

Mr Karim Khan QC  
The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court  
The International Criminal Court  
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2500CM, The Hague  
The Netherlands

By hard copy and email to [Office.OftheProsecutor@icc-cpi.int](mailto:Office.OftheProsecutor@icc-cpi.int)

11 May 2022

Dear Mr Khan,

The International Criminal Court and Nigeria

We are organisations and individuals concerned with the persecution of Christians around the world, and particularly in Nigeria.

We fully support and endorse the position taken by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in its Press Statement issued on Friday 29 April 2022, and which we attach to this letter. Like CAN, we are dismayed at the way the matter of religious persecution in Nigeria has been misunderstood and downplayed by the Office of the Prosecutor. We find the side-stepping of this religious group's persecution to be unjust and dangerous.

CAN has pointed out that a conservative estimate of the number of Christians killed through religious violence in the time that you and your predecessor have been 'considering' Nigeria is at least 25,000. And then there are all those thousands who survived attacks, who have been wounded, sexually abused, forcibly displaced from their homes and utterly traumatised. Christians have been left destitute by the destruction of their farmlands and villages, and some have been unable to return because the attackers have taken over their properties. The damage faced by Christians in Nigeria from the religious violence is staggering, ongoing and this has been under the watch of the Office of the Prosecutor. And then there are the harms suffered by other communities. What does that say about your Office, and the International Criminal Court?

Like CAN, we have grave concerns about the way your predecessor framed her proposed course of action when closing the Preliminary Examination in December 2020. We refer here to the failure to include the orgy of killings, destruction and displacement of Christians by armed Fulani herdsmen, to the narrowing down of the monumental experience of Christian persecution at the hands of Boko Haram to the undeniably terrible experience of the kidnapped girls from Chibok, and to the refusal even to consider the possibility that Nigerian Christians have, as a protected religious group, been subject to genocide by radical Islamists.


We too are dismayed that you have also been using the 'limited resources' excuse in relation to Nigeria, whilst at the same time enthusiastically moving forward with other situations, notably Venezuela, the Philippines and most recently Ukraine. For these situations, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has the resources and capacity that he does not have for Nigeria. We recall here that for many consecutive years Nigeria has been listed by the World Watch List, the global index of persecution of Christians, as having had the highest number of Christians killed for religious reasons *in the world*. The Boko Haram movement has featured at the top end of the Global Terrorism Index for years now. Yet, we are seeing that from Venezuela to the Philippines to Ukraine, you seem to be willing to act as if you are the world's Policeman. But strangely, not for Nigeria. Please be assured that we *do* understand about priorities and the principle of Complementarity. However, with all due respect, the only way for us to interpret this situation is that you are trying to rid yourself of the burden of dealing with Nigeria and the reality of Islamist persecution of Christians. Is this too 'hot' to handle? It saddens us to see what seems to be a dereliction of the responsibilities of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

You have made clear your preference for dealing with Nigeria's top officials. Like CAN, we are concerned with how, in your own media release about your Nigeria visit (22 April 2022) you wrote about the importance of 'deepening cooperation' with the government and 'finding common ground wherever possible, even in difficult circumstances'. We respectfully urge you to reconsider your strategy, and instead to champion victims and seek justice and redress for them. We urge you to engage with CAN, which is speaking out for Christian victims from all denominations, and with the other victims of international crimes in Nigeria. We urge you to engage directly with the many individuals and groups that have been petitioning your office about the atrocities in Nigeria before and after the Preliminary Examination commenced on 11 December 2010. We particularly align ourselves with the letter that was recently sent to you by Baroness Cox and others on 25 April 2022.

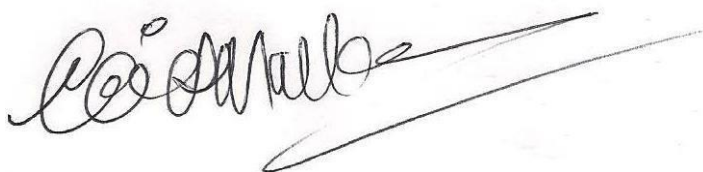
Mr. Khan, Nigeria is in a very precarious state right now, and that comes after almost twelve years of failed engagement by the Prosecutors of the International Criminal Court. We repeat what we stressed earlier: a conservative estimate is at least 25,000 Christians killed. They were killed under the watch of two Prosecutors of the International Criminal Court. We would be glad to assist with facilitating a long overdue meeting for yourself, your key advisors, some of the persecuted Christian community in Nigeria and their representatives. These victims, all victims and stakeholders, need to hear directly from you in response to the grave concerns that have emerged about the past, present and future handling of the Nigeria matter by your Office.

Our representative for correspondence is The Reverend Dr Gideon Para-Mallam (email addresses: [gorapmboy@yahoo.com](mailto:gorapmboy@yahoo.com) & [gideonpar.mall@gmail.com](mailto:gideonpar.mall@gmail.com)). The Reverend Dr Para-Mallam is also the Chair of the Management Committee of the CAN Nigeria Justice Project (NJP).

Yours sincerely,



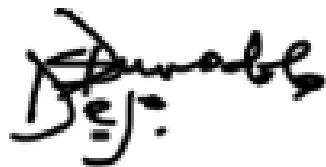
Professor John Oluwole A. Akintayo, for The Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON)



The Reverend Dr Gideon Para-Mallam, for The Gideon & Funmi Para-Mallam Peace Foundation



Rev. Akinyele Abiodun James, for Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship (NEF)



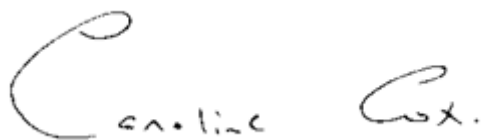
Professor John Durodola, for the Overseas Fellowship of Nigerian Christians (OFNC)



Dr Gloria Puldu-Samdi, for the Leah Foundation



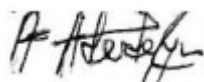
Mr Kyle Abts, for the International Committee on Nigeria (ICON)



The Baroness Cox



Dr Dennis Petri, for the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF)



Pastor Ayo Adedoyin, for the International Organization for Peace and Social Justice (PSJUK)