



Ref: Intersociety/001/02/018/FGN/NG

Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari

President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria & Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces

Office of the President, Presidential Villa

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Dear Mr. President

Christians At Crossroads In Nigeria: How Hundreds Of Churches & Estimated 16,000 Mostly Christian Lives Including 5,800 Victims Of Fulani Herdsmen And Boko Haram Were Lost Since June 2015

(Intersociety, Onitsha Nigeria: 6th February 2018)-Sir, the estimated 30 million Christians in Northern Nigeria who form the largest minority in a predominantly Muslim environment, have for decades, suffered marginalization and discrimination as well as targeted violence especially in the hands of organized mob violence and violent groups such as Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen.

Hundreds of churches in Northern Nigeria particularly Northeast and North-central Nigeria as well as Southern part of Kaduna State which is predominant Christian population have also been burnt or destroyed with estimated 16,000 defenseless citizens composed of mostly Christian population killed across the country since June 2015 when Mr. President became Nigeria's sixth civilian President. The estimated 16, 000 defenseless civilian deaths outside the law include 5,800 mostly Christians killed by terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram since June 2015.

The estimated 16,000 deaths are specifically composed of 2,050 victims of direct State violence, 7,950 victims of police custody or captivity killings through racial profiling and unprofessional crime detection management, 2,050 victims of Boko Haram insurgency and 3,750 victims of terror Fulani Herdsmen killings. In the months of December 2017 and January 2018, alone not less than 350 mostly Christians were killed by Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in the States of Adamawa, Taraba, Borno, Benue and Southern Kaduna. In January 2018 alone, not less than 250 defenseless citizens composed of mostly Christians were killed in the above named States.

The violent attacks including killing of Christians and burning or destruction of churches and other sacred places of Christian worship had recorded a viral increase in Northern Nigeria in recent years and further increased by 62% since June 2015 when you were sworn in as Nigeria's sixth civilian President.

The worst of it all was that the central Government under your leadership had done little or nothing to end the killings and destructions and fish out and punish the perpetrators especially members of the Fulani Herdsmen under the Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria. This is despite the firm promise of Mr. President on his swearing in, on 29th May 2015, to end terrorism and widespread violence in Nigeria. Mr. President also swore to uphold and abide by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended including its secular status.

According to several researches and investigations carried out by reputable local and international organizations, including the World Terror Index of the Int'l Institute for Economic & Peace and the Open Doors Int'l; Christians are facing steady persecution and decimation in Northern Nigeria, especially in States where there are sizeable or dominant Christian populations such as in Yobe, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa and Taraba all in Northeast Geopolitical Zone.

Large Christian populations in Southern Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Niger, Nasarawa and Kogi States are also not spared. The level of killing of Christians and destruction of churches in these States especially in Plateau, Benue, Adamawa, Borno, Taraba and Kaduna States has recorded further intensity and increase since June 2015. The number of Christians facing forceful conversion or already forcefully converted to Islam since then is strongly believed to be in their tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands.

Statistics

Violent killings of Christians in northern Nigeria have increased by 62% in just one year or in 2016, according to the 2016 World Watch List. In a report released in 2016 by the Open Doors and the Christian Association of Nigeria with a title '***Crushed but not defeated, the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria***', it gave a troubling detail of the violence that has contributed to the sustained decimation of Christian communities in the country (northern Nigeria). In 2015, according to the research, there were at least 4,028 killing of Christians and 198 attacks on churches, while figures for the previous year were 2,484 Christian deaths and 108 church attacks; mostly carried out by Boko Haram insurgents in Northern Nigeria.

Members of Christian Association of Nigerian-Americans (CANAN) speaking through the Executive Director, Dr. Ade Oyesile, said, *we are saddened by the rapid occurrences of these atrocious killings without a corresponding accountability being meted to the growing list of perpetrators.* CANAN calls on the federal government to go beyond mere expression of shock at the vicious killings and set in motion practical steps to stem this ugly spectacle of continuous massacre of Christians.

“As at July 20, 2016, our records show that at least 384 Christians have been killed and 111 injured in various parts of the country. With just weeks past mid-year, this figure compares in a scaring proportion to a total of 431 deaths and 301 injured Christians in the entire 2015. These killings, we noticed, are carried out either by tit-for-tat attacks, arson on properties especially churches or the targeted systemic killings of Christians perpetuated by the Boko Haram terrorist religious sectarian group.”

“Our figures of Christians killed and maimed by Muslims corroborate with documentation by “The Religion of Peace,” a magazine that chronicles attack on Christians. The magazine gives even more details of the vicious killings in 2016 alone as follows: “On January 27, at least 16 Christians were killed and 32 injured when a suicide bomber sent shrapnel at a vegetable market in Chibok a Christian town in Maiduguri. “On January 29, in Adamawa, 10 Christians were killed and 28 injured when a suicide bomber detonates a bomb at a busy market near a church. All the victims were Christians.”

“On February 14 in Abbi community in Uzo-Uwani, Enugu State, Fulani herdsmen killed 2 Christians when a brother and sister were hacked down in a Christian dominated community. 19 people were injured.” “On February 24 in Agatu, Benue State, the nation witnessed the merciless killings of at least 300 Christians by radical Islamic mercenaries (Fulani Herdsmen) including pregnant women.” “In Enugu on April 25, 48 Christians were killed and 60 injured by Fulani herdsmen’. “On April 30 in Dadawa, an outskirts of Sabongari in Kano State, a man and his daughter were burnt alive in a church by Boko Haram.’

“At Ninte village, in Jema’a local government in Kaduna State on May 31, scores of Christians were killed just a month after, 3 Christians were burnt to death in a Pastors’ home as they slept.” “In Kano on June 2, a Christian woman was beheaded by Islamic fundamentalist after a minor argument.’ “On June 30 at Obi town in Nasarawa State, a Pastor was killed by a militant Muslim’. “The July 9 incident where a female Pastor was hacked to death in the FCT by Muslim radicals traumatized every right thinking individual.’

More Statistics

In a 154-page research conducted for the Open Doors Int’l by Arne Mulder in 2015, the report revealed that 1.3 million Christians had fled their homes to safer places to avoid being hacked to death by religious fanatics such as Boko Haram and that between 2009 and December 2014; a period of five years, 11,500 Christians were killed and 13,000 churches and 1500 Christian schools burnt to ashes or destroyed in Boko Haram insurgency.

The Boko Haram insurgency also has generated over 2.6million internally displaced persons and scores of refugees. Many of the IDPs in Northern Nigeria are from Christian population including 236 of them killed by the Nigerian Air Force bombing in the Rann IDP camp in Borno State on 17th January 2017.

Since June 2015 when Mr. President took over as Nigeria's sixth civilian President, not less than 5,800 defenseless citizens dominated by Christian population had been killed by the duo of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. While Boko Haram accounted for at least 2,050 deaths, Fulani Herdsmen are responsible for the rest or 3,750 others. Between January and July 2015, according to Punch Newspaper, Fulani Herdsmen killed 631 Christian farmers in Benue State alone.

In the month of December 2016, according to the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan in Kaduna State, in its 30th December 2016 press conference, 808 Christian lives were lost to Fulani Herdsmen in Southern Kaduna with 57 others injured. Fifty-three (53) villages and fifteen (15) churches were razed or burnt to ashes. The authorities of the ECWA Church in the State also disclosed that 38 of their members with a number of their sacred places of worship were lost to Fulani Herdsmen in the first six months of 2016 in Southern Kaduna.

Mr. President, it is correct to say that average of 1,500 mostly, if not all Christian lives are lost annually to Fulani Herdsmen especially in Northern Nigeria since June 2015. Fulani Herdsmen violence, including killing of Christians and burning or destruction of their churches had recorded a spiral increase since your election and swearing in as Nigeria's sixth civilian President on 29th May 2015.

In 2014 alone, according to the Global Terrorism Index report of 2015, Fulani Herdsmen accounted for 1,229 mostly Christian deaths across Nigeria. The said Fulani Herdsmen killings of 2014 were part of 7089 deaths dominated by Christian population recorded in the hands of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen in 2014 alone. This is according to the 2015 report of the Global Index on Terrorism.

While the killings and property destruction by Boko Haram have drastically gone down and restricted to Borno and few other States in the Northeast owing to change of tactics, those of Fulani Herdsmen have increased spirally since June 2015. In 2017, for instance, only over 400 mainly Christian lives were lost to Boko Haram compared to higher casualty records in the previous years.

Amnesty Int'l issued a report in early December 2017, saying that "375 lives were lost to Boko Haram between January and November 2017". On the other hand, the killings and destruction or burning of properties, particularly churches by Fulani Herdsmen had recorded a geometric increase, especially between the last six months of 2015 and January 2018; a period of 32 months; leading to loss of not less than 1,500 Christian lives annually since June 2015.

Investigations carried out by reputable local and international rights groups and Christian bodies including Amnesty Int'l, Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law and Christian Association of Nigeria also revealed direct involvement of Nigeria's central Government under your Presidency in the killing of Christians in Nigeria. The Government security agencies especially the Army and the Air Force are directly accused of involvement in the killing of at least 700 Christians since June 2015.

These included the killing of not less than 400 pro Biafra Christian activists between 30th August 2015 and 15th September 2017 in Southeast and South-south Nigeria; killing through war jet bombing by the Nigerian Air Force of 236 Christian IDPs in the Rann IDP camp in Borno State on 17th January 2017; and killing through another war jet bombing and war helicopter attack by the Nigerian Air Force of over 50 rural Christians in Numan, Adamawa State on 4th December 2017.

In all, estimated 16,000 defenseless citizens or lives have been lost since June 2015 or a period of 32 months under your Presidency. These include not less than 350 defenseless rural Christians killed by the terror Fulani Herdsmen in the months of December 2017 and January 2018 in States of Benue, Taraba, Adamawa and Kaduna. Several Churches and other Christian sacred places of worship were also destroyed or burnt to ashes. In the month of January 2018 alone, not less than 250 mostly Christian lives were lost to the duo of Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen.

The Global Index on Terror says that the world's 1st and 4th deadliest or most terrible Islamic terror organizations operate in Nigeria-Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen. On the 4th February 2017, the US Congress affirmed that the most dangerous country on earth for anyone to be a Christian is Nigeria.

Strong evidence also suggests that the central Government under Mr. President promotes and runs Caliphate and Islamic policies in a country where over 50% of the population are members of Christian and other non Muslim religions. Under this central Government headed by Mr. President, for instance, every key and sensitive position in the National Security is occupied or held by Muslims from the North in utter violation of Section 14 (3) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution or federal character principle.

In the early days of this central Government headed by Mr. President, more than 90% senior military officers unceremoniously disengaged from the Army are Christians. More than 90% of new appointments into senior management positions and key security and policing appointments made by the present central Government in Nigeria since June 2015 are occupied by Northern Muslims in clear violation of Section 14 (3) of the Constitution. This is not just to mention but a few but also a serious threat to pluralistic and multi ethno-religious composition of Nigeria-a country of 389 tribes and multi religions with its secular status entrenched in Section 10 of the Constitution.

Further Mr. President, the breakdown of the estimated 16,000 defenseless lives lost outside the law or killed by terror Fulani Herdsmen, Boko Haram and Nigerian security forces especially the Army, Air Force and the Police in the past 32 months of your Presidency or since June 2015 are:

1. *State Actor Generated Killings 10, 000 Involving: direct State murders: 2,050 citizens; comprising unarmed and defenseless Igbo-Biafra activists and supporters 400 citizens; unarmed and defenseless Shiite Muslims 1,130; civilian detainees at Giwa Army Barracks in Maiduguri including 29 Children with ages between newborn and 5yrs 240 civilians (see Amnesty Int'l Special Report on Nigeria for 2016/2017); killing of 236 defenseless Christian IDPs at a Rann Christian IDP camp in Kala-Balge LGA in Borno State via Nigerian war jets bombing in the broad day light of 17th Jan 2017; and over 50 Christians killed in another premeditated bombing of Christian villages of Lawaru, Shafaron, Dong, Nzuruwei and Kodomti in Numan, Adamawa State by an Alpha Jet and an EC 135 attack Helicopter belonging to the Nigerian Air Force. The bombing and killings took place on 4th December 2017. See the text of the CAN's international press conference, dated 16th January 2018 and the latest report by Amnesty Int'l, Nigeria, dated 29th January 2018.*

2. *Police custodial and captivity deaths 7,950 (on national monthly average deaths of 250 detained or captivity citizens and seven per State since June 2015). These killings occurred through racial profiling and unprofessional crime detection and investigation management. See Intersociety's expert report on police custodial killings in Nigeria: the Untold Story of Ezu River Police SARS Killings (July 20, 2017).*

3. *Non State Actor/Government backed ethno-religious killings 5,800 (since June 2015) perpetrated by the duo of terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents; comprising 3, 750 mostly, if not all Christians killed by the terror Fulani Herdsmen and 2, 050 mostly Christians killed by Boko Haram insurgents; with several churches and properties burnt or destroyed.*

4. *Other 200 criminal deaths-representing the dark figures of crime or criminal deaths not captured or recorded by State actor or non State actor crime statistics.*

For more details on killing of not less than 350 Christians in the months of December 2017 and January 2018; and killing of over 250 mostly Christians in the month of January 2018 alone all in Northern Nigeria by the duo of terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram, see the text of a press conference addressed by the leadership of CAN in Adamawa State, led by Rev Dr. Stephen Dami Mamza, delivered on Wednesday, 10th January 2018; on *the spate of violence & terror killings unleashed upon Christian/Farming Communities in Adamawa State.*

Also see the text of a world press conference addressed by the national leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria, through its Secretary General, Rev Musa Asake, PhD, on Tuesday, 16th January 2018 at the National Christian Centre, Abuja Nigeria on: *Federal Government's conspiracy in the massacre of Christians in Nigeria*; as well as that addressed on same 16th January 2018 by the leadership of CAN in Taraba State on massacre of Christians in the State by terror Fulani Herdsmen.

The texts showed that at least 70 Christians lost their lives to terror Fulani Jihadists between 25th December 2017 and 10th January 2018 in Adamawa State alone with over 10 churches burnt to ashes. This excludes "not less than 150 Christian lives lost before the last Xmas festivities in the State", according to the State leadership of CAN.

In Benue State, not less than 73 dead bodies of Christians killed by terror Fulanis on 1st and 2nd January 2018 were recently interred. Several churches were also burnt or razed to rubbles. In Taraba State, according to the State leadership of CAN and Governor Darius Ishaku, not less than 63 Christian lives were lost and buried in January 2018.

As reported by Punch Newspaper of 2nd February 2018, the Governor of Taraba State had during an official visit by the national leadership of his party (PDP) disclosed that “63 people (Christians) killed by Fulani Herdsmen were buried in the State the same day the Benue State Government buried 73 people (Christians) killed by the same Fulani Herdsmen”. The Benue killings took place on 1st and 2nd January 2018. The Governor further disclosed that police authorities hardly respond to distress calls by the Government of Taraba State; saying police in his State had insisted that police intervention arising from such distress calls must be authorized by the Inspector General of Police

Specifically, the killings by the duo of Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in recent weeks clearly indicate that not less than 250 defenseless citizens mostly Christians died in the month of January 2018 alone. Boko Haram Islamist insurgents account for at least 40 deaths, while the terror Fulani Herdsmen account for the rest. Amnesty Int’l also notes that “at least 168 people have died in Herdsmen violence since January 2018”. In Adamawa State, according to Amnesty Int’l, 86 Christian farmers including not less than 35 killed by Government jet bombing were killed on 4th December 2017 and later buried in individual graves (58 bodies) and mass graves (28 bodies).

The killing of the Numan Christians was done and coordinated simultaneously by the Nigerian jet fighters and the terror Fulani Herdsmen. While the Nigerian Air Force, according to Amnesty Int’l report was bombing the Christian villages and killing defenseless Christian population including women and children using rockets and bombs; the Fulani Herdsmen simultaneously launched bloody attacks on the same population, shooting and slaughtering women, children, men and the elderly in their dozens.

The lists of 86 dead victims from the simultaneous Air Force and terror Fulani Herdsmen attacks obtained by Amnesty Int’l showed that 51 dead victims had gun shots and machete wounds while 35 others bore wounds of air strike attacks. Amnesty Int’l says 3000 homes were razed in air attacks launched on five Numan villages of Lawaru, Dong, Kodomti, Shafaron and Nzuruwei. In all, Amnesty Int’l says eight villages were heavily damaged or completely destroyed by air strike fire. Instances are too numerous to mention Mr. President!

Till date and since June 2015, Mr. President, it saddens our heart that not one member of the Armed Forces particularly the Army and Air Force, or the Police; or an official of MACBAN or culpable Fulani Jihadist has been apprehended by the Federal Government of Nigeria and put on trial over the killings highlighted above including the killing of Christians. Instead, the Administration keeps setting up one exonerative and lame duck panel or the other particularly as it concerns the military atrocities against Shiites and pro Biafra activists.

Our writing Mr. President, therefore, is to express our deepest dismay, shock and sadness concerning the continuation and intensification of the butchery above highlighted as well as total condoning of same by the central Government under your Presidency through Caliphate and Islamic policies and actions. This is more so when there are adequate constitutional safeguards to tame the butchery under reference and revert the country to its entrenched secularism status at all times.

Specifically, Mr. President, by Section 17 of the Chapter Two, otherwise called "*the Charter of Responsibilities for the Public Office Holders in Nigeria (including Mr. President)*"; it clearly states that the State Social Order is founded on ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice; 17(2) in furtherance of this social order: (a) every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law; 17 (2) (b) the sanctity of human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced; 17 (2) (c) government actions shall be humane.

By Section 14 of the same Constitutional Charter of Responsibilities, it states that the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on Principles of Democracy and Social Justice"; 14 (2) it is hereby declared that sovereignty belongs to the People of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority; 14 (2) (b) the security and welfare of the People (human security) shall be the primary purpose of the Government; and 14 (2) (c) the participation by the People in their Government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

Also by Section 14 (3) of the referenced Charter of Responsibilities in the Constitution, the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few States or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or any of its agencies".

By Section 15 (1), the motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress; 15 (2) accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.

By Section 10 of the same Constitution, the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion. Section 38 of the Constitution also affirms the fundamental human right to freedom of religion and worship in Nigeria.

Grandly, by Section 13 of the same Constitutional Chapter Two, it shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons, exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this Chapter (Two) of this Constitution. We are totally disappointed to inform Mr. President that these sacred constitutional duties, functions and obligations have totally been observed in breach under your Presidency.

We hereby strongly call on Mr. President to put an end to slaughtering of thousands of defenseless Christians on annual basis by terror Fulani Herdsmen in Northern Nigeria and proscribe the Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria as well as fish out their leaders and culpable elements and charge them for manslaughter and culpable homicide, respectively, among other felonies committed against the State of Nigeria and its population.

The Federal Government's silence, inaction and conspiracy over these ethno-religious carnages are not only an invitation to widespread retaliatory violence and ruination of the country in part or in whole but also a gross breach of Section 10 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution which forbids the Federal Government or any State Government from adopting any religion including Islam as the State Religion.

We make bold to say that the first major step towards addressing the present national and sub-national security challenges in Nigeria is total re-organization of the commanding positions and other top echelons of security forces, the police and other para-military organizations in Nigeria. The present Caliphate structure of Nigerian security and policing is totally rejected. They must be restructured in accordance with Section 14 (3) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution or federal character or geopolitical spread.

The stark reality today is that continuation of the centrality; oneness, unity and national cohesion of Nigeria is threatened and undermined by the present central Government. The ethno-religious divisions have continuously thickened, with ethno-religious chauvinists taking over and consolidating their grip on power.

Mr. President must wake up from Mr. President's slumber and discharge Mr. President's sworn constitutional duties and functions courageously and impartially so as to prevent a situation where millions of the threatened and endangered Christians in Nigeria will be forced to take recourse to self defense and other self help mechanisms to prevent their Christian religion and practices going the way of their counterparts in Lebanon, Asyut in Egypt and Turkey and other parts of Middle East.

Yours Faithfully,

For: Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law

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- **Mr. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the US House of Reps**
- **Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria**
- **ECWA Church Worldwide**
- **Christian Association of Nigeria**
- **Alaigbo Development Foundation**
- **EU Mission to Nigeria**
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