



International
Religious
Freedom
Roundtable
NIGERIA

Generation N.E.X.T.

High Commissioner
British High Commission
Plot 1137 Diplomatic Drive
Central Business District Abuja. Nigeria.

Honorable Ambassador
United States Embassy
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive
Central District. Abuja. Nigeria

April 25th 2022

Dear Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard and High Commissioner Catriona Laing CB,

We the undersigned, are concerned youth from Nigeria who are from various regions in Nigeria. We write you to raise serious concerns about the ongoing violations occurring in our country, notably: religious freedom, human rights and freedom of expression. We humbly request that you host a Town Hall with us, as concerned signatories.

We would like to share our shock and disappointment when the US government removed Nigeria from the list of Countries of Particular Concern (CPC). The CPC designation obligated the Nigerian government to be accountable to the global community. The ongoing violence, kidnappings and deaths occurring in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria have been occurring for over 20 years and the global community seems to be silent.

- Boko Haram/ISWAP/Ansaru, along with Fulani militants and so-called bandits are being joined by foreign-fighters leading to an international problem.
 - Boko Haram / ISWAP are “hell-bent on wiping away Christians and Christianity from Nigeria”, CAN President.
- Extremism and instability have spread across Nigeria with armed Fulani militants devastating lives, farms and villages, majority of whom are Christians.
- Leah Sharibu remains in captivity, as do hundreds of other women, girls and boys, while the government is unable or unwilling to do anything.
- Millions of people are displaced from their homes/communities and living in IDP camps because of insecurity due to terrorism.
- Over 13 million children (primary to secondary) are afraid or unable to attend school, this disruption of education compounds Nigeria’s insecurity woes.
- Freedom of expression and human rights violations against individuals like Luka Binniyat, Rev Jonah Gangas and Nnamdu Kanu who are wrongly accused and imprisoned, which serve to silence opposition and criticism.
 - Additionally, continued abuses against people like Sheik Zakzaky and his wife who, although being released, are unable to leave the country for urgent medical attention because their passports have not been returned.
- EndSARS protest crackdown has lacked accountability and remains inconclusive as Nigerian authorities continue to deny reports and have not ensured that those implicated in abuses against protesters will ever be held accountable.

We are conveying our discontent with Nigeria's blatant violation of religious freedom, human rights and freedom of expression, which fall under the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Nigeria is a signatory and must adhere to these international commitments, standards and policies.

Why did the US Department of State delist Nigeria from a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), after less than a year? In April 2021, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) had recommended that Nigeria remains on the list because of the "violence by militant Islamists and other non-state armed actors, as well as discrimination, arbitrary detentions, and capital blasphemy sentences by state authorities" in the country. However, the contrary has been done and neither you nor your Department have provided any explanation for this extraordinary turnaround, which comes despite absolutely no improvement in the situation in Nigeria. The evidence is all around, and has been made available to your State Department.

Why does the UK government claim to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief but they do not hold Nigerian government accountable? There was significant discussion revolving around the EndSARS protests but no action was taken when the recent report was released. What actions were taken when the All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion or Belief reported that Nigerian Christians are experiencing devastating violence, with attacks by armed groups of Islamist Fulani herders resulting in the killing, maiming, dispossession and eviction of thousands?

Nigeria is in the throes of collapse. This decision by your governments, merely encourages our government in its dereliction of duties to promote and protect religious freedom, human rights and freedom of expression.

We the youth of Nigeria are demoralized because we look to your governments as a beacon of justice, equity and fairness to humanity. We believe that this puts the USA and UK governments at risk of being held complicit with Nigeria.

With due respect Madam High Commissioner and Madam Ambassador, we employ you to do the needful by urging your governments to reconsider their decision and take up the matter of religious freedom, human rights and freedom of expression in Nigeria. We want justice for all Nigerians.

We would be pleased to engage directly with you and your officers. We are proposing that you host a Town Hall meeting where we can provide you with reports and testimonies of these matters raised in this letter. Our contact network is, the International Religious Freedom Roundtable in Nigeria: Generation NEXT, they can be reached by email: hello@iconhelp.org, via phone +1.262.271.2319 or +234.813.654.7017.

Signed:

Generation NEXT Leadership
Abuja FCT, Nigeria
hello@iconhelp.org



Ishaya Inuwa
Chair, IRF Roundtable Gen NEXT



Kyle Abts
Host, IRF Roundtable