



NIGERIANS LIVE IN PALPABLE FEAR, BECAUSE OF HERDSMEN'S NEFARIOUS ACTIVITIES

May 26, 2018

LAGOS, NIGERIA -

Nigerians are living in palpable fear as a result of the activities of the Fulani herdsmen, religious fundamentalists and other groups who have constituted themselves to threat to peace and tranquility in the country. President Muhammadu Buhari has therefore been called upon to promptly respond to the challenges of security issues in the country.

This contention was contained in a letter addressed to the President and Commander in Chief of Nigeria, Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari, by Archbishop Alfred Adewale Martins of Lagos; on the occasion of the solidarity rally embarked upon by the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos, to denounce the incessant killing of innocent Nigerians by Fulani herdsmen.

The ceremony which featured the celebration of the Holy Mass at St Leo's Catholic Church, Ikeja, and Prayer Procession protest march to the Governor's office at Alausa, Ikeja; to present the letter, was at the instance of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN); calling on all Catholic Archdioceses and dioceses in the country to

embark on a solidarity prayer session with the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi for the burial of the two priests and 17 other faithful of St Ignatius Quasi-Parish Church, Ukpok-Mbalom by Fulani herdsmen and buried in Makurdi on Tuesday, May 22, 2018.

Archbishop Martins expressed concern over the inability of security agencies of the country to effectively counter the menace of the terrorist herdsmen and protect the lives and properties of Nigerians, which is their primary assignment. Expressing concern over the incessant killings and general insecurity being experienced across the length and breadth of the country, especially in the North Central part; the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos declared: "We are very saddened by the fact that our security Agencies have not been able to put measures in place to bring the situation under control.

The Metropolitan of Lagos Ecclesiastical Province also expressed concern on the non- adherence to the secular status of the country which allows freedom choice of Religion and worship by Nigerians in any part of the country noting that in predominantly Christian parts of some states of the North; "Christians are victims of religious intolerance as they are denied rights to own lands to build their churches and worship their God in peace."

He described the Mbalom massacre victims burial ceremony as a watershed in the annals of Catholicism in the country; saying: "It is a day the entire Catholic Church in Nigeria speaks out, in a practical way, against injustice, insecurity, nepotism and other vices plaguing the country." The Archbishop added: "Today, we rise in unity to express our solidarity with our brothers and sisters who have been killed, and are still being killed across the country."

Archbishop Martins therefore called on President Muhammadu Buhari to direct the country's security agencies "to wake up, fish out the perpetrators of these callous killings and neutralize them so that people can once again feel safe".