



UN REPS, OTHERS MEET BISHOP KUKAH OVER INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Jul 01, 2021

SOKOTO, NIGERIA -

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worried by the spate of insecurity in Nigeria, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the European Economic Community and the International Office for Migration have held meeting with the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah.

According to the representatives of the three international bodies, their visit to states in the North West is to have firsthand assessment of the impact of insecurity and efforts to address all contentious issues.

Responding to questions from the visitors, Bishop Kukah told them that the cause of insecurity in Nigeria has a long history, giving birth to Boko Haram and other forms of

criminality currently bedeviling the nation, stressing that the killings and destructions have impacted on every community in all parts of Nigeria.

Bishop Kukah disclosed that bandits and insurgents have no respect for religion, whether Christian or Muslim as all they are after is money as means of livelihood.

He recalled the interaction of the bandits with a priest of Sokoto Diocese, Rev. Fr. Joe Keke, who was released from captivity recently to the effect that all they wanted was money and not a person's religion.

The Bishop, therefore, debunked the notion that the cause of insecurity in the country is a direct result of conflict between Christians and Muslims, and that the perceived conflict is only an illusion by colonialists and shenanigans who try to create a wedge between adherents of both religions and distract them from the real issues of development. "As a matter of fact, 99% of Nigerians, Christians and Muslims relate well among themselves and are not interested in any conflict on the basis of religion", Bishop Kukah stated.

He further said the greatest existential threat to Nigeria's unity are lack of access to qualitative education and integration and as long as the current situation prevails, the brazen attitude of the criminals may serve as encouragement for other youth to take to criminality as a way of life.

Speaking on education, Bishop Kukah said the Catholic Church and Sokoto Diocese in particular are doing quite well in providing quality education with its schools posting excellent results in national examinations. Such schools he explained do not discriminate on religion as Muslim parents are Chairmen of Parent-Teacher Associations in some of the Church's schools.

The cleric noted that education is one of the areas in which State ought to collaborate with the Church in view of the Church's experience in effective school administration, citing the example of Anambra State, South-East Nigeria which placed 23rd on the ladder of performance in national examinations before the state government returned schools to their owners and that after two years of management of the schools by the Church, Anambra has overtaken other states to claim the top spot.

Bishop Kukah, therefore, called on international organizations to consider taking the Church into consideration in their support for educational development as the Church is transparent in all that she does.