



PROVIDE CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR NIGERIANS TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING, GOVERNMENT TOLD

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, John Cardinal Onaiyekan has called on the Government to provide a conducive atmosphere for Nigerians to live a peaceful and decent life, noting that this will go a long way in combating the problem of human trafficking in the country.

The Archbishop made this remark while speaking at the opening ceremony of the first African Regional Conference of the Sancta Marta Group, held in Abuja recently. The three-day programme, organized by the International Sancta Marta Group in collaboration with Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN), took place at the CSN Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja; with the theme: *Church and State Working to Restore Dignity to Trafficked Persons*.

Noting that there is need to put human trafficking within the context of human mobility,

Cardinal Onaiyekan stated that the real problem is that when people want to move and cannot move easily and properly, they try unconventional means, and in the process fall victims of traffickers, who instead of helping them compound their problems.

Regretting that people who are trafficked pay heavily, including selling their properties, in order to migrate, the local ordinary of Abuja stressed that government could have made the situation better through the provision of jobs for the people, thus making it unnecessary for them to travel abroad in search of greener pastures.

Cardinal Onaiyekan noted that “Modern human slavery takes many forms which include: “Slave labour in mines, fishing boats, construction sites, agricultural fields, domestic servitude; sex slavery, more or less forced. He added: “A more heinous form of this is the sexual exploitation of children and minors”. The cardinal further stated: “These activities are under the control of ruthless criminal gangs, who make a lot of money at the expense of helpless victims.”

In his own address, the Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna, Most Rev. Matthew Ndagoso called on the Federal Government to address the challenges facing the country as living comfortably has become difficult for the people by the day.

The Archbishop who is the Chairman of the Church and Society department of the

Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria and Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN); stated that the hardship the people of the country are facing is the major factor responsible for illegal migration and human trafficking.

He noted that with effective intelligence and use of modern tracking devices, security agencies in the country are in a better position to track down human traffickers in the society and bring them to justice; adding that these traffickers are not ghosts and therefore not impossible for the security agencies to track them down.

The Archbishop however regretted: “Unfortunately, some of the security personnel have compromised and are in partnership with those who commit this heinous crime against Nigerians.