



WANEP

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria

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The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria on behalf of its over 300 member organisations spread across the six geo political zone have followed the recent religious related crisis that is causing humanitarian crises at Borno, Bauchi, Yobe States and is rapidly threatening peace and security in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States of Nigeria.

Supporters of a militant Islamic preacher (Mohammed Yusuf) armed with machetes, knives, home-made hunting rifles and petrol bombs have attacked churches, police stations, prisons and government buildings in most states of north east and west in recent days leaving over 300 people already killed and several others injured and displaced. This violence triggered and sustained by his sect called Boko Haram with suspected linkages to another sect called Yusufiya is demanding the abolition of western education and the enforcement of Islamic education under the disguise of a wider adoption of the Islamic Sharia law in Nigeria.

The Network appreciates the prompt positive action being taken by Jama,atul Nasril Islam, the umbrella body for Nigerian Muslims, the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'adu Abubakar and other well meaning Islamic leaders to douse Islamic sentiments or religious tension in the North. It clearly shows that the actions of this sect are criminal and antithetical to the rule of law and against Islamic tenets and injunctions. It also points to the deliberate attempt to slight the good image and integrity of all peace loving and well meaning Muslims across the country.

WANEP-Nigeria condemns this act of religious fanaticism and extremism as an act of public nuisance and disobedience to constituted law and order in the States of the North.

The Network also condemns the attacks on public structures and security operatives by this sect but at the same time request that as much as possible the use of force by the security operatives to restore order

should be balanced with adequate recourse to the protection of innocent citizens and vulnerable groups such as women and children.

As part of proactive strategies to address the emerging threat of religious extremism and violence in the North, WANEP recommends that the Federal and State Government takes the development of an effective Early Warning and Response structures and mechanisms seriously. An effective structure which builds partnership with civil society will ensure that government is always abreast of emerging threats to human security and also peacebuilding approaches for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

While our philosophy remains that, preventing violent conflicts requires addressing underlying issues and conditions that create ground for such violence to fester. In the immediate however, urgent actions are required to minimize spread, mistrust, and impact as well as build confidence towards peace and stability in the northern region.

WANEP Nigeria therefore calls for the following:

- A reinforcement of the police and other state security operatives in the affected states of the north and other states with the likelihood of reprisal attacks
- The establishment of an all involving stakeholders committee to investigate the remote and immediate causes of these attacks with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice
- A strict surveillance and management of Nigerian borders that has pointed as a possible gap in the activities of illegal immigrants and a possible connection to the ongoing crises in North.
- A comprehensive program on arms control with a view to managing proliferation of illegal arms in Nigeria
- A comprehensive training of the Nigerian Police and other security operatives in Conflict Early Warning and Early Response and a development of synergy between them and civil society for the purposes of conflict prevention.
- A strict application of the law as it relates to engaging children and adolescents in perpetuating crimes in our societies.
- Adequate care and provision of immediate needs of Internally Displaced Persons especially women and children
- Observance and adherence to international standards in responding to the needs of the Internally Displaced Persons and adequate arrangements towards their reintegration

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