

PRESS RELEASE: US Groups Join Survivor to Mark Anniversary Of Nigeria Terror Massacre, Seek United Nations' Humanitarian Response for Victims

January 6, 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Several US organizations advocating on Nigeria today marked the official start of the anti-Christian genocide in northern Nigeria on January 6, 2012.

From the time it issued an ultimatum, shortly after blowing up churches on Christmas day, asking Christians to leave Northern Nigeria in January 2012 or die, Boko Haram has prosecuted a pernicious and systematic campaign of extermination. Funerals for randomly killed non-Muslim “others” have been attacked, companies have been raided and non-Muslims summarily executed by shots to the head, buses have been stopped with the occupants separated and systematically slaughtered. More Christians were killed in northern Nigeria in 2012 than throughout the rest of the world.

Today, the Working Group on Nigeria joins with Ike Nzeribe, the sole survivor of Boko Haram’s Mubi massacre of January 6th 2012, to remember the estimated 2000 Christians who have been killed since then. 14 Christians were killed when they gathered to mourn another murdered Christian in Mubi in northern Nigeria. After being medi-vaced abroad, Ike continues to undergo surgery for shots to his head – a hallmark of Boko Haram’s vicious attacks.

While we commend the designation by the US of Boko Haram as an FTO during an Africa sub-committee congressional hearing in November, as Congressman Chris Smith noted then, “What I learnt on the trip (to Nigeria) was that victims of the terrorism are not receiving ... assistance from the international community including the United States. Individual private voluntary charitable groups ...are stepping up to the plate... but in nowhere near approximating the need of these individuals who are now IDPs and have PTSD problems.”

Accordingly we ask the following:

1. That the United Nations Security Council impose sanctions to restrict terror financing flows to Boko Haram. This is only logical as the UK, US and Canada are amongst the countries whose governments have done so.
This is even more necessary since the majority of permanent members of the UN Security Council have lost citizens to the Boko Haram (France, UK, China). Furthermore Boko Haram has in fact bombed UN offices itself in August 2011 killing 25 people.
2. That the UN reimburse Nigeria for the cost of rebuilding its bombed office by setting up a Victim Compensation Fund to provide compensation and humanitarian assistance to victims. It is unfair for the UN to benefit from this tragedy while poor victim citizens are deprived of similar restitution. The UN should pay its bills and give back to its hurting hosts. (The letter sent to the UN Secretary-General is attached.)
3. That the US, EU and other international partners similarly assist victims to help mitigate the potential for violent escalation. END

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Members of the Working Group on Nigeria signed this letter to the United Nations:

January 6, 2014

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General
U.N. Headquarters
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.

Dear Secretary-General Ban,

On behalf of the Washington Working Group on Nigeria, we would like to thank you for your service to the global community in promoting international cooperation, peace and security. The Working Group on Nigeria is a coalition of U.S. organizations working in the U.S., the U.N., I.C.C. and other fora advocating for peace, justice and humanitarian assistance in response to the insurgency in northern Nigeria.

Pursuant to our efforts, on November 13th, 2013, the U.S. government designated the Nigerian jihadists group Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The United Kingdom, Canada, and Nigeria have also designated Boko Haram a Terrorist Organization. By designating Boko Haram a Terrorist Organization, these nations have placed financial sanction on Boko Haram and their affiliates.

Boko Haram's 200+ body count in the January 20, 2012 massacre was the highest single death toll in any conflict worldwide exceeding Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan and tied only with Syria. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) reported that Boko Haram was the second most deadly terrorist group for the year 2012 ranking only behind the Taliban – and ahead of Al Qaeda.

Similarly:

- As you are well aware, thousands of lives have been lost in this largely silent slaughter in Nigeria at the hands of Boko Haram including members of your own staff in the 2011 U.N. bombing.
- Nearly one-third of the religious institutions targeted globally in 2012 were located in Nigeria, where Boko Haram overwhelmingly attacked churches.
- There were more attacks on religious institutions in Nigeria than there were attacks on diplomatic embassies around the world combined (diplomatic institutions including the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the UN as well as consulates, embassies, and diplomatic personnel)

The time has indeed come to help bring an end to what you have described as “senseless violence” and to aid those that have lost so much especially as it has now assumed international humanitarian dimensions with thousands of refugees in Cameroun, Chad and Niger.

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Regrettably, there is currently no victim compensation fund for the victims of these massacres as Nigeria's President announced that he would not provide compensation. Apart from the limited relief efforts some of our members are undertaking, we are not aware of any support by multilateral or international donors to victims in Nigeria.

However, the Nigerian government is reportedly spending over 30 million dollars to repair the U.N. building in Abuja after it was bombed in 2011. Over 100 churches have been destroyed since the U.N. bombing in 2011, about 3 mosques attacked and thousands of homes, farms and businesses as well, yet the Nigerian government has offered no restitution for the victims.

These victims are desperate. Desperation and destitution in the face of impunity are potential drivers for retaliation and escalation. This needs to be urgently mitigated.

On this 2nd anniversary of the Mubi Massacre of January, 6, 2012, we the undersigned organizations join Ike Nzeribe, the sole survivor of that attack, and urge the U.N. to repay at a minimum the equivalent amount of the renovation costs towards a **Victim Compensation Fund**. We consider it unfair for the world's top diplomatic institution, which is funded by national governments to derive a benefit from the Nigerian government when Nigeria's own indigent citizens who lack the social welfare safety net and perquisites of diplomats are deprived of the same.

Our data shows that in 2011 attacks around Nigeria's capital city, Boko Haram first bombed the Police HQ in June, ACFM church in July, the U.N. building in August and St. Theresa's Catholic church on Christmas day – all fatally. Recently, our fact-finders visited St Theresa's and found a mother who lost her husband and three children in the bombing, struggling to care for a 13-year old son who survived but still has shrapnel in his skull – 2 years after. People like this would benefit from a VCF.

We also urge that the UN Security Council impose global terror finance sanctions on Boko Haram as an AlQaida affiliate.

Finally, we would like to formally request a meeting with you to discuss these issues.

We thank you for your repeated statements on the situation and ask you to take actions reflective of the concern you have expressed.

We look forward to your prompt attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

ORGANIZATIONS:

Jubilee Campaign

Religious Freedom Coalition

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Igbo League

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