



## **SELF-DETERMINATION: CBCN URGES FG TO GIVE JUST, FAIR TRIAL TO ARRESTED AGITATORS**

Aug 21, 2027

### **ENUGU- NIGERIA -**

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has called on the Federal Government to ensure a just and fair trial of those arrested because of their agitation for self-determination, warning that mismanagement of those cases may trigger off further avoidable unrest.

This was contained in a communiqué issued by the CBCN at its just concluded second plenary held in Enugu Diocese, Enugu State.

The Conference therefore, called on both Government and citizens to work for a nation in which everyone and every part, irrespective of differences of tribe or religion or political affiliation, will have a sense of belonging.

The Bishops expressed gratitude to God that in spite of sundry agitations and struggles

for self-determination, Nigeria is still existing as one nation. “We observe that the agitations and tensions are mainly as a result of bad governance, injustice, inequity, and unfairness in appointments and distribution of resources to parts of the country. We recognize the rights of peoples to self-determination; yet we emphasize that the exercise of such rights must be within the confines of the rule of law.”

The Church leaders reiterated that the struggle for the ‘soul’ of Nigeria, that is presently ongoing, will not be won by ethnic cleansing, nepotism, kidnapping and banditry but by love, fairness and equity, common good and patriotism. “We therefore enjoin Government and all Nigerians to toe the path of justice and conciliatory dialogue and see themselves as agents of peace and development in order to ensure a harmonious and united nation.

While congratulating the Federal Government for enacting the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, the Catholic Bishops advised that it should address the genuine concerns of the people regarding some clauses in the Act. “It is our hope that the implementation of the provisions of the law will truly serve the common good”, the Bishops noted.

The CBCN strongly advocated total respect for the sanctity of human life, noting with regret that, except for the civil war, Nigeria has never witnessed the kind of widespread evil, wanton destruction and murderous bloodletting like the current situation.

The communique reads in part, “Life has never been so cheap, nor has Nigeria ever been at the stage we are now. Deaths in the hands of kidnapers, killer herdsmen, bandits, terrorist groups have made Nigeria one of the most terrorized countries in the world. The abductions of school children present us with the prospects of a traumatized generation of young people.”

It continued: “We recognize the efforts being made by Government to fight insecurity in the land. However, we stress that Government needs to show more strategic commitment and sincerity in this fight and take full responsibility for the present culture of violence and impunity in the country. Furthermore, Government must be balanced and seen to be so in its response to the challenges of insecurity in every segment of the citizenry. In the same vein, we call on all citizens to be law-abiding, vigilant, live by sound moral principles and, above all, obey the commandments of God. We continue to plead with all to shun violence and criminality.

The Church fathers urged Government at all levels to provide the enabling environment that would make it possible for both the Government and the private sector to create job opportunities for Nigeria's teeming youth population as this would surely reduce the danger of insecurity and unrest in our land.

On politics and electoral reform in Nigeria, the Bishops stated that the Church is keenly interested in the political situation of our country, noting that although the Church does not support any political party, it supports every Government that prioritizes the welfare of the citizens.

The Conference condemned Government policies that do not promote development and the common good, insisting that there is an urgent need for a fair and credible electoral process, through which Nigeria's political leaders emerge. "We therefore state loud and clear that the recent voting by the National Assembly against electronic transmission of results of elections will create opening for further manipulation of electoral votes and lay the foundation for more conflicts in future elections. We call on the National Assembly to reconsider its position in the light of world best practices."