



Gideon & Funmi Para-Mallam Peace Foundation

"They are blessed who work for peace, for they will be called God's children". Matthew 5:9

Reaction to the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group Report on Nigeria

The UK APPG report on Nigeria, released on June 15th, 2020 is long overdue. The previous inattention caused many to suspect some kind of global conspiracy of silence or the posturing of a toothless bulldog interested in mere talk. For long, numerous internal voices have been raising concerns over the on-going killings and unending wastefulness of human life in Nigeria. The targeting and systematic killings of Christians and ethnic minorities to forcefully grab their ancestral homelands is real and has been going on for a decade now. This can no longer be denied! There is clear danger ahead if this trend continues and the reality tactically buried or conflated with arguments around climate change and resource control. While both arguments have some merit, they do not detract from the fact that Christians and ethnic minorities in Northern Nigeria have historically faced and continue to face systemic and systematic discrimination, injustice and oppression on several fronts. The APPG report now takes the conversation to a different level by presenting a critical evaluation of issues and supporting evidence. I hope this moment could be seized for positive impact.

The Federal government of Nigeria, constitutionally saddled with the responsibility of securing lives and property as well as maintaining law and order, has failed woefully. The impunities we witness on several fronts says it all. Unfortunately, rather than engage constructively with the issues raised in the APPG report, the Presidency has adopted its usual reactionary approach of undiscerning condemnation and barefaced denials or the real existential threat to life and wellbeing, probably in a bid to stifle local protest action. We hope the government will listen and become accountable to the citizens. Nigeria's multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic composition have simply been ignored with impunity. The highest echelon of security appointments are dominated literally 90% by Muslims in flagrant disregard of the Federal Character principle enshrined in the Constitution. Sadly, insecurity has never been addressed with a deep sense of purpose or the intentionality required to end the violence and killings. Today in Nigeria, thousands are in captivity in their own homelands. In captivity at the hands of Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, and Bandits. This triumvirate band of killers operates virtually freely in Nigeria. Is it not strange that six years on, some of the Chibok girls (about 103 of them) remain in captivity? In addition, Leah Sharibu and Alice Ngaddah, who have already spent two years in captivity, Grace Tuka, Lilian Daniel Gyang and several others yet to be named, remain in Boko Haram captivity, sadly in their own homelands. Yet, the Nigerian government continues to offer nothing but empty promises.

By naming the diverse drivers and threads fueling the near genocidal killings in Nigeria, the APPG report, titled, 'Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide,' has taken a bold and audacious step towards drawing the much-needed international attention to a serious problem. It is my sincere hope that the Nigerian government will listen to the incisive comments and recommendations put forward in the report. Similarly, will Western Embassies and other foreign Missions in Nigeria and their governments will act to support the implementation of forward-looking change strategies in the report rather than use diplomatic channels to undermine the laudable work of done by the APPG? This remains to be seen. It is the solemn duty of the United Nations and its Member States to listen to the voices of the victims spoken about in this report and act to preserve those being targeted, persecuted or threatened. It is a fact that both Christians and non-Christians are being killed in Nigeria today for different reasons with a complex set of causative factors at play. This is often used to deny the fact that Christians are the victims of religious profiling and terrorism. Will the British government nudge the Nigerian government to end ALL killings - not just of Christians but also others? All lives in Nigeria matter! Sadly, in Nigeria today, not all lives matter.

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Yours Sincerely,



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