

Katsina, Nigeria (2025)

We pray for the Diocesan President and all Mothers' Union members in Katsina. *(A candle is lit).*

Located in Western Africa, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the seventh most populated country in the world. According to December 2024 figures the population is just under 235 million, an increase of 39 million in the year. According to UN projections the population will exceed that of the United States by 2047. Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups and over 500 additional indigenous languages. It is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's largest economies and relies heavily on oil as its main source of revenue, yet despite this it is estimate that more than 60% of Nigeria's population lives in extreme poverty.

Katsina is in the north of Nigeria, near the border with Niger. It has a hot semi-arid climate. On Christmas Day 2024 the temperature was 30 Centigrade. The population of Katsina in 2024 was over 543,000. In 1950 the population was just over 45,000.

Modern Katsina is a major collecting point for peanuts (groundnuts) and for hides and skins that are sent to Kano, 92 miles southeast, for export by road and rail. In Katsina's central market, sorghum, millet, onions and other vegetables, peanuts, indigo, goats, poultry, sheep, cattle, and cotton are traded. Traditional crafts of the town's predominantly Hausa population include weaving and dyeing of cotton, working in leather and metal, and the design of pottery, embroidery, and calabashes. Modern industries were introduced in the 1970s and include vegetable oil mills and a steel-rolling plant.

Gender based violence is a problem in Katsina as elsewhere in Nigeria. Children in Katsina have organised themselves into a protest group, the Girls Led Movement Building (GLMB) which has called on the Katsina state government to enhance measures aimed at protecting girls from gender-based violence. This urgent call was made during a courtesy visit to both the offices of the Commissioner of Education, and Commissioner of Women Affairs. The visits were part of a series of activities commemorating the International Day of the Girl Child, supported by Save the Children International. In response to the children's concerns, the Commissioner of Education announced that the government plans to introduce guidance and counselling officers in every school. These officers will receive training on addressing issues related to molestation and guiding students on how to report such incidents. This will be

strengthened by the passage of the Child Protection law, which guarantees safety, education, health, and overall well-being for children in Katsina.

Health matters also feature large in Katsina and 120 health workers in Katsina State's secondary and tertiary facilities are to be trained in maternal, infant, and young child nutrition. The training is organized by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare with support from the World Bank. The Katsina State Commissioner of Health has reiterated the Katsina State government's commitment to revitalizing the health sector. Various developmental projects have been initiated including the commissioning of a world-class dialysis centre, the construction of a new imaging centre, the establishment of general hospitals, renovation of numerous primary healthcare centres, and recruitment of health personnel.

Mothers' Union has been present in Nigeria for well over 100 years, having started there in 1908. Conservative estimates of membership numbers start at 60,000 but, in reality our numbers could be far greater than this. Mothers' Union in Nigeria is very active in creating opportunities for women and young girls to reach their full potential, working closely alongside the Women's Guild in each diocese.

Mothers' Union is deeply embedded in the local community and members are involved on a daily basis with hospital visits, health clinics, supporting widows and orphans, day care centres and nursery schools, marriage preparation, vocational training, orphan care, prison ministry and with a parenting programme.

We pray for our steadfast members in Katsina and the work they carry out every day in very difficult circumstances.

Amen

Gill MU / Katsina 2025