



GOVERNMENT URGED TO BE MORE PROACTIVE IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA

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IBADAN, NIGERIA -

Bishops of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province have called on the Federal Government to be more proactive in addressing the challenges of the country to alleviate the sufferings of Nigerians, instead of continuous blame of the former administration for the woes of the country.

The Bishops made the call in the communiqué issued at the end of their first Provincial meeting held recently at the Jubilee Conference Centre, Oke Ado, Ibadan. The communiqué was signed by Most Rev. Gabriel Abegunrin, the Archbishop of Ibadan and President of the Provincial Conference and the Secretary, Most Rev. John Oyejola, Bishop of Osogbo Diocese. The Ecclesiastical Province comprises of: Ibadan Archdiocese, Ilorin Diocese, Oyo Diocese, Ekiti Diocese, Ondo Diocese and Osogbo Diocese.

Speaking on the State of the Nation, the Bishops declared: “After nearly two years of the

current administration, Nigerians should no longer hear past administrations blamed for the woes of the present. Our present governments, especially at Federal and State levels, have had enough time to demonstrate the capability to bring about the changes promised to Nigerians.”

They continued: “It is no longer news that Nigerians are truly suffering. Some of this can be understandable under a recession, however, there ought to be clear signs in national life by now that the government and people of our country are truly working to bring things under control. Regrettably there is not much evidence of this currently. Instead, there is a growing sense of desperation in the general populace that the much expected change has been slowed down. This unfortunate situation provokes general bad will manifested in the current proliferation of false information, violent clashes, calls for the break-up of Nigeria and pervasive criminality. It is necessary and urgent to restore the confidence of all Nigerians in the Nigerian nation.”

The Bishops also condemned in strong terms the lackadaisical attitude of the Federal Government towards the wanton killing of Christians in Southern Kaduna saying: “We condemn the needless loss of life in the Southern Kaduna crisis which has confirmed an impression that government is lackadaisical in responding to the needs of some sections of the nation. This impression should not be allowed to take firm root.”

They added: “Government exists for all and must never be seen to favour any group or ignore the needs of another. We admonish the government to be more proactive in protecting the life and property of Nigerians. We appeal to all men and women of goodwill to succor the needy and all those affected by the crisis. We acknowledge the recent effort of the Federal government in providing a number of jobs and giving some welfare packages to some poor citizens of Nigeria. We urge the government to do more in this regard and ask State Governments to replicate this programme in the States.”

The Bishops admonished governments at all levels in the country to continue to optimize strategies to bring about positive change in the country; adding that “the campaign against corruption seem to be losing steam”.

They commended the efforts and sacrifices made by the members of the country’s security agencies in keeping the country together and condoled with the families of those who lost their lives in the process. The Bishops also spoke on the last Bishops conference last Plenary hosted by the Province in Akure and expressed gratitude to Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State, government and people of the state for the “enthusiastic welcome accorded the Conference”.

They also called on Catholic faithful to fully participate in the forthcoming Marian Congress Celebration in the country slated for March to October this year; and identified

some lapses in the order of worship and liturgy in the province and called for a change on the part of the faithful in this respect.