



## **SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT CANNOT BE BUILT ON THE BLOOD OF INNOCENT CITIZENS, CATHOLIC BISHOPS WARN**

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**ABUJA** - The country's political leaders have been warned that sustained development cannot be built on the bloodshed of innocent people brutally murdered by religious fundamentalists without any recourse to justice for the victims. This assertion was contained in a press statement issued in Abuja, recently; on the spurious killings of innocent people in Southern Kaduna. In the statement titled: Insecurity in Nigeria: Stop the Killing Now; and signed by Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze, the Archbishop of Benin City and President of the Conference; the bishops expressed concern about the unabated acts of terrorism in Northern Nigeria adding that the country's politicians should not politicize the killing of Nigerians. They declared: "We are all tired of this situation. There should be one response from everyone, and that is; the killing must stop. Our hearts are bleeding, and we are more troubled when we hear of the massacre presently going on in Southern Kaduna." While calling on the Federal Government and the Government of Kaduna State to bring a complete stop to the killing of innocent people; the bishops declared: "The loss of the life of any Nigerian does not help or further the agenda of any religious ideology or the ambition of any politician." The bishops while commiserating with the people of Southern Kaduna with assurance of prayer from all the Catholics in the country, they called on the government to ensure that the perpetrators of the dastardly act are brought to justice; emphasizing that: "Where there is no justice or justice is not seen to be done, there cannot be peace. Where there is no peace, there cannot be development." While bringing to fore the electoral mantra promises of: eradication of corruption, security to life and property, rapid economic growth and other people oriented policies which the ruling Federal Government used to hoodwink the people to vote them to power; the bishops regretted that "Many Nigerians, irrespective of political party affiliation, will affirm that these promises have remained a far cry."

They added: “We strongly appeal to all Nigerians to unite together in calling the Federal Government to give priority to these areas of their lives.” The bishops also used the occasion to call on all Catholics in the country to a special forty days prayer for the country, from August 22 to September 30, 2020. The eve of the country’s Independence celebration. They admonished: “To all Catholics, we request that you join in praying, one Our Father, three Hail Marys and one Glory Be to the Father every day after the Angelus for forty days, starting from 22, August, 2020 and ending 30 September 2020, the eve of Nigeria’s Independence Day. On Independence Day, let us join in praying the five decades of the sorrowful mysteries starting from 12noon. We appeal to each Bishop to encourage the faithful in his Diocese to participate fully in this prayer for God to save Nigeria.”