

Appendix II

THE COMMUNIQUE

THE SECOND-QUARTER MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT THE BANQUET HALL, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, ILORIN, KWARA STATE FROM 5TH TO 7TH DECEMBER, 2011

The Nigeria Inter Religious Council (NIREC) under the Co-Chairmanship of the Sultan of Sokoto, who is also the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni; and the President of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and President, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor OFR, held its 2nd Quarter-General meeting at the Banquet Hall, Government House, Ilorin, Kwara State from 5th - 7th December, 2011. The meeting was attended by the Council's principal officers, members and specially invited Religious leaders from all zones of the Federation.

The formal Opening Ceremony was held at the Banquet Hall, Ilorin, and was attended by His Excellency, the President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck, Ebele Jonathan GCFR, Governors of Kwara and Niger States Alhaji Abdulfatah Ahmed and Dr. Babangida Aliyu respectively; Deputy Governor Kwara State, Elder Peter Kisirra and Representatives of the Governors of Benue and Ekiti States.

Present also at the Opening were the Chief of Staff to the President, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Information and Communication, the Minister of Labour and Productivity, the Minister of State for Health and members of the National Assembly. Other dignitaries present were, the Speaker and members of the Kwara State House of Assembly. Members of the Kwara State Executive and Security Councils, Secretary to the Kwara State Government, Traditional Rulers, Acting Chief Judge of Kwara State, Hon. Justice Suleiman Kawu; the Grand Khadi of Kwara State, Hon. Justice Haroon Idris; Permanent Secretaries and many top Government functionaries.

A presentation of “**Global Restriction on Religion: The Nigerian Ranking**” was made by Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, the National Coordinator of NIREC. It was the 2010 Pew Research Centre’s global analysis of religious hostilities and restrictions and their impact on societies around the world.

The Council:

- Expressed its gratitude to the President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR for honouring the invitation and declaring the meeting open.
- Was grateful to His Excellency, the Governor, the Government and people of Kwara State for their hospitality.
- Thanked the Governor of Niger State, Dr. Babangida Aliyu for his adequate representation of the Governors of the North Central Zone.
- Thanked the Governors of Benue and Ekiti States for sending their representatives.

The Council also observed that:

- NIREC continues to be an essential medium in dealing with issues that affect the wellbeing of Nigerians.
- Religious and traditional leaders have central responsibility in fostering harmony and peaceful coexistence in the nation.
- Violence and insecurity in the country are on the rise.
- Peace and security of life and property are essential for the promotion of democratic principles and development of the nation.

RESOLUTIONS

The Council

Urges all Nigerians to live and act out our motto of “Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.”

On the Role of Traditional and Religious Leaders

- i. Urges both the Christians and Muslims and especially religious leaders to continue to dialogue in order to promote peace and religious harmony in Nigeria.
- ii. Urges religious leaders to continue to preach peaceful co-existence and National unity.
- iii. Appeals to all religious leaders and stake holders to avoid provocative or reckless preaching and utterances which are inimical to Peace and harmony in the Nation.

On Same sex marriage

- iv. Commends the Senate for passing the Bill against same sex marriage because the practice offends the moral sensibility of our people and urges the House of Representatives to promptly follow suit.
- v. Urges the Government not to succumb to pressure from any external group to undermine the shared values of the country.

On Corruption

- vi. Strongly condemns corruption and urges the Governments to vigorously address the menace.

On Youth Employment

- vii. Calls on the Government and the Private sector to create jobs for the teeming youth and reduce poverty in the land.

On the Teaching of Religion in Schools

- viii. Appeals to the Federal Ministry of Education to effect the directive of Government that the teaching of Christian Religious/Islamic Studies should be compulsory in Primary and Secondary schools to curb anti social behaviour among the youth.
- ix. Emphasises that War Against Indiscipline and corruption should be re-launched and vigorously prosecuted in Nigeria.

On Family Values

- x. Advocates the re-introduction of projects and programmes to strengthen family values as a basis for building a strong and disciplined society.

On Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) Strike

- xi. Appeals to ASUU to suspend its strike and avoid unnecessary disruption of University education in the country. The Government should re-appraise the issues/accord reached and implement same without further delay.

On Boko Haram

- xii. The Boko Haram menace and other security threats in the country must be effectively addressed by all means. Shedding the blood of

innocent persons is an abomination before God and clearly condemned by our faiths. It is also a crime against the laws of the nation. Any one found culpable should be charged under the Criminal Code with murder.

On Security

xiii. Calls for a general review of security administration for effect.

On Fuel Deregulation

xiv. Appreciates Mr. President for addressing the Council on the issue of fuel deregulation and it urges the Government to carry on wider consultations with other stakeholders.

Conclusion

xv. Commends the Co-Chairmen of the Council for their purposeful leadership and the National Coordinator and the Secretariat for their excellent work.

Prof. Is-haq Oloyede

National Coordinator/Executive Secretary

His Eminence,
Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni
The Sultan of Sokoto and
President General, Nigerian Supreme Council
for Islamic Affairs.
Co-Chairman (NIREC)

Pastor Ayodele Joseph Oritsejafor, OFR
President, Christian Association of
Nigeria (CAN) & President,
Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
Co-Chairman (NIREC)