



INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FORUM FOR PEACE

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON KIDNAPPING AND ATTACKS IN NIGERIA

The Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDPF) is an interreligious peacebuilding organization made up of Christian and Muslim religious leaders from across Nigeria. We believe in religious leaders as effective peacemakers and so we support their efforts to help sensitize the populace on the need to have a peaceful and safe nation.

This Press Conference has been necessitated by the increasing cases of kidnapping and attacks on Nigerians in most parts of the country that result in massive destruction of lives and property. We have actually witnessed an upsurge in such violence in recent months.

The inability of the government to secure citizens from these catastrophes is an indication that Nigeria is fast becoming a failed state. We are worried and apprehensive that no one seems safe on the road, on railway tracks and even in their homes in a sovereign country with vast and sophisticated security architecture. We are troubled that government security agencies that are trained and commissioned to secure the lives and property of ordinary citizens seem impotent to deal with the huge security challenges. We regret that our commonwealth is used for the well being of government officials, politicians, security agencies and workers with no positive impact on the security of lives and property of the citizenry.

We are particularly troubled that these destructions now know no boundaries. Places of religious worship are no longer exempted. We recall the murder of over 40 defenceless worshippers in Owo, Ondo State, on Pentecost Sunday. In like manner, a Muslim woman and her four children were recently dastardly murdered in Anambra State. Based on experience, we wonder if anyone will ever be apprehended and brought to book for these heinous crimes. We call on the government to do more than its usual condemnation of these killings and the issuance of condolence messages to injured victims and families of the dead and take concrete steps to stem them.

These reveal how weak, nonchalant and seemingly compromising our security agencies have turned out to be. We call for a total overhauling of the national security apparatus and specifically the constitutional provision for state police.

The administration of criminal justice has not also helped by its slow attendance to criminal cases as well as the flippant dismissals of such cases without regard to the feelings of ordinary Nigerians. We call for decisive actions against anyone guilty of kidnapping, banditry or terrorism. We seek to be protected and safe as Nigerians.

One of our great strengths and pride as a country has been religious harmony, tolerance and freedom. This is manifested in true religious liberty. However, this is being gradually eroded. Our worship centers are now slaughter theatres where innocent Nigerians meet an untimely death in the most gruesome war-like manner.

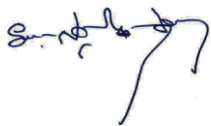
We call on religious organizations to step up security at their worship centers. They should be more vigilant about who comes into their congregations and premises at all times.

We as religious leaders are resolute that we will not be deterred by the activities of bandits, kidnappers, extremists, corrupt public servants and other criminal persons and groups because they have destabilized and dislocated our various communities and undermined our unity. We reject as not part of us and not of God anyone who does these dastardly deeds in the name of any of our religions.

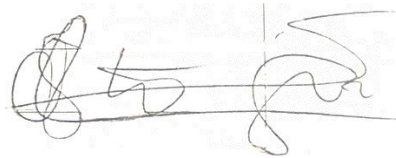
We encourage tolerance, peace, patience and interfaith harmony and relations in Nigeria to make Nigerians live in peace for sustainable growth.

May Peace and Unity continue to prevail in Nigeria!!!

Signed:



Bishop Sunday Onuoha
Co-Chairman



Alhaji Kunle Sanni Isah
Co-Chairman