



National Christian Elders Forum

Motto: Watch & Pray that we may be one ...

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MURIC

Lagos

REJOINDER - MURIC TO CHRISTIAN ELDERS ON ONNOGHEN, GOWON: YOUR POSITION IS PEDESTRIAN

Introduction and Coup of 1975

Ordinarily, the NCEF would have ignored your article titled “**MURIC to Christian Elders on Onnoghen, Gowon: your position pedestrian**”, published by The Eagle online, April 23, 2019, but for two fundamental mistakes (a) that you chose to use former CJN Onnoghen and our respected former Head of State as subjects of attack; and (b) your use of the word “pedestrian”, which the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines as “without any imagination or excitement, dull.” This Rejoinder is unusually long for the purpose of stating the entire facts based upon which we drew our conclusion with respect to jihad – stealth and conventional. As Elders and, in some cases, “dramatis personae” in many of the actions under review, we want to put the record straight on the question of the coup of July 29, 1975 and jihad in Nigeria.

There is need to understand the phenomenon that was responsible for the killing of 50 Muslim worshippers in New Zealand and the killing of over 250 Christian worshippers and hotel guests in Sri Lanka, as it is clear that most Nigerians do not understand the meaning of jihad, one of the tenets of Islam. In the said statement, you wrote “we find it

hard to believe that General Yakubu Gowon in particular, a former head of state, will belong to a group that stands logic on its head and twists the facts of history. How did the overthrow of Gowon in 1975 constitute a jihad? This is a most irrational claim. Our people say when a child rejects evening pounded yam his parents will narrate to him the story of his mother's marriage. But what do we say about elders who falsify facts? We must beckon on historians to bail us out."

We want to make it clear that General Yakubu Gowon is not a member of NCEF. Having got the membership of NCEF wrong, MURIC also got its facts wrong.

In 1975, all members of the NCEF were also in positions of mature Christian stakeholders in Nigeria. With respect to those who planned the overthrow of General Gowon, we reproduce below, the statement of General Ibrahim Babangida as published in the book **Ibrahim Babangida: The Military, Politics and Power in Nigeria** by Dan Agbese to wit: "sometime in January, 1975, Lt-Col Shehu Musa Yar'Adua took Lt-Col Ibrahim Babangida out on an evening drive in Lagos. Their initial subject of discussion was the gathering of army officers in Lagos for a military activity. The conversation later drifted to the state of the nation and the Gowon administration. Then quite suddenly, Yar'Adua stopped the car. He turned to Babangida and told him **he was planning to topple the Gowon administration**. A few minutes of awkward silence ensued between them --- Babangida was on his guard. "I thought he was trying to size me up," he now says. Was someone trying to set him up? He quickly dismissed that fear because he and Yar'Adua were too close and too trusting of each other for the latter to contemplate booby-trapping him. Although they were of the same rank, Yar'Adua was Babangida's senior by one term. Yar'Adua was course five and Babangida course six in the NMTC. Babangida asked Yar'Adua why he was thinking of a coup against Gowon. Yar'Adua reeled off a litany of complaints against the Gowon administration. Most of what he said were not new to Babangida --- Babangida told Yar'Adua he shared his views on all the issues he raised. "I also shared the same conviction," Babangida admits. He says he was aware of "this strong belief that we needed a change, a new sense of direction. At that time, it was very clear to me that there was a general apathy, a general frustration within the society, so there had to be a change." [pg. 109]

The period 1975, was a period of militant Islam which the Wahabi Muslims of Saudi Arabia introduced to the world and here we were with two Muslim Colonels who planned a coup against a Christian C-in-C which, with the benefit of hindsight, can be regarded as a jihad following subsequent events years after periods of military rule, Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen, etc.

Militant Islamist is defined as a group or individual advocating Islamist ideological goals, principally by violent means. Militant Islamists call for the strictest possible interpretation of both the Quran (Muslim book of divine revelation) and the hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's actions and deeds). This narrow interpretation opposes the beliefs of Muslims and non-Muslims alike; Militant Islamists stand against Western democracies, Middle Eastern institutions of government, and Islamist political parties that participate non-violently in elections. Although Militant Islamists call for the establishment of an Islamic state, they are characterized by a lack of any socio-economic agenda and impose their narrow views by force upon other Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Examples of Militant Islamists include al-Qaeda and its affiliates. **CDR Youssef, Aboul-Enein Militant Islamic Ideology, Understanding the Global Threat** [pg. 1] Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria have been included in the list of most dangerous militant Islamist groups in the world.

The night of the coup of July 29, 1975, a meeting was held by the core plotters at 3, Kofu Abayomi Street, Victoria Island under the chairmanship of Col. Ochefu. Those present at the meeting including Musa Yar'Adua (**who read out the operational order**), were Garba, Muktar Mohammed, Aduloju, Tarfa Babangida, Buhari, Taiwo, Abdullahi Mohammed and Sani Bello with Yar'Adua as the leader, [Gowon, J. Isawa Elaigwu, pg. 230] four Christians and seven Muslims.

The arguments then that Gowon had overstayed his welcome as Head of State and was thus unpopular are no longer tenable. The leader of the plotters was Col. Shehu Yar'Adua and the false notion that their C-in-C, five years after a successful civil war was unpopular and must be removed, in order to hand over power to "bloody civilians" is untenable. History has shown that 1975 was the height of Islamic fundamentalism or militant Islamism; the seven Muslims and four Christians who spearheaded the coup were all colonels. We hold the view that Gowon was overthrown because his plan was to hand over power to a democratically elected Nigerian leader and enthrone democracy. The coup plotters, on the other hand, decided to stop this process. Immediately after the coup or jihad of 1975, two of the four Christian actors, Joe Garba was made Foreign Affairs Minister, Aduloju was made a flag officer commanding Western Command, Ochefu became Governor of South-Eastern State, while Tarfa was appointed Governor of Western Nigeria, thereby getting them out of the way in the day to day running of Nigeria including the mass purge of Christians in the Civil Service that followed. At any rate, Christians like Obasanjo, Danjuma, Isa Doko, Michael Adelanwa did not participate in the coup but were beneficiaries of the exercise in the usual attempt to strike a balance of Christians and Muslims in government at the time. Presently, it has become an all-Muslim affair especially with stealth jihad. In 1979 (four years after 1975 coup plot), the

military handed over power to civilians. Another coup was staged in 1983 for the removal of a moderate Muslim, Shehu Shagari and, for 16 years, militant “Islamist” leaders were in charge. We hold the view that as a strategy, Christians and moderate Muslims were allowed to rule from 1999 to 2015, until Buhari became President after four attempts. Thus the 1975 coup can be regarded as a jihad, so also was the coup against Shagari a moderate Muslim. “Jihad in a broad, Islamic view, means to struggle or exert effort. Jihad can be as simple as struggling to get up in the early morning to say your dawn prayers or struggling to learn and improve yourself spiritually or intellectually. It also can mean struggling in the path of God, which does not necessarily mean engaging in warfare but might be making time to teach Islam to children or providing financial support for an Islamic project. Jihad means to struggle to fulfill your obligations to God, both moral and spiritual, on a daily basis. **Islamists narrow this definition, insisting that Jihad means to expend every effort fighting against the disbelievers**, but even Islamists delineate who can fight and when; unlike Militant Islamists, they generally set rules and limits for engaging in fighting in the name of God. Islamists generally believe that the Jihad (in their definition) is a communal obligation and that if enough members of the community fulfill this responsibility, the rest of the community is absolved. It makes Jihad obligatory upon all Muslims only if the enemy has entered Muslim lands and if the imam calls for Jihad. Jihad is obligatory only upon individuals meeting certain conditions, according to Islamists - such as being sane, adult, male, and free from physical infirmities, and having the funds needed to participate.” [Militant Islamist Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat, CDR Youssef H. Aboul-Enein, pg. 34] It is militant Islamists who are our major adversaries as well as Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen. They represent the immediate threat to our National Security. From the above, the Nigerian situation becomes precarious because both the militant and non-militant Islamists are desirous of converting Nigeria to an Islamic State.

Justice Walter Onnoghen in Stealth Jihad

MURIC’s publication continued “the most arbitrary claim of the group has to do with the removal of the suspended CJN. NCEF claimed the removal of Onnoghen is a continuation of stealth jihad which began with the coup against Gowon. It is as ludicrous as it is infantile.” We, of the NCEF, are of the very strong view that many Muslims do not follow the directives of Sharia, much less engage in jihad but these Muslims unfortunately, provide the sea in which jihadists swim. Muslims in Nigeria do not offer meaningful opposition to the militant Islamists’ agenda. The inquiry into Maitatsine disturbance in 1982 and Jimeta of 1984 were the last two commissions of inquiry into Muslim religious

disturbances in Nigeria; while the Kano enquiry was published, the Jimeta one was not. The attitude of Muslims in Nigeria, gives non-Muslims the impression that they approve of jihad designed to turn Nigeria into a Caliphate. The non-militant Muslims however, may not approve of the violent methods. Unfortunately, the owners of the backyard in which Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen plan their operations as well as those providing the arms and ammunition including propaganda, etc are parties to the same crime and therefore guilty of jihad, especially when it is an open secret that Islamists are engaged in a global war of conquest - jihad. **We want to re-state once again that the attack on Onnoghen, a Christian is the determination of the Muslim Executive to have a dominant position, unchallenged by either the Legislature or Judiciary.** Throughout Military rule, the Legislature was non-existent and at the return to Democracy in 1999, a Legislative arm at Federal and State was programmed to be dominated by the Executive. This practice is common in Sunni Muslim world of the 21st century. Nigeria is being **piloted** to accept a dominant Executive which is the case in all states of the federation but not at Federal or National level.

Stealth Jihad

The definition of stealth jihad can be inferred from Leo Hohmann's book **Stealth Invasion: Muslim Conquest through Immigration and Resettlement Jihad**, which states: "unlike the violent jihad we see in daily acts of terror around the world, civilization jihad is **stealthy** and less obvious. It uses migration (al-hijra), high birthrates, and lack of assimilation to build a parallel society - a society within a **society** - **in unsuspecting Western democracies where knowledge of Islam's major tenets of sharia and jihad remain abysmally thin.** This strategy will allow for the taking of America (as it would also in Nigeria) without firing a shot, just like that Trojan horse mentioned earlier, by eating away at our freedoms, one bite at a time. **It may take fifty or even a hundred years to complete the takeover, but that's okay.** Islam is in this fight for the long term and can patiently wait for the attainment of its ultimate goal, which is nothing less than the replacement of the U.S. Constitution and the subjugation of the people it governs." [Emphasis supplied] [pg. 30] Jihad in Nigeria is both conventional and stealth.

Onnoghen's Case

The Nigerian Constitution provides for separation of powers and the Executive does not have judicial powers yet the highest official of the Judiciary, Chief Justice Onnoghen was tried by the lowest cadre in the Executive tribunal, the CCT whose members do not take

the judicial oath because it is an administrative tribunal. There is a presumption in law that all Executive tribunals are inferior to the High Court of Records and they are equivalent to Magistrate's Courts. "Sharia" principles (not common law principles) were adopted by the CCT in the trial (Jihad) of Chief Justice Onnoghen. The charges were prepared by the Executive based on the petition by the Executive (Presidency) and the CJN was found guilty by the Executive and Sharia punishment meted out to him. The whole exercise was conducted by a Muslim President, a Muslim Attorney-General, a Muslim Prosecutor through a Muslim tribunal. The two Christian members of the panel were not allowed to speak throughout the proceedings by the Muslim Chairman. The judgment of the tribunal included Onnoghen's removal from office after he had submitted a notice of retirement, being barred for 10 years from holding public office and forfeiture of his domiciliary account to the government. To seal the jihad, a Muslim was appointed the acting CJN even before the trial began. The former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor now Emir of Kano, was a serving officer in the Executive under Jonathan who had the power to hire and fire anybody under the Executive. The comparison, in the circumstance, is misplaced.

Stealth Jihad by the Executive against non-Islamist Nigerians

The incumbent President came into office with the manifesto to improve security, quell Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, banditry, kidnapping etc. So far, he has not succeeded in addition, he has refused to obey court orders with respect to Colonel Dasuki (rtd) who has been in custody for over three years despite being granted bail by the Court. The President deployed the military for election duties contrary to the Constitution and would not allow election results to be transmitted digitally notwithstanding the millions of US dollars that was expended on the equipment that were all functioning. The Executive would rather have vigilantes, hunters and the like in the states rather than well-equipped, well-trained State and Local Government Police. Thus the arrest and prosecution of jihadists have proved very difficult, if not impossible, because of stealth jihad. This has further been compounded by the re-integration of Boko Haram terrorists said to have repented back into the society. The huge cost to Christians through activities or inactivity that constitute stealth jihad are getting higher by the day. This includes also the activities of groups like MURIC which desire that the Nigerian Constitution be replaced or amended so as to comply in all particulars, with Islamic Sharia law. The incumbent President of Nigeria has said he has the duty to spread Sharia influence throughout Nigeria.

Amalgamation and Genocide

Amalgamation is one of the issues raised by MURIC which, it said, cannot be attributed to the Fulani. This is, to a certain extent correct, but our contention however is that the Fulani have no right to behave like the colonial British by introducing neo-colonialism in their quest for Islamism in Nigeria. On the question of genocide in Rwanda, NCEF is of the view that the killing of Southerners especially Ndi'gbo that took place in Northern Nigeria in 1966 – 1967 is genocide notwithstanding the fact that in Nigeria, we did not preserve the relics of the genocide and resultant the Civil War. The very important reason for the statement by NCEF is to prevent another civil war since no nation ever survived two civil wars.

CAN and NCEF

The insinuation that NCEF has been disowned by CAN, is yet another stealth jihad. The militant Islamists got the President of CAN to denounce one of its own. The NCEF is praying for the present leadership of CAN to stop being an instrument of stealth jihad. From media reports, it is very clear that the present President of CAN, Rev. Supo Ayokunle PhD is on its own and because the prize is right, he is prepared to discredit the strongest arm Christians have in Nigeria that is opposed to militant Islam. Did the President of CAN as President of Baptist Convention not also used the Police to close down a Baptist Church in Ibadan? No one can deny us, NCEF, the fact that we are among the primary stakeholders of Christianity in Nigeria, the five Church groups that make up the Body of Christ in Nigeria. We have invested everything to promote Christianity in Nigeria. No one can suggest that he is more important than others simply because he holds an office in CAN. We feel that we have a vested interest in the success of Christianity and Democratic Nigeria and will not be silenced by agents of jihad. However, we will continue to pray for the incumbent President of CAN. Fortunately, the Vice President of CAN – Professor Joseph Otubu is one of us, which suggest the depth of how stealth jihad has divided Christians in Nigeria and especially in the use of fallen Christians to abuse elders in order to frustrate them and prevent them from speaking out against militant Islamist jihadists. Stealth jihad has affected our sense of morality even as Christian clergy. We, Elders are reminded that even Jesus was denied by one of His disciples – Peter.

It is not in the habit of Africans for children to abuse their elders. The NCEF will also pray for MURIC for its insulting statement that **“members of the NCEF should not tarry until Nigerians start sending anti-senility drugs to them before they take**

CAN's advice." This invective is as foul-mouthed as they come! We will continue to pray for all Nigerians even as we will continue to reveal tenets of Sharia and jihad which has remained abysmally thin in the knowledge of most Nigerians, Christians and Muslims alike with particular reference to the incompatibility of Democracy and Sharia. Insults from MURIC will not stop us because we believe that as Christians we have a duty to answer to our Creator on judgment day.

National Security and Civil Defence Corps

We have decided to include this topic although no mention was made by MURIC concerning NSCDC in their militant Islamic presentation against NCEF because the introduction of the quasi security unit portray the operational method of stealth jihad. On Easter day in Gombe one of its personnel, a civil defence officer, drove into a Christian procession, killed 18 children and was himself lynched. The head of the Civil Defence Corps as a result, ordered his corps to "work out a time table for **security profiling** and **psychological test** of all personnel". This is excellent and we commend the NSCDC Commandant-General, Alhaji Gana and hope that the NSCDC remains a civil defence organ to help Nigerians in a state of emergency rather than another instrument of stealth jihad. Section (f) i - viii of its Act provides as follows: "(f) power to arrest with or without a warrant, detain, investigate and institute legal proceedings by or in the name of the Attorney-General of the Federation in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria against any person who is reasonably suspected to have committed an offence under this Act or is involved in any: (i) Criminal activity; (ii) Chemical poison or oil spillage, nuclear waste, poisoning; (iii) Industry espionage or fraud; (iv) Activity aimed at frustrating any government program or policy; (v) Riot, civil disorder, revolt, strike, or religious unrest'; (vi) Power transmission lines, oil pipelines, NIPOST cables equipment, water borne pipes or equipment vandalization; (vii) Monitor the activities of religious bodies and trade associations; (viii) Monitor, investigate, and take every necessary step to forestall any planned Act of terrorism particularly: (a) Cult and Ethnic militia activities; and (b) Criminal activities aimed at depriving citizens of their properties or lives". These are very wide powers not functions for a Civil Defence organization. These powers make NSCDC superior to Nigerian Police and we submit that this section of the Act is unconstitutional.

In the Spirit of Jihad

Nigeria has security problems, banditry, kidnapping, Boko haram, Fulani herdsmen, etc, with very large security apparatus which include the armed forces that now sees itself as part of internal security performing election duties. All the para-military organizations, the Nigerian Police, Customs, Immigration, Prisons, Intelligence Services, Road Safety, NSCDC, etc are all concentrated in the Federal Government. The States and Local Government leaders styled Chief Security officers have no security apparatus. The only instrument to fight crime is a whopping sum of N500m (five hundred million Naira) “monthly” on security per state. Yet crime persists. We hold the view that we need to look inward for the reasons of insecurity and strategize. The NCEF is in a position to help unless, of course, the Executive had decided to shut its gates to fresh ideas.

Willink’s Report

A study of the **Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them** shows quite clearly that all that is happening presently in Nigeria were appreciated by the minorities of the North including Christians. Although, today, Christians are no longer the minority of the North, they are treated as minorities and discriminated against.

The Willink’s report of 1958 provides as follows: “in the Northern Region as a whole, the population is divided between three main religious groups. Muslim, Animist and Christians, as follows: Moslems - **11,322,000**, Animists - **4,279,000**, Christians - **547,000**. Both Christians and Animists expressed fears to us regarding the future; once again, these fears were not particularly impressive when marshaled item by item, but that a general feeling of apprehension exists we have no doubt. We should however say at the outset that those who appeared before us as representatives of Christian bodies stated clearly that they did not wish for any political separation; they did express the hope that the new Constitution would embody a statement on human rights which would give religious minorities the freedom to practice their religion and which would specifically lay down that there should be no obstacle to a person changing his religion.” [**Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them, Willink Report** pg.64] The NCEF still maintains that Christians in Nigeria do not wish for political separation. Unfortunately, Willink cannot be recalled for us, Christians, to say ‘we told you so’ regarding: (a) fears and grievance regarding Traditional Rulers pg. 58; (b) social fears and grievances pg. 59; (c) fears of Political Influence pg. 60; (d) fears regarding Foreign Policy pg. 61; (e) relations with Native

Authorities pg. 62; (f) fears of Religious Intolerance pg. 64; (e) fear of Muslim law pg. 66. Commission summary provides as follows: “We consider that the fears of minorities in respect of Muslim Law would be reduced if the Government of the Northern Region were to adopt the following proposals, some of which they already have in mind: (i) Non-Muslims to have the option of being dealt with by non-Muslim courts: (this presupposes that the North is an Islamic North). We believe that, if the Government of the Northern Region decided to reform the administration of the law in these and certain other respects, they will very considerably reduce the fears felt by minorities and ease the passage to independence.”

It is very clear from the above that Willink was wrong in believing that democracy will carry the future notwithstanding Hausa/Fulani which the Commission found to be an ideology thus: “many witnesses have referred to their fears of Fulani-Hausa domination, and though the meaning of this phrase was not always expressed in terms, or even consciously analyzed by those who used it, it clearly implies a system of rule and of society of which an important ingredient is the operation of Muslim Law. Some witnesses have specifically referred to this system of law as an object of fear.” [pg. 66] The Commission continued **“the whole structure of the proceedings leading to independence is based on the belief that Nigeria means to follow the road of liberal democracy and parliamentary government; to base parts of the structure on the opposite assumption is to invite governments to do their worst. But if that road is followed, votes will count and in the last resort it is the votes that will win fair treatment for minorities.”**

Between 1958 and today, Northern Nigeria has grown with over 100 million. It is clear that these are the fruits of Christianity – that include democracy, peace, development and life more abundant here on earth. The Christian religion is formidable and enduring because of these listed contributions to humanity.

Final Stages against Democracy

The question to ponder is whether Nigeria has reached the final stages of conventional and stealth jihad against democracy, in that violence is implicit in jihad, destroys the acquired Western civilization in the country from within. Sharia thus provides that only Allah can make laws and that democratic rule involving human legislation is not permissible. Therefore, the destruction of Western-style system which, unfortunately, includes democracy is obligatory. Ultimately, the Islamists intend to establish an Islamic caliphate in the world and we cannot derive effective policy from the view that Islamic

law and tradition justify militant Islamists ideology as this line of thinking leads to “clash of civilization.” “Once Militant Islamists have triumphed over a regional threat, they set up an Islamic government in their image. Such a government will eventually have no room for national, tribal, or religious differences, and it will misuse Islam to submerge these differences. There may be a short-term triumph over a tribal rival, but this will be short-lived; Egyptians, Saudis, and Algerians within the Militant Islamist movement will have more and more say in the affairs of the tribe protecting them. This inevitable schism needs to be explored and, if possible, amplified to induce tribes protecting these elements to purge them from their ranks, to avoid being marginalized by tribal rivals.” [**Stealth Invasion: Muslim Conquest through Immigration and Resettlement Jihad Leo Hohmann, pg. 211**] Nigeria Muslims need to purge militant Islamists in their midst such as Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen.

Nigeria must not Burn

It is the hope of National Christian Elders Forum (NCEF) that the words of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini spoken in 1980 that “we do not worship Iran, we worship Allah – I say let this land (Iran) burn. I say let this land go up in smoke, **provided Islam emerges triumphant**” [Emphasis supplied] [Andrew Boston <http://www.andrewboston.org>], will not become operational in Nigeria. Insecurity in Nigeria of 2019, suggests a last resort for the Islamists in Nigeria. Politics of exclusion which has been promoted in the last four years by President Buhari is unacceptable. Christian states mainly, have borne the country’s finance burden since amalgamation in 1914 and all they demand is to be treated with respect. The NCEF is also convinced that if elements among Christians that participate in the “jihad” as collaborators and propaganda agents for the Islamist should stop being part of the stealth jihad, the militant Islamists in Nigeria would reduce in numbers and effect. Sharia has altered fundamentally the character of Nigeria as a country especially in the area of democracy and rule of law. We must all join hands to do more of jaw jaw not Boko Haram, not Fulani herdsmen to move Nigeria from the status of a country to that of a nation.

By their fruits

The British highest-ranking man of the cloth, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said Christians should not share their faith with Muslims unless they are asked. Archbishop Justin Welby made the comments at an inter-faith event that included Islamic and Jewish leaders. He insisted Christians should not actively proselytize non-Christians, the UK’s

Express reported [**Stealth Invasion: Muslim Conquest through Immigration and Resettlement Jihad**, Leo Hohmann pg. 120] This statement was made on May 21, 2016.

Pope Francis also made a similar statement when he greeted Father Jean-Pierre Schumacher, a French monk who survived the Tibhirine killings, where seven Trappist monks and 12 other Catholics were kidnapped from the monastery of Tibhirine, south of Algiers in 1996 and killed, in the Rabat Cathedral, Morocco. Pope Francis was in Morocco for a two-day trip aimed at enhancing the North African nation's Christian-Muslim ties, while also showing solidarity with migrants at Europe's door and tending to a tiny Catholic flock. Speaking to a small community of priests, religious and the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Morocco, Pope Francis said that consecrated people are not called to "govern" the people entrusted to them but to "love" them. Despite being outnumbered in a country where 99 percent of society is Muslim and there are only an estimated 40,000 Catholics, Francis said Christians are called to be the "yeast" of Morocco. "The problem is not when we are few in number, but when we are insignificant, [like] salt that has lost the flavor of the Gospel or lamps that no longer shed light," he said. Our mission as baptized persons, priests and consecrated men and women, is not really determined by the number or size of spaces that we occupy, but rather by our capacity to generate change and to awaken wonder and compassion, the pope said. We do this by the way we live as disciples of Jesus, in the midst of those with whom we share our daily lives, joys and sorrows, suffering and hopes. The paths of mission are not those of "proselytism," Francis said, as it always leads to a "cul-de-sac." Christians especially the consecrated in Nigeria can generate change if they lead in the direction of justice for all Nigerians including Christians in Nigeria

Conclusion

We agree that what Nigerians need now is peaceful environment but this cannot be achieved when one section of the populace (Christians) is marginalized. We also agree that there cannot be meaningful development without peace and stability. It is not justice that IPOB is declared a terrorist organization while the Miyetti Allah that have issued statements on behalf of Fulani herdsmen who attacked and killed farmers in most states of the country, is yet to be declared a terrorist organization. The NCEF has come to the firm belief that the experimentation of Sharia and its tenets of apostasy, Islamic supremacy, jihad, Taqiyya among others, in a democratic Nigeria and in competition with democracy have been responsible for the difficulty in peaceful co-existence with other

religions and Ethnic Nationalities that do not believe in and are not willing to be bound by these tenets. It is not justice that these facts, notwithstanding, Christians by their contributions to the common purse are made to pay for the injustices meted out to them. NCEF, as a group of Elders, is merely drawing the attention of both the Government and the governed to these injustices due to the conflict between Democracy and Sharia.

As Christians we believe that we are the salt of the earth and light of the world. It is in this spirit that we send this Rejoinder. It is a well-known fact that Nigeria and Nigerians are blessed. You find them everywhere in the world and in the highest echelons of professions and callings, but it appears that Nigerians are unable to find solutions to man-made problems, (some say man-made disasters) plaguing the country which some have attributed to the problem of leadership. The NCEF is saying that in addition to leadership, conflict of two contradictory ideologies is the main problem. Since amalgamation (1914), a period of racism, this evil of racism and superiority of religion were planted in our country by the policy of Divide and Rule. The North was the first to threaten secession then Ndi'gbo followed with Baifra. The threat continues even today and some are still thinking of how to pull out of Nigeria including the Oduduwa 'Republic' already with emblems, flag etc. The truth is that if any part of Nigeria breaks away, the blessing of diversity will be lost. We will be losers not winners. The breakaway portion can neither be moved to Europe or America; we remain Nigerians.

The NCEF has suggested severally, that the contradictory ideology of Democracy and Sharia at play in Nigeria is responsible for her instability. Nigeria has to choose one of the two not both. It is hoped that the 'super' Executive that wants to swallow the Legislature and the Judiciary will find time to read papers prepared by NCEF. They may learn a thing or two and not see jihad as the final solution rather than as separation of powers. The Puritans in America refused to give anyone too much power because of their belief in human depravity. Power has a corrupting influence and could be used to oppress others. For that reason, the authority of the leaders was carefully monitored. We must do the same in Nigeria.

God bless Nigeria



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