

# AL-MIRAJ<sup>☾</sup>

The official bulletin of the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)

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## Don't be tools for political thuggery and violence - Sultan tells youth

The President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, (NSCIA), and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Saad Abubakar, has appealed to Nigerian youth not to allow themselves to be tricked into perpetrating political thuggery and violence before, during and after the 2019

General Elections.

The President-General stated this during the presentation of his opening remarks at the 2nd Annual National Youth Summit organised by the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC)

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# Peaceful dialogue and co-existence, crucial to development - NSA

The National Security Adviser to the Federal Government of Nigeria, Maj. Gen. Babagana Muhammad Monguno (rtd), has stated that peaceful dialogue and co-existence is a *sine qua non* for a developing country and economy like ours that wants to stand tall and be respected in the global community of nations.

The National Security Adviser, who was represented by Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Aliyu Ndagi, stated this while presenting his keynote address at the 2nd Annual Youth Summit, organised by the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC), in Abuja on the 24th of November, 2018. He said that there is so much conflict in the world today and that peace has become an elusive phenomenon.

According to the retired Major General, peace has given way to intolerance because we took peace for granted. He said, "peace is a core value of all religions today. However, peace does not come cheaply, we need to



Maj. Gen. Babagana Monguno (rtd)

consciously work for it". He went further by quoting J.F. Kennedy who said, "peace is a daily, weekly and monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding all barriers as well as quietly building new structures".

He commended the religious leaders

under the auspices of NIREC, especially the President-General of NSCIA, for their efforts in engendering and sustaining peace in the country. He expressed worry that words in the streets and other quarters tend to suggest that the election may not be free, fair, credible and peaceful, noting that such speculations fuel and heighten tension in the society. He therefore advised rumour mongers to desist from the act for the sake of peace, security and stability of the country.

While saying that all hands must be on deck to ensure that the 2019 general elections are not only credible but also peaceful, he added that security matters should not be left in the hands of security agencies alone. "Security is a collective responsibility for every Nigerian, especially the youth. As patriotic citizens of this country, the youth must understand that they have a crucial role to play in peace building, including the security of the electoral

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# Peaceful dialogue and co-existence, crucial to development - NSA

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process", he said.

The NSA stressed that the administration of President Muhammad Buhari is making efforts to conduct free, fair and credible elections in 2019. "Mr. President's commitment to a free, fair and credible election is clearly manifest in his address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2017, where the President stated unequivocally that our faith in democracy remains unshaken".

He maintained that security agencies have been synergising with INEC via the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee for Election Security (ICES) on how best to improve on the successes recorded in recent elections.

He added that as part of measures to ensure a free, fair and credible election, a new code of conduct has been fashioned out for security operatives in the country. He condemned the negative activities of some youth who involve themselves in murder, arson, thuggery, ballot box snatching and stuffing, and appealed to them to avoid such anti-democratic practices.

"Youth as vanguards of society must not allow themselves to

be used to scuttle the electoral process of the 2019 polls", stating further that "youth are the bedrock of sustainable development of any country, being bulk of the labour force," he said.

"Youth should serve as watchdogs of society by standing against unacceptable and undemocratic practices that can jeopardize the peaceful conduct of the 2019 General Elections," he noted, adding that it is in recognition of the importance of youth participation in the electoral process that the President signed the "Not Too Young to Run" bill into law, so that the youth can ultimately take ownership of the process.

He stated that the office of the NSA is ready to partner with the youth in organising programmes that promote peace before, during and after the 2019 General Elections, while cautioning them against the use of the cyber space to spread hate speech in the country.

He concluded by quoting Mahatma Gandhi's "Seven Blunders of the World" which are Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Knowledge without Character, Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity, Worship without Sacrifice and Politics without Principle". ■

## Don't heat up the polity with hate speech - Yadudu

By Ibrahim Aselemi

**A** Professor of Law at Bayero University, Kano, Auwalu Yadudu, has appealed to Nigerians especially the clergy to be very careful of what they say and avoid hate speech at the pulpits and minbars. He said it is very unfortunate that some respected religious leaders in the country are now spreading hate speech in their places of worship and thereby heating up the already overcharged political atmosphere in the country.

Prof. Yadudu made the appeal while contributing to a lecture titled "Preventing Electoral Violence, the Role of Christian and Muslim Youth" at the 2nd Annual Youth Summit organised by the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC) in Abuja on the 24th November 2018.

The university don stated that the threat that hate speech poses is one that should not be taken with levity. He stated further that the issue of hate speech is further compounded by what he termed as the "psychological complex of accidental scholars" in religious circles. He condemned the hypocrisy of some religious leaders who like playing to the gallery to impress their congregations and sponsors.

He said a situation where some religious leaders mount the podium in their various places of worship and indoctrinate their members to hate the candidate from a particular ethnic group and his political party is very unfortunate, and this portends grave danger to free, fair and peaceful elections as we approach the 2019 general elections.

On the role of youth in ensuring a violent-free poll, Prof. Yadudu stated that Nigerians are a special species of creation. According to him, we are deficient in truth, dignity and patience. "Where truth works, it fails in Nigeria; where dignity works, it is non-existent in Nigeria; and where people are patient, it is non-existent in Nigeria. We are deficient of so many acceptable norms and conventions in the world".

The paper discussant stressed that the issue of violence before, during and after elections is something that is always started by the youth. "It is the youth that engage in ballot box snatching and stuffing on the day of election", he added. He said nothing much will change unless the youth do 360 degree turn around and embrace the culture of doing the right thing.

According to Prof. Yadudu, preventing electoral violence during the forthcoming general elections will not succeed if

politicians do not learn to play by the rules of the game. Unfortunately, every politician is pre-occupied with elections and getting elected. Every other thing is secondary. He appealed to the youth to be wary of politicians who are not interested in solving the problems of the people, but rather interested in themselves. "Politicians are only interested in solving their own problems. Their primary concern is election and getting elected. Every other thing is secondary. This is the mindset of an average politician", he said.

He added that the solution to the myriad of problems that confronts us as a people, collectively and individually, does not lie with the politicians, as in some cases, politicians are themselves the creators of the problems we face.

The erudite scholar quoted the American author and politician, Ben Carson, who said, "we have been conditioned to think that only politicians can solve our problems, but at some point, we will wake up and realize that it is the politicians who created our problems", noting that one of the ways to avoid violence before, during and after the 2019 General Elections is for the youth leaders especially from the Muslim and Christian faiths, to synergise and work the talk, after all, they are the triggers and igniters of these political violence.

"Youth groups must be trained on the need and use of decorum in the Social Media, and to avoid inflammatory rhetoric in the cyber space", he noted. He also observed that since "humans are naturally opposed to what they have no knowledge of", enlightenment campaigns should be organized by youth leaders nationwide to sensitize their contemporaries on the need for free, fair, credible and violence-free elections come 2019.

Prof. Yadudu said that one of the triggers of violence is the fact that politicians believe that there is no morality in politics. He added that "all efforts to sensitize the youth on the merits of free, fair, and credible 2019 polls will remain a distant mirage as long as politicians believe that there is no morality in politics".

He concluded by quoting Prof. Loch Otieno Lumumba who said, "I held 250 town hall meetings, I articulated solutions to our problems in my constituency. My opponent did not campaign at all, he gathered money and showed up on the day of election and distributed money. He won. Africans are not moved by ideas, their stomachs lead them". ■

## Election: Not by Desperation

**H**uman life is a track that is naturally guided by law. Its smoothness or otherwise, for those who ply it, depends on how it is plied.

From whichever angle it is viewed, the track of life is neither permanently smooth nor permanently rough. And that is what confirms the dynamism of life itself and the ephemerality of the processes by which it is conducted. It is one thing to be determined in the process of achieving success. It is another to be desperate in the same process.

The difference between the two is that while the earlier falls within the armpit of the rule of law, the latter is flagrantly against the rule of law. In no aspect of history has desperation been reported to have ever paved way for success without ending up in regret. Life's track is littered with a variety of particles. Sometimes, those particles are wreaths of honour. Some other times, they are thorns of ruins. But the only assurance of safety for anybody that keeps the track of life is to abide by the rules of laws that guide it.

With another time of general election fast approaching in Nigeria now, it is certain that the corporate track of life for millions of citizens will once again be put to test. And who records the success of failure of such a test besides the Almighty Allah who knows causes of today's occurrences and those of tomorrow. Wherever desperation is adopted as a means of achieving success the tendency is for it to bring along some elements of ruins and regret. That was the case

with the first and the second world wars that claimed millions of life and threw the world in an insuperable jeopardy.

It can still be recalled that Nigeria became a restive country following the military coup of 1966 which was engineered and executed by clique of desperate soldiers who wanted power by all means. Perhaps without that devilish desperation that led to a civil war Nigeria would have become Africa's political/economic Eldorado.

Now, having gone this far through a political rigmarole, it is expected that a useful lesson has been learnt by today's politicians who are expected to tap from the experience of the past in paving the future way towards the Cape of Good Hope. Power belongs to Allah who confers it on anybody He wishes. And nobody can grab power without the wish of Allah. It is enough lesson for today's desperate politicians to look back once again and see what happened to the desperate Nigerian politicians of the past.

With education and civility, today's politicians should present a decent template to the future politicians who are yearning to learn from them. "Surely, a human being is a chapter of history to be read after his demise. Therefore, be a pleasantly readable chapter for your readers after your demise".

- *Editor-in-Chief*

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# How Unilorin influenced Islamic banking in Nigeria -Don

By Abubakar Akande

The vital role played by the University of Ilorin towards the development of Islamic Banking in Nigeria has been acknowledged.

This acknowledgment was made by the Head of Islamic Law Department of the University, Prof. AbdulQadir Ibrahim Abikan, at the opening ceremony of a National Conference on “Shariah in the Nigerian Legal Education System”, jointly organised by the Department and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018, at the main auditorium, University of Ilorin.

The university don noted that in 2009, the Department in collaboration with the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, hosted the 1st international conference on Islamic Banking at the University of Ilorin, which was followed by the one-day sensitisation seminar on Islamic banking held in collaboration with Albarka Foundation Ilorin in 2011.

“That conference and seminar heralded Islamic banking becoming part of the Nigerian banking system today,” he said.

Prof. Abikan, who is the Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Conference, recounted the rationale behind the Conference.

According to the don, “it would interest this esteemed audience to know that despite the fact that a Nigerian lawyer has right of audience in all the Nigerian courts including the Shariah courts and in all matters including Shariah related matters, our laws do not require him to have any training in Islamic law whether substantive or procedural”.

He cited a scenario in one of the criminal procedure classes of the Nigerian Law School in 1998 taken by late Dr. (Mrs.) Olohuntoyin Doherty, saying, “she was dismayed to realize that majority of the Nigerian law graduates attending the class were not taught sources of Islamic Law in our universities whereas, she was taken through the sources in the United Kingdom where Islamic law does not form part of their law.”

Abikan added that while every nation that desires to be globally relevant and competitive takes up the challenge of educating its citizens in all spheres of human

**“She was dismayed to realize that majority of the Nigerian law graduates attending the class were not taught sources of Islamic Law in our universities whereas, she was taken through the sources in the United Kingdom where Islamic law does not form part of their law.”**



endeavour, it appears the reverse is the case with Nigeria as it relates to Islamic law as a part of legal education and legal system.

To support his position, the Islamic Law Professor gave the example of the United States of America where Harvard University was encouraged by the regulators of the nation's educational system to endow a chair of Islamic Legal Studies and Islamic Finance Programme to attract research grants in billions of dollars.

The National Conference was declared open by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. Sulaiman Age Abdulkareem, who appreciated the thoughtfulness of the Faculty of Law of the University for initiating discussions on and re-examination of the position of Shariah Law in the Nigerian Legal Education System.

The Vice-Chancellor also noted that although Common Law has overshadowed the Nigeria Legal System today, the agitation for the proper administration of Islamic Law is rife and justifiable. “For proper administration of Islamic Law, there is a need to train legal practitioners in all gamuts of our legal pluralism, including essentially the Islamic Law,” he added.

Prof. Adulkareem emphasised the need to regulate and standardise traditional Shariah education so as to make its products fit conveniently into the framework of our legal education. He also canvassed addressing the issue of intellectual stagnation, for which the opponents of Shariah law criticise it, and the need to resolve it by taking into cognizance the emerging critical issue bordering on secularism, human rights, rights of non-Muslims and gender equality.

The keynote address at the conference was delivered by the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, His Eminence, Alh. Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, who was represented by the Wazirin Sokoto, Prof. Sambo Wali Junaidu.

Other dignitaries at the opening ceremony included the first Grand Qadi of Kwara State, Hon. Justice AbdulQadir Orire; the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Osun State University, Malam Yusuf Olaolu Ali (SAN); Alh. Adelodun (SAN), the Balogun Gambari of Ilorin, Chairman of NBA Ilorin Branch, Barr Muhammad Idowu Akande, among others. ■

# 'Enrich the poor through Zakat to solve insecurity'

... Foundation empowers 1,516 with N143m

By Sekinah Lawal

**A** clarion call has gone to the rich in the society to also enrich the poor through the institution of Zakat in order to ensure the security of lives and property.

Making the appeal was the Lagos State Deputy Governor, Dr. Idiat Adebule, who recommended the payment of Zakat (wealth redistribution) as one of the ways of alleviating poverty in the country.

Speaking at the 14th Zakat Distribution Ceremony of the Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation (ZSF) at Alausa Secretariat Mosque, Ikeja, Adebule noted that the payment of zakat would help to fight insecurity in the country.

During the ceremony, N142.9 million was distributed to 1,516 beneficiaries.

She was represented by the Lagos State Chairperson, College of Nigerian Pathologists (CNP), Prof. Fatimah AbdulKareem.

"When we take from the wealthy to distribute to the appropriate beneficiaries, there is constant circulation of wealth such that it is not concentrated in the hands of a few.

"Zakat gives rise to relative equality among mankind. It fosters feeling of love, and harmony as well as cohesion within the society. In the present day Nigeria, wealth circulates among a few while the majority languishes in poverty.

"The few wealthy ones, unfortunately, don't feel secured living amongst the majority who are poor, hungry and angry; thus the wealthy spends so much on security when all it takes is to give out 2.5 per cent as zakat," she submitted.

In his address, the Lagos State Commissioner for Home Affairs, Dr Abdullateef Abdulhakeem, urged government to give legal backing to Zakat. "Anyone who possesses wealth must realise that he/she is a distributor on behalf of the giver Allah. There is so much wealth within the community but because we have failed to activate our sense of generosity, so many people are suffering today.

"Charity will do a lot to alleviate poverty in the society. Zakat is something that even the government should give legal backing to. It will be a form of Public Private Partnership that will assist the government to get funds for the purpose of alleviating poverty. "Organisations like this should be given support. Governance is also about touching lives of the people in the society," he said.

Also speaking, the Chief Imam of Lagos State, Sheikh Sulaiman Oluwatoyin Abou-Nollah, advised Muslims to prioritise investments in areas capable of reducing poverty among Muslims.

He said, "it is important for us to invest. Zakaat is about enriching poor people so that they can get to the level that is sustainable."

The chairman of the occasion and immediate past Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Bello Rahmon, advised that investments should be focused towards the health needs of Nigeria.

According to him, "this is one of the few events to showcase the beauty of Islam. It is an aspect of our religion that must be put to use. The level of unemployment is high. You find hundreds and thousands of graduates walking around with nothing to do. Zakat



**L-R: Member, Lagos State House of Assembly, Abdul Sobur Olawale Omititi, the Executive Director, ZSF, Prince Sulayman Olagunju, Chairman of the occasion and immediate past Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Rahmon Bello presenting a Tricycle key to one of the Zakat beneficiaries, Mutiu Abdullateef, and the Executive Director, Jaiz Charity Foundation, Imam Abdullahi Shuaib at the 14th Zakat Distribution Ceremony of the Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation at Alausa Secretariat Mosque, Ikeja, Lagos**

is one of the ways to get this resolved.

We must continue to consider the possibilities of setting up institutions that can assist with unemployment and health challenges. We need to set up clinics that attend to prevalent ailments in our society."

The Executive Director, ZSF, Prince Sulayman Olagunju, said the Foundation was worried about the growing rate of poverty in the country.

"We were deeply touched to see the numbers of Nigerians who were wallowing in abject poverty, which has been one of the propelling forces driving us to step up zakat collections on yearly basis despite the economic situation of our country.

"Today, with the support of our zakat payers, we are pleased to inform you that the sum of N142,938,905 is being distributed to 1,516 beneficiaries in Lagos State out of the N318,152,130 Zakat mobilized for the year 2018 as at October 31," he noted.

ZSF Board of Directors Chairman, Dr. Tajudeen Yusuf, appealed to Nigerians to join the effort to stop poverty in the country.

"Poverty can be eradicated in Nigeria. We are prepared to work towards the eradication. Poverty is not our own portion as Muslims, so we are not just focused on alleviating but eradicating it.

"It is gratifying for me that each year we come here, our performance has always been better than the previous year.

"Secondly, a programme titled KOSOSI Forum would be launched on Sunday, December 23, 2018 where we seek to equip our economic empowerment beneficiaries in such a manner that they become economically accountable and self-reliant."

The Executive Director, Jaiz Charity Foundation, Imam Abdullahi Shuaib, warned against the danger of not paying Zakat.

"Allah gave us the institution of Zakat for specific purpose but some of us are ungrateful elements. Some Muslims are capable of paying but they won't pay. Muslims should not be rich and poor at the same time," he said.

Many of the beneficiaries expressed their appreciation to the Foundation and promised to make the best use of what they were given with the hope of being able to pay Zakat in future. ■

# Accidental politicians, bane of development in Nigeria - Oladosu

By Ibrahim Aselemi

**A** Professor of Islamic Studies in the University of Ibadan, Afis Oladosu, has identified the emergence of an army of clueless, visionless and brainless political leaders in what he termed "accidental politicians", as the bane of the rise in the level of unprecedented political violence in the country today.

The scholar stated this in his contribution to the lead paper presented by the Secretary-General of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Dr Khalid Aliyu, titled "Election Violence Prevention, the Role of Muslim and Christian Youth", during the 2nd Annual Youth Summit organised by Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC) in Abuja on the 24th of November 2018.

The professor argued that accidental politicians lack all the decency, discipline, character, qualification and decorum required for the lofty offices that they vie for. He likened them to paper boats, always at the mercy of the tide. They are deficient in every facet of the game of politics, and therefore resort to violence in the pursuit of their inordinate ambition. He explained further that accidental politicians believe in the Machiavellian theory that "the end justifies the means".

Speaking further, the University lecturer also identified other causes of political violence to include environmentally induced factors. According to him, the assumption is that if a child grows up in a violence-prone environment, such a child will become prone to violent behaviour in the future, in what he termed "Argument based on Nurture".

Another trigger for political violence among the youth population especially during election is what the scholar

christened an "Argument base on Nature". Here, the argument is based on the assumption that violence is part and parcel of our being. He said it is believed that we cannot simply extricate ourselves from violent behaviour, because we are innately wired to be violent. He however added that the danger in this theory is that it totally absolves the youth of any criminal responsibility in their acts of violence. It essentially grant the youth immunity from criminal responsibility on grounds that criminality is natural to human being.

Prof. Oladosu also identified "Personality Disorder" as another trigger for political violence especially during elections. The lecturer believes that the psychological frame-up of sociopaths and psychopaths exposes them to criminal tendencies and behaviours.

He also mentioned the natural inclination to survive, especially in a harsh economic environment, as another reason why youth engage in violent activities during elections. According to him, the argument is that youth engage in violent activities out of necessity for the basic needs of life. He said that when youth are not engaged in meaningful and productive economic endeavours, they are easily deceived and ensnared into the abyss of political quagmire and violence.

He also blamed another group of politicians he called "Professional Politicians", for the palpable circle of violence that has become synonymous with elections in Nigeria. According to him, "they are the modern day Pharaohs", who employ the use of fear, violence and intimidation as tools to win elections. He said their singular goal is to win election "by any means necessary" no matter whose ox is gored. ■

## Muslims urged to explore film for da'wah

By Abubakar Akande

**A** call has been made to the Nigerian Muslims to explore the potential of films and invest in the industry to propagate Islam.

This call was made by the Pro-Chancellor of Osun State University, Mallam Yusuf Ali, SAN; the Chairman of Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), Dr Muiz Banire, SAN, and the proprietor of Iqra College, Ilorin, Alhaji Aliu Badmus in their remarks at the premiere and review of a film, 'Second Chance', a production of Film for Da'wah Initiative (FILFORDAW) in Ikeja, Lagos, on Sunday, November 25, 2018.

Mallam Ali especially commended the initiators of the project and urged Muslims to support it so that it would be sustained, noting that films offer veritable platforms for reaching the youth.

In his review of the film, entitled "Stopping the Macabre Dance: A Review of Funsho Aliyu's 'Second Chance'" an Associate Professor at the University of Ilorin, Mahfouz Adedimeji, urged Muslims to be dutiful and responsible to their wives, saying that the film explores the subject of marital irresponsibility, which he said, is a dominant feature of our contemporary society.

He also appealed to women to be faithful, patient and forbearing in dealing with the challenges they face, noting that as demonstrated in the film, Allah would always support the faithful. "It is impressive that 'Second Chance', which is of high technical quality, serves to awaken the consciousness of young women to the sad reality that marriage is not a bed of roses but a work in progress. The film serves to awaken in them the spirit of patience and forbearance with the undertone of attracting divine support for sacrifices made in keeping their marriages despite



L-R: Alh. Aliu Badmus, Chairman, Film for Da'wah Initiative Board; Dr Muiz Banire, SAN, Chairman of the occasion; Alh. Kola Ayanwale, MD, Centrespread Ltd, a guest and the film reviewer, at the premiere

the suffocating stench of the challenges. 'Second Chance' is ultimately a call to Muslims in particular and the general audience at large to stop the macabre dance of irresponsibility ... Women are to be loved and respected, not to be used, abused and dumped. So the macabre dance of domestic abuse and marital irresponsibility must stop now, the films appears to strongly warn us all," he said. ■

# Should the Prophet's birth be celebrated? -Abbas

“Who shares his life's pure pleasure and walks the honest road; who trades with heaping measure and lifts his brother's load; who turns the wrong down bluntly and lends the right a hand; he dwells in God's own country and tills the holy land.” - Louis F. Benson

By Femi Abbas

## Monologue

This is Rabi'ul Awwal, the third month of the Islamic calendar. It is on the 12th day of this month that Muhammad, the son of Abdullah and Aminah who later became a Prophet of Allah, at the age of 40, was born into the world, in Makkah.

In Islamic history, this month is as important as any other Hijrah month but not more. It is therefore a form of imitation to attach to it any myth which Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself who was born in it did not attach to it.

## Preamble

Contrary to what may be the thought by some readers in certain Muslim circles, in Nigeria, this article is not meant to celebrate the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for which the 12th of Rabi'ul Awwal is often erroneously declared as a public holiday by Nigerian government. What is to be celebrated about this great Prophet is by far beyond his birth. It is only those whose achievements in life are short of adequate benefits to mankind that need celebration of birth to augment their claimed achievements. There is nothing unique about birth.

## Mawlidun-Nabiyy

Muslims who celebrate Prophet Muhammad's birthday only do so ignorantly in imitation of the Christians. Even Prophet Muhammad did not talk about his birth when he was alive and no genuine Hadith can be quoted in support of his birthday. The idea of celebrating his birthday in imitation of the Christians began only centuries after the Prophet's demise. And what those who are imitating the Christians in celebrating the Prophet's birthday do not realize is that there is nothing to celebrate in Christianity beyond the birth and the death of Jesus Christ which Easter and Christmas symbolize. Can the same be said of Islam?

Who was Prophet Muhammad? Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a man whose life remains a school in which every knowledge-seeker learns even long after his demise. In fact, no man's biography has been so much written and read as his own. This man's biography has been written from all conceivable angles, positive and negative, by various men and women of diverse races, tribes, ideologies and religions since he became a Prophet of Allah in 610 CE. And the biography is still being written and re-written authoritatively and un-authoritatively, today, in uncountable languages across the world.

## Effects of his Biography

Through the writings of Prophet Muhammad's biography, some people have zoomed into un-dreamt fame. Others have sunk into the abyss of permanent oblivion. In a nutshell, no other Prophet's biography has attracted as many writers from among the believers and non-believers, as well as from friends and foes alike as that of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Every aspect of this Prophet's life including the dresses he wore, the food he ate, the way he spoke, the wives he married, the children he bore, and even the jokes he cast, has formed the basis of his biography. In short, next to the Qur'an, no book is as much read daily in the world today as the biography of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in one form or another. And so it will continue to eternity.



## A Vital Question

Why is there so much global focus on this unlettered Prophet from Arabia? The answer to this question is not far-fetched. The world has not produced any human being like him. And it will not. He is the seal of all Prophets and the epitome of human exemplariness. It is in him alone that all the traits of what a perfect gentleman should be are found in all ramifications.

## The 'ifs' of his Life

Every human being has certain 'ifs' in his or her life which may sometimes require analysis. For some people, such 'ifs' may

be positive. And for others, they may be negative or mixed. In the case of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) all the 'ifs' that are attributable to him are components of life that constitute the school in which humanity is supposed to learn how to link the life of this world to that of the hereafter. For instance if the Prophet had not been an orphan, he would not have been able to guide humanity on how orphans should be treated especially with regards to upbringing and inheritance. If he had not been a husband, his marital life would not have been an excellent example for others to emulate and women's rights would have been permanently ignored. If he had not been a widower and married widows, the world would not have realized the plight of widowhood and learnt how to provide for widows. If he had not been a father, the proper care for children by parents would have been relegated to the background in Islamic doctrine. If he had not been trustworthy, the value of trust would have been totally lost on mankind. If he had not migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the culture of hospitality universally imbibed today would not have come into existence.

That Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was forced to face certain wars was a blessing in disguise. If he had not been forced to fight those wars, the laws of war, armistice and peace would not have become a universal rule. And without his conquests in some of those wars, the word magnanimity would not have found a place in the dictionary of man. Also, it was due to the defeats he suffered in some other wars that created a sense of gallantry for the vanquished in the contemporary world.

## Further 'ifs' of his Life

If Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had not been a judge, the virtue of justice would have been globally thrown to the winds and survival in all societies would have been for the fittest. If he had not been a democratic ruler, the relationship between the ruled and their rulers, all over the world, today, would not have been dissimilar from that of slaves and their masters and dictatorship in governance would have known no bounds. If the Prophet had not been poor despite being a Head of State, the policy of social welfare adopted in civilized societies today in favour of the poor, would not have been possible. If he had not been an illiterate, the world would not have known the difference between literacy and education. And, if, despite all these qualities in him, he had not been humble and affable, arrogance would have been the main character of all privileged people in the world today. Who else can be compared to this man in history? And, in which any other single person have all the aforementioned qualities ever been found in history? There can be little wonder, therefore, why so much attention was and is still being focused on the personality of this extra-ordinary human being. That is Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for you, the like of whom



the world had never seen and will never see again. If this man is celebrated anywhere in the world, anytime in this month or after the month, therefore, it is definitely not because he was born. Since every human being came into the world through birth, the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) cannot be classified as an achievement to be celebrated.

### Attestation

There are many attestations to the above assertion. For instance, after many years of scientific experimentations, a German-born American physicist and Nobel Laureate, Albert Einstein who invented atomic bomb and is generally known as the 20th century creator of special and general theory of relativity, compared his works with the contents of the Qur'an and concluded as follows: "Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind". He then called on fellow scientists to endeavour to read the Qur'an without bias in order to know the true origin of science in human life.

### Professor Keith Moore

Also, after carefully examining the translation of the Qur'anic verses presented to him, one Professor of Embryology, Keith Moor of the Department of Anatomy, University of Toronto in Canada admitted thus: "most of the information concerning embryology mentioned in the Qur'an is in perfect conformity with modern discoveries in the field of embryology and does not conflict with them in any way". Professor Moore had no prior knowledge of anything leechlike about embryo until he read chapter 96 of the Qur'an where Allah says "Read! In the name of your Lord Who created. He created man out of a leechlike clot..." He then went to verify this fact in an embryo under a powerful microscope and compared his observation with a diagram of a leech. He was astonished at the resemblance of the two. That prompted him to go fully into the study of the Qur'an and Hadith to acquire more knowledge until he was able to answer about 80 hitherto unanswered questions in that field. It was that discovery that prompted him to correct the contents of his book 'The Developing Human' which he published earlier and had to re-publish in 1982. It was with that revised edition that he became the recipient of an award for the best medical book written by a single author in the 20th century. That book has been translated into many major languages of the world and is mostly used as textbook of embryology today in the first year of medical studies in various Universities across the world.

### Alphonse de Lamartine

After many years of scholastic research, a renowned French Historian, Alphonse de Lamartine, had the following to say about Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his book 'Histoire de la Torque': "Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim since this aim was superhuman; to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator; to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design no other instrument than himself, and no other, except a handful of men living in a corner of a desert...."

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled before their very eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that,

he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls. On the basis of a book, every letter of which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blended together peoples of every tongue and of every race.....

As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured we may well ask, is there any man in human history greater than Muhammad?"

### Napoleon Bonaparte

On his own, Napoleon Bonaparte, the great 18th century French conqueror of Europe was so much amazed by the traits of Islam which he saw in Egypt during his military expeditions that he made the following historic statement about that divine religion and its great Prophet: "Muhammad, in reality, was a great leader of mankind. He preached UNITY among Arabs who were, till then, torn asunder due to internecine quarrels, sometimes resulting in bloody war fares. He brought them out of the obscure world in a short time and the discipline which they maintained under his leadership was simply marvelous, and so was their bravery, courage and devotion to the cause which they loved and cherished. This, coupled with the contempt for death, as taught by their leader, made them great soldiers and fighters like of whom history rarely produces. I simply marvel at the achievements of this great 'Son of the Desert' within a mere period of less than 15 years; a thing which Moses and Christ could not do in 15 centuries. I salute this great man; I salute his qualities of Head and Heart...."

### George Bernard Shaw

And, in corroboration of the above statements, variously made by renowned men of letters and intellect, another foremost Orientalist, playwright and dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, had the following to say about Islam and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his book 'The genuine Islam' (vol. 1 No 8 of 1936): "The Christians and their missionaries have presented a horrible picture of Islam. Not only that, they also carried out an organized and planned propaganda against the personality of Prophet Mohammad and the religion he preached. I have carefully studied Islam and the life of its Prophet. I have done so both as a student of history and as a critic. And I have come to the conclusion that Mohammad was indeed a great man and a deliverer and benefactor of mankind which was till then writhing under a most agonizing pain. I have always held Islam in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing face of existence which can make it appealing to every age. I have studied him, the wonderful man, and in my opinion, far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity.

I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today".

### Conclusion

The above quoted attestations are just some of the facts that make an unlettered Prophet, the greatest human being that ever lived on earth. None of the attestations above made any reference to his birth or birthday because the attesters knew that the Prophet's birth had nothing to do with his achievements. He was not born a Prophet and his greatness was not by accident of birth but by divine will of Allah. If non-Muslims could go as far as expressing the above quoted attestations to confirm the numerous human benefit from the greatness of Prophet Muhammad's mission on earth, what else is expected of Muslims for whom that mission is permanently meant? Thus, celebrating the Prophet's birthday is a trivialization of the greatness of the seal of all Prophets. ■



**COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SHARI'AH IN THE NIGERIAN LEGAL EDUCATION SYSTEM ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC LAW, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NIGERIAN SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM ON 13TH - 15TH NOVEMBER, 2018**

## INTRODUCTION

The 3-day conference was declared open by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor Sulyman Age Abdulkareem, while the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alhaji Abubakar Sa'ad II, CFR delivered a keynote address.

The conference brought together stakeholders in Islamic legal education project, and covers intellectually stimulating activities such as the opening ceremony, two roundtable plenary sessions, three paper presentation sessions and a stakeholders' summit. It was attended by key players in the Nigerian legal education system such as the Director-General of Nigerian Law School, Grand Kadis of Shariah Courts of Appeal from different states, President of the Nigerian Bar Association, and members of the academia including the erudite professor of law from Obafemi Awolowo University, Professor Ademola Popoola and the doyen of Islamic Law scholarship in Nigerian Universities, Professor Abdulqadir Zubair.

The sessions focused on issues germane to the Islamic legal education system in Nigeria such as: the imperativeness of Islamic Law Content for LL.B. in Nigerian universities, Islamic law curriculum and graduates employability, regulation of LL.B. programme for inclusive legal education, teaching of Islamic law in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning and integration of Islamic law into the training and practice of legal profession.

## OBSERVATIONS

At the end of the 3-day conference, the following observations were made:

- i. Due to the inadequacies in the teaching of Islamic law in Nigerian universities, many graduates of Islamic law could not compete effectively in global skill and labour markets.
- ii. Vast majority of graduates of Islamic law from Nigerian universities are more versed in the common law than in the Shari'ah and this has been a disservice to the development of the practice of Islamic component of the legal profession.
- iii. Islamic law specialisation is one of the emerging areas of legal profession where Nigerian lawyers are making substantial income especially in areas such as Islamic family law, Islamic capital market, Central Banking supervision, Islamic financial product development, Islamic content providers, etc.
- iv. It is worrisome that Nigerian faculties of law produce graduates of Islamic law many of whom cannot even independently read Arabic texts lest converse in Arabic or interpret Arabic sources.
- v. The myriads of challenges facing the training of Islamic law in Nigeria could be partially traced to the quality of entry requirements for the degree programme in LL.B. Common and Islamic law.
- vi. Imparting robust knowledge of Islamic law is capable of boosting the economic status of legal practitioners in many

ways.

vii. There is lack of cohesion and collaboration among institutions of Islamic law in Nigeria to wit, Departments of Islamic law and Shari'ah courts.

viii. Effective training of Shari'ah lawyers like other educational endeavours require huge financial investments that are not currently available in the country.

ix. Legal profession as it is being practised in Nigeria today could be among the endangered professions and thus needs diversification.

x. The dearth of learning resources for Islamic law courses affects the teaching and learning of Islamic law more than the common law.

xi. The current curriculum for teaching Islamic law in Nigerian universities is structured to conform to the common law approach and methodology.

xii. The Benchmark for Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) for Nigerian universities has relegated Islamic law courses to elective status in Nigerian universities while it has made common law courses either compulsory, required or elective.

xiii. The CAILS which produce the bulk of human resources need for Area courts and Shari'ah courts are not accorded the appropriate recognition and funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above observations, the following recommendations were made;

1. There is the need for a review of the Islamic law curriculum in Nigerian universities with a view to preparing graduates of the programme for national relevance and global competitiveness.
2. In view of the status of Islamic law as a major component of the Nigerian legal system, the Council of Legal Education should make adequate provisions for the teaching of its practice and procedure at the Nigerian Law School.
5. In view of the growing importance of Islamic banking and finance, there is a need to expand the Shari'ah court jurisdiction to hear disputes arising from Islamic banking and finance matters.
6. The formal and non-formal Islamic schools (madaris) should be mainstreamed into the education systems (particularly in the Northern and South Western Nigeria) with a view to empowering them to produce students that can effectively undertake LL.B. (Common and Islamic law) programme.
7. Proficiency in Arabic language should be made a prerequisite for admission requirement for the study of Islamic law in Nigerian universities.
8. In view of tensions that often surround the application of Islamic law principles in Nigeria such as Islamic banking, sukuk, Islamic insurance, all law students should be exposed to general aspects and some specialised courses of Islamic law in order to produce national cohesion and give room for robust





## The Hijab Question: Knocks for Ibadan School, kudos to Lagos State



trend and the wind of change in the world is to respect the religious rights of the minority. This explains why even in military and paramilitary organisations as well as professions in many countries across the Western world, the religious rights of Muslim ladies are granted through the use of hijab. Why is Nigeria still tied to apron strings of its inglorious colonial past in virtually every stratum, especially education?

The lesson learnt by conscionable individuals and institutions from the victory of Barrister Firdaos Amosa in being called to the Nigerian bar in July this year, after a resolved misunderstanding caused by the infringement on her right to use hijab in December 2017, is that only those who are living in darkness can deprive willing Muslim girls and women of the use of hijab in schools and work places. That this execrable height of intolerance and abuse is made to happen actually shows the type of person the principal is, an uninformed and megalomaniac religious bigot whose intent is to provoke religious crisis in the ancient city and the hallowed academic community of the University of Ibadan.

We strongly condemn the management of ISI and warn the principal that she will be held responsible for whatever her administrative incompetence and religious intolerance precipitate in this matter. Muslims in Nigeria can no longer fold their arms and watch their rights being unabashedly trampled upon by minions and tin-gods who find themselves in some positions of authority. Others like her anywhere they are will be named and shamed as agents provocateurs who want to destroy this country by fanning the embers of religious discord.

The prevarications of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics) of the University of Ibadan, Prof. Yinka Aderinto, on the matter are rather disappointing. If he is a refined academic that he ought to be, he would have been on the right side of history, instead of pontificating on the private ownership of the school, as if private ownership confers religious abuse on the proprietors. Suggesting ISI is even a private school is shamelessly mendacious. Let Prof. Aderinto name one private investor in the school. ISI is owned 100 per cent by an agency of the government and funded by the public. We challenge him to prove to the contrary.

Now, NSCIA demands that the principal of ISI be sanctioned for dragging the name of the school in the mire and trampling on the rights of her students, against whom the school gate was shut as if they were stray animals. The Council demands that the University of Ibadan wade into the matter immediately by working together with the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria and the ISI Muslim Parents Forum to grant the students their full rights of wearing hijab, which in anyway does not impede their learning. Any code, by-law, rule or regulation that conflicts with the Nigerian Constitution is null and void. Therefore, the argument of some school rules and regulations by apologists in the matter is shallow and diversionary.

Meanwhile, the Council also applauds the Lagos State Government for approving the use of hijab in public schools in the state. Though the approval is not a favour in any way

as the Government had been acting ultra vires all this while by refusing to obey the judgement of the Court of Appeal since July 2016 that it was given, we still commend the Government for doing the right thing and behaving responsibly now in the eyes of the enlightened citizens who know that judgements must be obeyed until they are set aside by courts of competent jurisdiction. We urge the State Government to take a step further by withdrawing its appeal on the same matter from the Supreme Court of Nigeria. That is the appropriate thing to do.

The Council urges other Governments across the country, especially in the South West, South South and South East geopolitical zones, to take a cue from the Government of Lagos State and cure themselves from hijabphobia. They should do the needful and honourable just as once done by the Ekiti State Government, under Dr Kayode Fayemi, on the matter of hijab and not wait until they are compelled by the courts, in line with the constitutional provisions, as it happened in Kwara and Osun States before Lagos State now joins the progressive league. This is civilisation and those who deny religious and minority groups' rights are the backward, crude and intolerant people and Governments.

As we said in our statement, "Stop Press! Hijab is Constitutional" released on December 18, 2017 following the denial of call to bar on account of hijab earlier adumbrated, its smacks of illegality of the highest order to deny any willing Muslim female of her constitutional right of using hijab. Section 38, Subsection 1 of the Nigerian Constitution (as amended in 2011) states categorically thus: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion... (either alone or in community with others, and in public and or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching practice and observance." The matter was put to rest in Suit CA/IL/49/2009 where the appellate court sitting in Ilorin ruled unequivocally that the use of hijab by female Muslims qualifies as a fundamental right under Section 38 of the Constitution.

NSCIA warns that henceforth, anybody who harasses Muslim students or professionals on the basis of hijab will be deemed a criminal suspect, being a violator of the Constitution. Such lawless persons will individually answer their surnames and charged to court for violating the Nigerian Constitution regarding the rights of Muslims. Muslims have never barred Christians from dressing anyway their religion expects them to do. We have no problem with nuns in uniform or with people who do not wear shoes or ear-rings. They are our fellow citizens and we respect them and their religious convictions. But why should Christians always stand in our way, regarding adherence to our faith within the confines of the Constitution?

We reiterate that bigoted non-Muslims are hereby put on notice that in schools and work places, violating Muslim ladies' right to hijab will be legally construed as an infringement or a form of harassment. Principals, teachers and little tin-gods in temporary positions of authority who are fond of persecuting Muslim girls and ladies because of hijab should be ready to go prison as they cannot defeat the Constitution of Nigeria in Court just as it was not, and will not be, possible for even state governments to do.

This is a warning; enough is enough! ■

**Prof. Salisu Shehu**  
**Deputy Secretary-General, NSCIA**

## THE SUBJECT MATTER

Mahfouz A. Adedimeji

### Religion without righteousness

A right step in the right direction, the Conference on "Religious Harmony in Nigeria: Towards the 2019 General Elections" was held at Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, between October 11 and 14, 2018. Convened by the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, and the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, through their Interfaith Initiative for Peace (IIP), one thought occupied my mind as political and religious leaders took turns to address the conference, a mixed gathering of Muslim and Christian youth and leaders.

That thought, based on the emphasis placed on religion and expectations from religious leaders in the polity, was inspired in a sense by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi it was who identified "seven blunders" of the modern world, which he earlier referred to as "seven social sins" in an article he published in his "Young India" weekly newspaper of October 22, 1925.

According to Gandhi, in a thoughtful classification that has often been found apt in explaining the chronic contradictions that characterise our world today, these blunders are: wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice and politics without principle. Gandhi's grandson, Arun Gandhi, added the eighth later, which he called "rights without responsibilities".

Inspired by the dynamics of events in Nigeria as a microcosm of Africa and the world, I had reasons to add two more to the list, "democracy without decorum, courts without justice" in an article so captioned in the back page column of Newswatch newspaper on Friday, August 2, 2013 where reference was made to the blunders. The argument is that democracy is shorn of decorum as it is filled with hubris while the courts, the last hope of the common man, are fast becoming where justice is absent due to corruption.

On the occasion of the closing ceremony on Saturday, October 13, 2018, as President Muhammadu Buhari, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and other past Heads of State and current political, judicial and religious leaders passionately spoke after one another, it struck me that if Gandhi were to be alive, he would add that a major blunder of the modern world is "religion without righteousness."

Come to think of it, we live in a highly religious world. Based on a study by the Pew Research Centre in 2015, as revealed by the Secretary-General of NSCIA and Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Is-haq O. Oloyede, in his 2016 Annual Lecture of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL), "Utilising Religion for National Integration and Development" held on Thursday February 18, 2016 at Kwara State University, Kwara State, our world is religiously diverse.

According to the study, as cited Prof. Oloyede, we live in a world of 2.1 billion Christians (31% of the world's population), 1.8 billion Muslims (24%), 1 billion Hindus (15%), nearly 500 million Buddhists (7%) and 14 million Jews (0.2%). Besides,

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## PRESS RELEASE THE HIJAB QUESTION: KNOCKS FOR IBADAN SCHOOL, KUDOS TO LAGOS STATE

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) is appalled by the odious stench of religious bigotry and intolerance oozing out from the academic precincts of the premier University of Ibadan. This is with regard to the needless acrimony and vendetta, hatred and hubris being brought to the fore on the plight of the young Muslim girls of the International School, Ibadan (ISI), owned by the University.

In this age and at this stage of our socio-political development, it is highly deplorable and condemnable that the leadership of the foremost academic community where freedom of religion and expression should be held sacrosanct, apart from other freedoms guaranteed by the Nigerian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Rights document, can lie supine while inanity is made to fester in its International School.

What has been going on for years at ISI is an affront to refinement and civilisation, which education should impart. The denial of the Muslim girls of the right to use their hijab is just a ring in a long chain of institutionalised religious discrimination against Muslims in the school, which should ordinarily be a centre of excellence where learning, probity, excellence and character are respected.

Does ISI belong to a cantankerous Islamophobic religious Association? What hatred and wickedness would make a school management descend so low as to condemn innocent school girls to the blaze of the sun just because of hijab? Where is integrity? Indeed, where is service in a school that makes a claim to "integrity and service" as its motto?

It is ludicrous that the anti-Islamic management of ISI, as available evidence shows, has been violating the rights of the Muslim students for several years through various acts of infraction. This is why Muslim students, who are boarders, had been compelled to attend Sunday church services for years and had been denied the knowledge of their faith while the school employed Christian Studies teachers before the school was challenged. That is also why the school management under the watchful eyes of the University of Ibadan engaged in other unbecoming conducts, only reminiscent of the colonial past when Christianity was forced down the throats of unwilling students.

The incident of Thursday, November 15, 2018 will not be forgotten by the 120 million Muslims in Nigeria. To wit, how would anyone calling herself a principal in the 21st century have the audacity of shutting innocent Muslim students out of school just for the "offence" of wearing small head-carves called hijab? What type of education did the religious bigot called Mrs Phebean Olowe receive that would make her commit such infamy? Why must Muslims always fight before they are granted their rights, as constitutionally guaranteed?

That the management of ISI is dragging itself into this muddle at this time beggars belief. Apart from the sheer population of Muslims that do not make them a religious minority in Nigeria, not even in Ibadan, the contemporary

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