



International Christian Concern
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PETITION FOR CHRISTIANS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

September 18, 2009

His Excellency Ambassador Baba Gana Wakil
Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
3519 International Court, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

It is with great concern that we petition your government on behalf of the Christian minority communities which bear the brunt of the violence committed by Islamic extremists in northern Nigeria.

Since the introduction of Sharia law in northern Nigeria in 1999, religious violence has resulted in the death of 12,000 Nigerians, the displacement of thousands more, and the destruction of places of worship and private property.

The most recent violent attacks occurred on July 26 and 27, when the Islamic extremist group known as Boko Haram carried out attacks targeting government security officials, innocent civilians, police stations, and churches. Hundreds died as a result of these attacks. This violence, which started in Bauchi state, also engulfed the northern Nigerian states of Borno, Kanu and Yobe.

The Islamists razed twenty churches in Madiguri, Borno state and killed several Christians including: Sabo Yakubu, pastor of a Church of Christ congregation in Nigeria, Reverend Sylvester O Akpan, pastor of National Evangelical Mission, and Reverend George Orji, pastor of Good News of Christ Church.

In addition, in April 2009, several Christians were injured and places of worship destroyed after a group of Muslims attacked Christians while they were celebrating Easter in Niger State.

In February 2009, 11 people were killed and 14 churches and one mosque were burned down in Bauchi after Islamists carried out attacks against Christians in the city. Hundreds of innocent people lost their lives following one of the worst instances of religious violence in Jos in November 2008.

The violence and the resulting wanton destruction of lives and property are avoidable. Nigerian security officials have repeatedly failed to take preventive measures before such attacks occur. Also, Nigerian officials repeatedly fail to bring the perpetrators of these attacks to justice.

According to the 2009 Annual Report by the United States Commission for International Freedom, *"The response of the government of Nigeria to persistent religious freedom violations and violent sectarian and communal conflicts along religious lines has been inadequate and ineffectual. Years of inaction by Nigeria's federal, state and local governments has created a climate of impunity, resulting in thousands of deaths."*

As party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Nigerian government has an obligation to ensure and respect religious freedom and other human rights. In addition, the United Nations Human Rights Committee's General Recommendation 31 to the ICCPR clearly indicates that countries party to

the ICCPR have obligations to *"take appropriate measures or...exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harm caused by such acts by private persons or entities."*

We, therefore, call upon your government to take necessary preventive action in order to avert the recurrence of religious violence in northern Nigeria, bring all the perpetrators of the attacks to justice, provide redress for the victims of the violence and respect and ensure the rights of the Christian minority communities in northern Nigeria to freely practice their faith.

Very Sincerely,

International Christian Concern (and attached)



PETITION FOR CHRISTIANS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

(Please Print, Do Not Sign)



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