

**Exclusion Of Africa's Super Catholic/Christian States: Congo DRC, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia And Kenya From Pope Leo XIV's Maiden Visit Was A Fundamental Omission Needing Redress In 'Second Papal Missionary Journey' To Africa**

**- Intersociety**

**...highlights other fundamental missing points in Pope's African Visit and reforms including demanding for appointment of four Cardinal-Electors for Uganda and Kenya (two each); two each for Cameroon, Angola and Tanzania; and three each for Congo DRC and Nigeria to encourage, strengthen and save Africa's largest but severely threatened Catholicism and Christianity**

**Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, Monday, April 13, 2026:** The International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law-Intersociety (<https://intersociety-ng.org>) has carefully observed that there are fundamental missing points in the Holy Father's papal reforms and his African visit-commencing today (April 13) and ending on April 23, 2026. Our special advocacy interest in Pope Leo XIV (Robert Francis Prevost)'s papal reforms and leadership is brought about by the fact that global Catholicism under him is looked upon by the world Christian population as "the General Overseer and the Global Mother Church founded since AD35" especially in matters of Promotion, Defence and Protection of the Christian Faith.

**Welcoming Pope's World Peace But Not Peace Of The Christian Graveyard:** The Holy Father's Global Message for Peace is also a Welcome Development, provided it does not end being "Peace of the Grave Yard for Christians, Jews and other Peaceful Religions and other religious minorities especially in the hands of global Islamic Jihadists who have consistently vowed to continue to target Christians and Jews until they are converted or hacked to death". Such is also their central violent message in Nigeria. This is more so when Catholicism is home to estimated 1,422billion faith members, out of the projected global Christian population of 2.4billion-with no fewer than 750m threatened and endangered Christians living in Africa alone, including no fewer than 200m threatened Catholics.

**Charity Begins At Home Reforms First:** Intersociety is well pleased with some reforms carried out so far to reposition the 'Mother Church' to strongly defend and protect the Christian Faith. It has however been observed that reforms carried out so far are not good enough. More concrete reforms are very strongly and urgently needed to strategically and strongly reposition the Mother Church as the common umbrella and "General Overseer of the global Christendom". Among such reforms needed are "Charity Must Begin at Home Reforms" including tasking Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin to sit up or resign, as was similarly the case in the April 10, 2026 resignation of Archbishop Claudio Dalla Zuanna of the Mozambique's Archdiocese of Beira and Archbishop Pascalis Bruno Sukur, who declined an early 2026 appointment by Pope Leo XIV as a cardinal, choosing to remain in his role as Bishop of Bogor in Indonesia.

**Exclusion Of Africa's Five Super Catholic States From Pope's Maiden Visit:** We have observed a fundamental omission in the Holy Father's African visit, covering only countries of Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea; excluding super Catholic/Christian populated countries of Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya-with combined Catholic population of estimated 141m, as well as Ethiopia-Africa's third largest Christian State with 77m. Out of the four countries pencilled down for papal visit, only Angola has a large Catholic population of about 10m as against Cameroon's 9m Catholics and Equatorial Guinea's 1.4m Catholics.

Our careful study of the current patterns and trends of genocidal attacks by Islamic jihadists against Christians in Africa has clearly indicated that except Cameroon, Catholics and general Christian population face less jihadist threats and attacks in Angola and Equatorial Guinea than the five major Catholic countries of Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya and allied others like Ethiopia. From available records, Algeria is partly populated by just 4,200 Catholics with a serving Cardinal, out of estimated 100,000 Christians in the country of estimated 47m and Africa's largest landmass country of 2.382m km<sup>2</sup>. Algeria is only consoled and included in the papal visit by the fact that it is **country of birth of the Biblical Saint Augustine.**

While we hold no grudges against the choice of the four African countries, the five most threatened and attacked African countries ought to have been included in the itinerary of the Pope. The five affected Africa's Super Catholic States included: Congo DRC-with estimated 55m Catholics and 115m Christians, Nigeria-with 30m-35m Catholics and 113m Christians, Tanzania-with 19m Catholics and 31m Christians, Uganda-with 18m Catholics and 30m Christians and Kenya-with 18m Catholics and 40m Christians-totaling 141m Catholics and 329m Christians, in addition to Ethiopia-with estimated 77m Christians; also one of the Africa's oldest Christian countries. As a matter of fact, these six African countries should have been scheduled as "First Among Equals" in the Pope Leo XIV's maiden African visit, more so when such Holy Father's visit is importantly and urgently needed to encourage and strength the Christian faith believers in dangerous places like Nigeria, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya where if extreme care is not taken, their teeming Catholic and other Christian populations will not only be wiped out by local and ISIS and ISIL-linked Islamic jihadists in the next 50-100 years (2075AD-2125AD) but their incoming generations will no longer have traces of Christianity and Christian names linked to their lineages.

**Imbalanced Appointment Of Catholic Cardinal-Electors:** Another fundamental missing point was the imbalanced appointment of Catholic Cardinals in Africa-especially countries with large Catholic population. These countries have been grappling with inadequate number of "Cardinal-Electors" (those under 80 years' old who exercise voting right during papal conclave and other cardinal decisions. Further observed was the fact that **out of present Vatican's 243 Catholic Cardinals, there are only 121 Cardinal-Electors; out of which,** African countries are left with one Elector-Cardinal each. Uganda-with estimated 18m Catholics does not have a single Cardinal-Elector, except Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala who is 99 years of age. Kenya-with estimated 14m Catholics is also denied a **Cardinal-Elector**, except retired Cardinal (John Njue) who is 82 years of age.

It is also not right to allocate a Cardinal-Elector for each of the African countries with large Catholic population especially Congo DRC, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Cameroon and Angola. While Congo DRC-with 55m Catholics and 115m Christians is presently allocated with only one Cardinal-Elector (Ambongo Basungu-66 years of age), Nigeria-with 30-35m Catholics and 113m Christians is allocated with a single Cardinal-Elector (Peter Ebere Okpaleke-63 years old). Comparatively, there are seven 'Cardinal-Electors for Brazil-with estimated 170m Catholics, six Cardinal-Electors for Mexico-with estimated 100m Catholics, 10 or 11 Cardinal-Electors for USA-with estimated 55-60m Catholics, three Cardinal-Electors for the Philippines-with estimated 90m Catholics and four Cardinal-Electors for Argentina-with estimated 30m Catholics. In Nigeria, with estimated 30-35m Catholics, out of the country's four surviving Catholic Cardinals, only one is Cardinal-Elector (Peter Ebere Okpaleke) and three Others-Non-Elector Cardinals including Retired Cardinals Arinze, 93 years of age, Okogie, 89 years of age and Onaikan, 82 years of age.

### **Government Apologists And Double Speakers Must Not Be Made Cardinal-Electors:**

Not only that Cardinal-Electors should be appointed for Uganda and Kenya (presently with retired Cardinals), but also the number of such Cardinal-Electors should be increased to two each as a matter of moral correctness and episcopal fairness. Apart from strongly calling for appointment of more “Cardinal-Electors” and increase in their numbers especially in the six most threatened and attacked African countries with larger Catholic population including Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, as well as Angola-with largely populated 10m Catholics; it is also our addition that such appointments when being made must be put into consideration episcopal bravery, boldness and Christ-like charismatic features of those to be appointed. Situations have circumstantially arisen whereby Episcopal Catholic clerics with opposite characteristics have ended up being the beneficiaries of such sacred positions.

A typical case in point is Nigeria where leading Christian leaders including notable Catholic Bishops played a destructive role in amplifying the denial of state actor and non-state actor persecution of Christians (“Nigerian Christian Genocide”). The most unfortunate of it was the alleged involvement of the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin, who was reported to have openly joined forces with others and promoted the widely suspected scripts promoted by Government of Nigeria; to the extent that despite the clear, firm and unambiguous position of the Holy Father, affirming and strongly condemning the ongoing Persecution of Christians in Nigeria using targeted, coordinated and systematic killings and church destructions in their record numbers-perpetrated by state actors and non-state actors; the Vatican Secretary of State and his Cassock-wearing partners in Nigeria joined the ranks of those pushing for “climate change”, “farmers-herders’ clashes” and “Muslims are also being killed” in downplaying the unchecked butcheries and ‘domicide’ (industrial scale destruction of homes and other properties); only to summersault later and engage in double speak, especially during the “AD Lamina Apostolorum Visit” to the Holy Father by Nigeria’s Catholic Bishops’ Conference between March 6 and 14, 2026, where they tabled challenges facing the Church in Nigeria to include: “insecurity and violence against Christians and unsafety of the communities of the Catholic Faithful, etc.”.

The genesis of the above was also traced by **Intersociety** to the May 2025 Papal invitation extended to the Nigeria’s Muslim-Muslim Presidency, with four Nigerian Catholic Bishops including Lucius Ugorji, Ignatius Kaigama, Alfred Martins and Mathew Hassan Kukah strangely and untraditionally enlisted by the same Presidency “as part a high-powered delegation of the Government of Nigeria for the inauguration mass of Pope Leo XIV on May 18, 2025”. It is also placed on record that one of those Catholic Bishops, Bishop Kukah, is a Nigerian Government appointee by having been appointed as “Pro Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Federal University of the Applied Sciences in Kachia, Kaduna State by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu on March 17, 2025”. Critics strongly believed that it was from that moment that things began to fall apart.

### **Calling For Two New Cardinal-Electors For Nigeria’s North-East And Middle-Belt:**

We hereby call for appointment of two new Cardinal-Electors for Nigeria, specifically to be appointed from the country’s North-East especially among Catholic Dioceses in Taraba State as well as from among Catholic Dioceses in Benue State. Going by our recent findings, there are very brave and bold Catholic Bishops in the area that have stood their grounds against widespread Jihadist Fulani and their allied Boko Haram and Fulani Bandits’ attacks including massacre of thousands of members of their Catholic Faith and destruction of hundreds of churches, especially since 2015 till date.

Among the affected Catholic Dioceses, those of Wukari Diocese under Bishop Mark Maigida Nzukwein (born July 15, 1969 or 56+) and Makurdi Diocese under Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe (born 1965, 61 years old) are the worst hit, yet their Bishops have stood their grounds and defied all kinds of threats and passed through series of persecution and internal and external conspiracies. For internationally speaking out in USA in March 2025, Bishop Anagbe was targeted and his village razed and dozens of his kinsmen and women massacred by Fulani Jihadists. More than 90,000 Catholics have been forced to flee, with hundreds killed and dozens of church parishes razed or sacked in Wukari Diocese in 2024 till this date of April 2026 alone; likewise, in Makurdi Diocese where hundreds have been killed and dozens of parishes razed or sacked.

There are 60 Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria including 59 full-fledged Dioceses and a Suffragan, located in Ibadan, Oyo State, out of which **27 are presently dying and 17 inches away from diocesan emptiness.** Among them are dioceses of Jos, Gboko Idah, Katsina-Ala, Lafia, Lokoja, Makurdi, Otukpo; dioceses of Bauchi, Jalingo, Maiduguri, Pankshin, Shendam, Wukari and Yola; dioceses of Kaduna, Kafanchan, Kano, Kontagora, Minna, Sokoto, Zaria, Katsina; dioceses of Uromi and Auchi dioceses under Benin; diocese of Ilorin under Ibadan; and diocese of Nsukka under Onitsha. Seventeen others that are inches away from diocesan emptiness include dioceses of *Gboko, Katsina-Ala, Lafia, Lokoja, Makurdi, and Oturkpo; dioceses of Jaligo, Wukari, Maiduguri, Yola; and dioceses of Kafanchan, Kontagora, Minna, Sokoto and Zaria.*

**END**

**Signed:**

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