

**2022 FOURTH QUARTER MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS  
COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT NICON LUXURY HOTEL, ABUJA,  
FROM DECEMBER 5 TO 7, 2022**

**COMMUNIQUÉ**

**PREAMBLE**

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), under the leadership of the Co-chairmen, the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Eminence, Archbishop (Dr) Daniel Okoh, and His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, held its 2022 Fourth Quarter Meeting at the NICON Luxury Hotel, Abuja, from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 2022. The theme of the meeting was “Peaceful and Credible Elections for National Renaissance”.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Mr. Boss Gida Mustapha, the Permanent Secretary General Services OSGF, Dr. Maurice Nnamdi Mbaeri, the Chief of Defence Staff represented by Rear Admiral Adeseyi Ayobanjo and the Commandant-General of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) represented by Commandant Operations Mr. C.Y. Otoibhi. Also in attendance were foremost traditional rulers, eminent religious leaders and senior government functionaries. The leaderships of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and National Senior Citizens Centre made presentations and sought partnership with NIREC.

The meeting was declared open by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation who expressed his pleasure to have worked with NIREC in furtherance of his mandate of ensuring public safety. The Co-chairmen and the Executive Secretary of NIREC, Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Omonokhua, delivered thought-provoking opening remarks on the imperative of the need for stakeholders to ensure that the 2023 elections are free, fair, peaceful and credible. Two papers were also presented on the theme of the meeting by two scholars from Bayero University, Kano, Dr Saidu Ahmad Dukawa of the Department of Public Administration and Prof. Moses T. Aluaigba of the Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Studies.

**RESOLUTIONS**

After extensive deliberations and deep reflections on the theme of the meeting, the Council unanimously:

1. **tasked** all Nigerians to work together regardless of their political affiliations, ethnic identities and religious backgrounds to ensure that the 2023 elections are free, fair, credible and peaceful;
2. **encouraged** Nigerians not to be distracted by those raising alarms about the stability of Nigeria in the forthcoming General election urging Nigerians to trust God and **affirmed** that Nigerians should trust President Muhammadu Buhari who has promised to guarantee peaceful, credible, free and fair elections in 2023;
3. **urged** political actors to shun politics of corruption, intimidation and exclusion while tasking leaders across political, religious and ethnic divides to avoid hate speech, destructive propaganda and divisive rhetoric in pursuing their political agenda;
4. **called** on Nigerians to understand their differences and be united without necessarily being uniform in pursuing the common goal of achieving peaceful and successful elections;
5. **charged** the youth to reject being used by politicians to foment trouble and perpetrate violence as victims of political violence are always the children of the poor, not those of the politicians;
6. **decried** the erosion of family, ethics, religious and social values among Nigerians which is partly responsible for the prevalence of criminality and insecurity in the nation;
7. **condemned** attacks on places of religious worship and communities by criminals and urged the security agencies to double their efforts in securing the lives and properties of Nigerians;
8. **noted** with serious concern the increasing high cost of living as well as the hardship it poses for millions of Nigerians and urged Governments at all levels to devise means of stabilizing the economy and arresting inflation;
9. **appreciated** the Federal Government for the re-introduction of History into the school curriculum given that we cannot know where we are going without knowing where we are coming from as a people;
10. **appealed** to the Federal Government to urgently implement its earlier decision that Islamic Studies and Christian Religious Studies be taught as distinct subjects in order to deepen knowledge and develop the character of Nigerians more;
11. **enjoined** the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to leave no stone unturned in ensuring free, fair, credible and peaceful elections by providing adequate

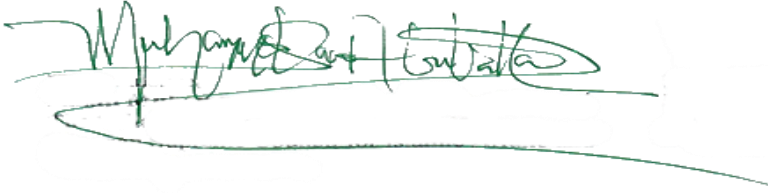
infrastructure and logistics, intensifying voter education and sanctioning politicians who advocate political intolerance or threaten peace;

12. **encouraged** all eligible Nigerians to go out on the election days to vote the candidates of their choice, conduct themselves in an orderly manner, treat polling (INEC) workers with courtesy, respect the privacy of voters, ensure that they thumb-print the ballot correctly and cast it before leaving the polling station, shun vote buying and selling, report problems or violations of electoral law to security agencies and be law-abiding on the election days and always;
13. **urged** civil society organizations to remain active and proactive in sensitizing the general public against electoral violence and pressurize INEC, political parties and their candidates to be transparent and law-abiding;
14. **appealed** to the Federal Government to temper justice with mercy and pay the withheld salaries of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) as a way of averting another strike that may negatively impact on the smooth conduct of the 2023 elections;
15. **advocated** meting out strict punishments to political parties, candidates and their followers who violate the provisions of the Electoral Act, 2022 without fear or favour;
16. **directed** religious leaders across the country to use their platforms and pulpits to preach love, peace, harmony and unity so that Nigerians will appreciate that elections are not a do-or-die affair and only God gives power to whom He wishes;
17. **stressed** the need for Nigerians to be faithful, positive and hopeful while remembering that prayers are powerful, hence the need to pray for Nigeria;
18. **tasked** INEC, politicians, political parties, security agencies, civil society organizations, voters, the media, the social media influencers and the judiciary to prioritise national interest in their activities before, during and after the elections;
19. **commended** the NIREC Youth Forum for its activities since its inauguration in Lagos in September and urged members to report activities within the Nigerian youth community that threaten the peace and security of the Nigerian communities; and
20. **acknowledged** the contributions of the Federal Government through the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF) in promoting inter-religious cooperation between the two major religious communities in Nigeria.

## **APPRECIATION**

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) immensely appreciated the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, towards the successful conduct its 2022 meetings, which were all successfully held. The Council also

thanked the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Gida Mustapha, for his personal interest in, and unflinching support to, the success of NIREC programmes and activities. The Council is no less grateful to the Guest Speakers, Dr Saidu Ahmad Dukawa and Prof. Moses T. Aluaigba, for their deeply engaging presentations on the theme of the meeting. The Council is equally grateful to all partners, guests and stakeholders who contributed in diverse ways towards the successful conclusion of the meeting.



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**His Eminence Alhaji Muhammed Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni**  
The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General,  
Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)  
**CO-CHAIRMAN**



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**His Eminence Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Okoh**  
President, Christian Association of  
Nigeria (CAN)  
**CO-CHAIRMAN**



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**Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua**  
Executive Secretary