

2025 SECOND TRIANNUAL MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT BARCELONA HOTEL, WUSE II, ABUJA, FROM 9TH – 11TH DECEMBER, 2025

COMMUNIQUE

PREAMBLE

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), under the leadership of the Co-chairmen, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, and the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Eminence, Most Rev. Dr. Daniel C. Okoh, held its 2025 Second Triannual Meeting at Barcelona Hotel, Abuja, from the 9th to 11th of December, 2025, with the theme “Collaboration of Inter-religious Councils with Government to Promote Peace in Nigeria”.

The Opening Ceremony had in attendance the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator Dr George Akume; representatives of the Inspector General of Police, Dr Kayode Egbetokun and Speaker House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas; traditional rulers, religious leaders, senior government functionaries, distinguished members of NIREC and members of the interfaith organisations in Nigeria.

The meeting was declared open by the SGF who emphasised that government had taken every measure to end insecurity in Nigeria with the hope that Nigeria will be delisted from its designation as a Country of Particular Concern by the United States of America. The Co-chairmen in their respective remarks noted that Nigeria is a multi-religious country while NIREC is a national asset that allows religious leaders to speak with one voice in condemnation of criminality and violence in all their forms. The Executive Secretary of NIREC, Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua, in his welcome address highlighted the history of NIREC, emphasising that every human life is precious and all hands should be on deck to confront terrorists, bandits and other criminals who wage war and rampant killings, sometimes condemned even as genocide in some quarters.

The paper presentation was made by the immediate past Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Gida Mustapha, CFR, who noted that working with NIREC made his job easy between 2017 and 2023. He commended the Council for collaborating for the promotion of peace through dialogue, conflict mediation, social welfare activities and public advocacy while calling for more support for NIREC.

RESOLUTIONS

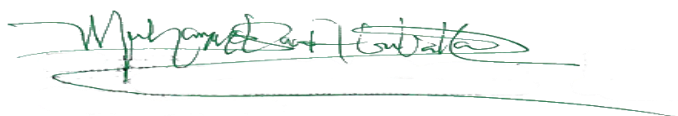
After exhaustive deliberations and keen reflections on the theme of the meeting and the state of the nation at the plenary and closed-door sessions, the Council:

1. **called** on government to take decisive measures in addressing insecurity in Nigeria, given that Muslim and Christian societies have suffered devastating losses from insurgency and banditry;
2. **advocated** for an interfaith approach to healing the wounds inflicted on Nigerians by the recent upsurge in insecurity with religious leaders collaborating more actively in inclusive policymaking, early-warning systems, joint peacebuilding efforts, promotion of good governance, justice and rule of law;
3. **challenged** the government to bring the perpetrators of violence and their sponsors to book and support the various victims of insecurity across the country;
4. **affirmed** that NIREC shall continue to educate people, reconcile differences and mobilise Nigerians to support peace, justice and national stability;
5. **cautioned** Nigerians, especially religious leaders and the media, against the evil of selective outrage by condemning evil wherever it occurs whether in the North or the South regardless of who the perpetrators or victims are;
6. **charged** Governments at all levels to promote good governance and prioritise citizens' welfare and wellbeing as a way of curbing restiveness and criminality;
7. **supported** the call for the establishment of State Police to enable states to be more involved in securing lives and property within their jurisdictions;
8. **stressed** that peace is the cornerstone of development and no effort should be spared in steering Nigeria to the path of sustainable peace and security by both the government and the citizens;
9. **decried** the weaponisation of religion, ethnicity and politics as tools of manipulating and dividing Nigerians by those who should genuinely enthrone and support good governance;
10. **traced** some of the problems confronting Nigeria to politics of bitterness and decided that neither the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) nor the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) would adopt or anoint particular candidates for elections in Nigeria;
11. **declared** that terrorists, kidnappers, bandits and gunmen are criminals that do not represent any religious or ethnic group and they should always be described as such and decisively dealt with;

12. **commiserated** with all Nigerians who have been affected by the spectre of insecurity across regions and religions while praying that they receive divine succour and urging government and security agencies to redouble their efforts in protecting the citizens;
13. **tasked** the Federal Government to establish special courts for the quick administration of justice, which should be capital punishment, for terrorists and kidnappers, to ensure that crime has consequences because justice delayed is justice denied;
14. **appealed** to religious leaders, media practitioners and international partners to use their unique platforms for promoting faithfulness, righteousness, truth and justice and not avenues for divisive rhetoric, character assassination, religious bigotry, unethical rivalry and unverified narratives that are capable of inflaming inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria;
15. **encouraged** Nigerian leaders to lead by example and shun the grandiose display of wealth and power in their lifestyles and activities;
16. **demanded** a thorough investigation and public disclosure of the unusual circumstances leading to the capture and subsequent gruesome murder of Brigadier General Musa Ubaydullah in order to guard against such serious lapses in future;
17. **commended** the Federal Government for the improvement in confronting insecurity in the recent weeks and urged them to continue the pressure against terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, ritualists and other criminals causing havoc in Nigeria;
18. **acknowledged** the intervention of the Nigerian military in restoring democratic order in Benin Republic and urged the military to work harder in restoring security to Nigeria as well;
19. **tasked** government to strengthen institutional mechanisms to enhance national security with regard to the vast ungoverned territories that create fertile grounds for lawlessness and criminality in the country;
20. **called on** religious leaders to be circumspect in their speeches and sermons because there are more areas of convergence than divergence in Islam and Christianity;
21. **expressed** alarm at the abuse of the digital space, especially the social media, for the promotion and circulation of fake news, misinformation and deepfakes while calling on government to restrict the age limits of social media users;
22. **reaffirmed** the commitment of NIREC to partnering with government to achieve curriculum review and quality education especially through engaging with the National Universities Commission (NUC) on the teaching of inter-religious dialogue in Nigerian Universities;
23. **enjoined** the Federal Government to engage more with campus unions with a view to finding a sustainable solution to the disruption of academic calendars and prioritising their welfare; and
24. **appreciated** the Co-chairmen of NIREC for their astute leadership that has assisted the Council in achieving its set goals and objectives.

APPRECIATION

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) immensely appreciated the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, towards the success of the meeting. The Council also thanked the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Dr. George Akume, for his cooperation as well as for participating throughout the opening session of the meeting and responding to the questions asked by the audience. The Council equally appreciated the Guest Speaker, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation; the Speaker of the House of Representatives; the Inspector General of Police, interfaith partners and other distinguished guests for their presence and goodwill messages. The Council also expressed its unreserved appreciation to its members, including the NIREC YOUTH FORUM, for their cooperation towards making the first and second physical meetings of NIREC in 2025 successful.



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His Eminence Alhaji Muhammed Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni
The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General,
Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)
CO-CHAIRMAN



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His Eminence Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Okoh
President, Christian Association of
Nigeria (CAN)
CO-CHAIRMAN



Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua
Executive Secretary