirely non-overlapping sets of PEOPLE — some individuals displaced by the 1966 pogrom may also have been among those displaced again as the war advanced. This document counts the events as reported, additively, and has not attempted an overlap adjustment to arrive at a distinct-persons figure; § 5.3 addresses this ambiguity directly and it should be read alongside this figure.

5.3 Further Methodology Note

Unlike the killed and enslaved metrics, the displaced total is anchored primarily to two directly-quotable news citations of Intersociety's own reporting (Table 6, Aug/Nov 2025 rows), rather than to a single official Intersociety publication accessed directly. The 2014–2023 interpolated points exist solely to draw a continuous line between the 2009 baseline and the 2025 anchors and should not be read as independently documented figures for those specific years. Intersociety's own reporting on this metric has varied across publications (figures ranging from approximately 5 to 15+ million have appeared in different releases); this document uses the two most specific, directly quotable citations available and notes the gap between them as evidence of genuine reporting variance rather than resolving it artificially.

6. Note on the Enslaved / Displaced Figure Pairing

Two previously published pieces by the author ("Today's Hidden Holocaust" and the NGOSHE briefing) cite the paired headline figures "10 million enslaved, 25 million displaced." Neither of this document's current, independently-derived totals matches either figure from that original pairing: the displaced total (§ 5) comes to approximately 20.5 million, and the enslaved total (§ 4) comes to approximately 13.2 million. Both are lower than the 25 million figure originally attached to enslaved, and displaced (20.5M) sits closer to the original enslaved figure (25M) than to the original displaced figure (10M). This document's current totals are the product of the disclosed methodologies in § 3–§5, not an attempt to reconcile with either number from the original publications; where they land relative to that original pairing is reported here for transparency.

7. Supporting Record: The Sultan of Sokoto Lineage

The timeline's sultan-lineage record (20 holders of the throne, 1804–2026, organized into four rival succession houses — Bello, Atiku, Rufai, and Buhari) is sourced to Falola's Historical Dictionary of Nigeria and Burdon's 1907 "Sokoto History: Tables of Dates and Genealogy" (Journal of the Royal African Society), the same primary compilations underlying Wikipedia's "List of Sultans of Sokoto" infobox, cross-checked against individual sultans' entries and, for the contested 1988 succession, against contemporaneous reporting (The Christian Science Monitor, 1990; The Guardian Nigeria). Grokipedia is not cited here — it is an AI-generated aggregation, not an independent citable authority. This record is treated as Tier 1 throughout — dates of reign, filial relationships, and house affiliations are stable, cross-confirmed historical record, not estimates.

The single most consequential episode in this record — the 1988 installation of Ibrahim Dasuki over the kingmakers' preferred candidate, Muhammadu Maccido — is corroborated across multiple independent sources (contemporary wire reporting via The Christian Science Monitor and the Guardian Nigeria's retrospective), including the specific detail that five days of rioting followed and approximately ten people died. This is presented in the timeline as directly documented, Tier 1 fact.

7b. Supporting Record: The Political / Religious Rule Row

A separate row in the timeline tracks who governed this territory and under what religious identity, from 1800 to 2026. This row underwent a substantive editorial revision during development, documented here for transparency.

7b.1 Why there is no separate "Sokoto Caliphate" block

This row does not show a bounded "Sokoto Caliphate" segment running 1804–1903 followed by "British Indirect Rule" (1903–1960), for two reasons:

- Geographic accuracy: the Sokoto Caliphate never governed the full territory depicted on this timeline. It was the dominant power in the north; independent Hausa kingdoms and a range of other indigenous nations existed alongside and beyond its reach for the whole of this period. Labeling the entire 1804–1903 span "Sokoto Caliphate" overstated the Caliphate's geographic reach.
- Continuity of power: the author's central contention — stated repeatedly and explicitly across this project — is that the Caliphate's power structure was never actually broken. It was absorbed into British indirect rule in 1903 (Fulani emirs became British colonial proxies) and, per the author's argument, has controlled the federal center of Nigeria in one form or another ever since. Displaying "Sokoto Caliphate" as a closed, bounded era ending in 1903 would visually contradict this argument by implying the Caliphate's rule ended rather than continued under new cover.

The row now shows a single merged segment, "Indigenous Nations (incl. Sokoto Caliphate, north only)," spanning 1800–1903, followed by "British Indirect Rule" (1903–1960) and then the post-independence sequence of heads of state/government with their religious identity noted (Table 7). The Caliphate's 1804 founding is marked with a point-in-time flag icon rather than a ruling-era block — acknowledging the event without asserting a bounded, exclusive period of Caliphate governance over the whole territory.

7b.2 Sourcing for the Post-Independence Sequence

The religion attributed to each post-1960 head of state or government (Table 7) reflects each individual's publicly known religious identity as reported in standard biographical and historical sources; this is treated as Tier 1, directly documented information throughout.

Period	Leader	Religion	Note
1800–1903	(Indigenous nations, incl. Sokoto Caliphate, north only)	—	See § 7b.1
1903–1960	British indirect rule	—	Colonial administration; Fulani emirs retained as proxies
1960–1966	Tafawa Balewa	Muslim	First Prime Minister; assassinated in the Jan. 1966 coup
1966	Aguiyi-Ironsi	Christian	Assassinated in the July 1966 counter-coup
1966–1975	Yakubu Gowon	Christian	Led federal government through the Biafran War

Period	Leader	Religion	Note
1975–1976	Murtala Muhammed	Muslim	Assassinated in a failed coup
1976–1979	Olusegun Obasanjo	Christian	First stint, military
1979–1983	Shehu Shagari	Muslim	Second Republic; overthrown 1983
1983–1985	Muhammadu Buhari	Muslim	First stint, military
1985–1993	Ibrahim Babangida	Muslim	Annulled the 1993 election
1993	Ernest Shonekan	Christian	Brief interim administration
1993–1998	Sani Abacha	Muslim	Deposed Sultan Dasuki, 1996
1998–1999	Abdulsalami Abubakar	Muslim	Interim; oversaw 1999 constitution
1999–2007	Olusegun Obasanjo	Christian	Second stint, elected
2007–2010	Umaru Yar'Adua	Muslim	Died in office
2010–2015	Goodluck Jonathan	Christian	Defeated in 2015 amid Western pressure
2015–2023	Muhammadu Buhari	Muslim	Second stint, elected
2023–present	Bola Tinubu	Muslim	Incumbent

Table 7. Post-independence rule sequence with religious identity.

8. Limitations and Epistemic Caveats

8.1 An Overarching Point: This History Cannot, By Its Nature, Be Fully Documented

Before the specific limitations below, a broader point belongs here, because it explains why this document relies as heavily as it does on reconstruction, ratios, and disclosed estimation rather than a clean documentary record: the power structure this timeline covers has been continuously controlling, secretive, and willing to use violence to enforce that control for the full 222 years it spans — not only during the Biafran War (§ 1 documents that specific case with sources), and not only under the modern Nigerian state.

The Sokoto Caliphate itself (1804–1903) was a theocratic state with no independent press, no external audit of its own governance, and centralized control over its own historical narrative through court chroniclers and religious authority — an information environment closed by design, not merely under-documented for lack of bureaucratic capacity. The British colonial administration that followed (§ 7b) had its own, different incentive to manage the record: enforcing the 1897–1936 legal abolition of slavery honestly would have destabilized the "indirect rule" arrangement Britain depended on, and Lovejoy and Hogendorn's own scholarship (Slow Death for Slavery, cited throughout § 3–4) documents forty years of deliberate institutional slowness in enforcing that abolition for exactly this reason. The postwar and present-day Nigerian state's documented behavior (§ 1.3) is the same pattern in its most recent form, not a new one.

This matters methodologically, not just rhetorically: it is the reason no clean casualty ledger exists for any era this timeline covers, from the 1804 jihad through the 1966 pogrom to the present Boko Haram insurgency, and it is a real part of why this document is built substantially from ratios, analogies, and disclosed reconstructions (§ 3.2 and § 4.2's stock-flow calculations; § 3.3's treatment of Biafra) rather than from a single authoritative count. That reconstruction is not purely a methodological shortcoming to apologize for — it is, in part, the documented consequence of 222 years of continuous control by parties with an interest in the record staying incomplete. This is stated here as a limitation of the available evidentiary record, not as a substitute for the specific quantitative methodology in § 3–5, which stands or falls on its own disclosed calculations regardless of this broader context.

The timeline's own Rule row reflects a related but separate argument, which should not be confused with the evidentiary point above: the Sokoto Caliphate is not shown as a closed era ending in 1903, but merged into a continuous "Indigenous Nations" block flowing into British indirect rule and then the post-independence state (§ 7b.1), because the author's contention — disclosed there explicitly as interpretive argument, not data — is that this is one continuously self-protecting power structure across the whole period. That is the timeline's interpretive framing; it motivates why full documentation was never likely, but it is not itself evidence for any specific casualty figure in this document, and readers should keep the two separate.

8.2 Metric-Specific Limitations

This document and the timeline it accompanies aim to be transparent about the boundary between documented fact and disclosed estimate. The following limitations apply across all three metrics:

- No single-source, continuously-measured series exists for any of the three metrics across the full 222-year span. Every metric necessarily combines historical episodes, official modern statistics, and author-constructed bridges between them.
- Tier 2 estimates (most significantly, the raiding-era mortality figure in § 3.2) rest on the assumption that a documented ratio from a related but not identical context (Hamman Yaji's early-20th-century Adamawa raiding, per Van Beek 2012) can be responsibly extended to the Sokoto Caliphate's own, earlier, 1804–1890 raiding system. This is a defensible modeling choice — a real, regionally-affiliated ratio rather than a cross-continental analogy — but it is not a discovery of a Sokoto-specific, period-specific rate, and should be cited as such.
- Deaths in bondage (§ 3.2, reported separately from the killed metric, not part of its total) counts all deaths occurring in bondage over 1804–1890, not specifically EXCESS deaths attributable to enslavement above what background mortality would have been for a free population in the same era and region. No age-specific historical baseline mortality rate exists to compute that narrower, more precise quantity. This document counts all-cause bondage mortality rather than invent a background-mortality baseline with no more evidentiary footing than the figure it would replace; the resulting figure should be understood as an upper-bound-leaning estimate for this reason, not a precise measure of mortality specifically caused by enslavement.
- A related, separately disclosed choice: this document counts children born into slavery as part of the cumulative-ever-enslaved total (§ 4.2) — a child born into bondage is enslaved. The killed metric's raiding-mortality ratio (§ 3.2) is applied only to the estimated captures portion of that same entries figure, since a ratio measuring deaths during a raid cannot describe a birth. The births-share used to separate them (10% low, 20% central, 35% high) is a disclosed judgment, not a measurement, and is now the largest single soft parameter remaining in the killed metric, since the bondage-mortality channel is no longer part of it. A reader who rejects the 20% central figure can recompute the killed metric's raiding-capture estimate at any share they prefer directly from the figures given in § 3.2.
- Tier 3 interpolated points exist purely to render continuous lines on the interactive chart and carry no independent evidentiary weight for their specific years.
- Historical population and mortality figures for pre-20th-century Africa are subject to wide scholarly uncertainty in general, reflecting the absence of contemporaneous census data; the specific figures used here (e.g., Lovejoy's 2,000,000 enslaved-population estimate) represent the most widely cited scholarly figures available, not the only figures that have been proposed in the literature.
- Where official statistics have been revised or superseded (for example, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics' 2018/19 survey redesign, or the World Bank's periodic PPP-line updates), this document uses the most recent, most directly comparable figures available at time of writing and flags known discontinuities rather than silently smoothing over them.

This document should be read alongside the interactive timeline itself, where each data point and narrative entry remains individually inspectable via the timeline's click-through detail panel.

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