

Boko Haram: Clarion call on the Nigerian Government and Muslims

On behalf of the Nigerian Muslim Network (NMN), we wish to express our grief on the way and manner lives of hundreds of Muslims were lost recently in the Boko Haram crisis, which engulfed Bauchi, Borno, Yobe, Kano and Katsina States. From all indications, this disaster could have been averted had Nigerian Muslims populace and governments, both federal and state, taken diplomatic and civil approaches early enough.

The Nigerian government could have prevented or at least brought Boko Haram members to justice for crimes they might have committed against the government and innocent citizens of this country in the course of their activities by the use of intelligence services. Information at our disposal shows that the group and her activities were common knowledge, at least to government and non-governmental agencies in the northern parts of the country before the break-out of the unfortunate violent unrest.

The unscrupulous use of force by Nigerian Police and Military in this crisis is highly unprofessional, even as it constitutes gross abuse of human rights and an unconscionable waste of human and material resources. Equally, the conflicting reports from government agents on the cause of the crisis put well-meaning citizens in doubt on the authenticity of government account.

It is extremely important that government brings to book the policemen and women who carried out extra-judicial killing of the members of the Boko Haram and other innocent Nigerians just because they dressed in a manner that portrayed them as Muslims. The law enforcement agents in Nigeria should understand that wearing of beard or trousers that do

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not go beyond the ankle has nothing to do with any sect or group of Muslims and should not be used as weapon with which Muslims could be demonised or described as terrorists.

On a last note, we wish to appeal to Muslim parents and communities throughout the country to guard and guide their wards so as not to fall prey to misguided pseudo Islamic scholars. Islam enjoins Muslims to seek for knowledge and endeavour to be educated in as much as it is beneficial to humanity and the learning environment is devoid of what is forbidden in Islam.

It is our aspiration that all stakeholders among the Muslim leaders and government will adopt better strategies to prevent such carnage in the future.

Signed,

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Affairs Committee (2008 – 2010)

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