

RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

Version 20.05.2015

The Mission Synod of Mission 21, meeting in Basel, Switzerland, 12 June 2015, representing 90 churches and organizations in 22 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America,

- a) Reaffirming our commitment as a Christian faith-based organization to stand with the people of north-eastern Nigeria and in a special way with EYN Church of the Brethren Nigeria, who is currently suffering severely from the consequences of attacks by terrorists known under the name 'Boko Haram',
- b) Mindful of and deeply concerned by the global activities of jihadists, in particular in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, and the resulting massive streams of internally displaced people and refugees,
- c) Reiterating that the scourge of terrorism in Nigeria has primarily affected the populations of the north-eastern States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, where Christians and moderate Muslims have been victims of violent attacks by radical groups,
- d) Stressing that, according to many Nigerian opinion leaders as well as national and international analysts, the root causes for the magnitude of the insurgencies are likely to be located at the intersection of severe economic inequality, low levels of education, corruption and criminal activity, and religious fanaticism,
- e) Condemning in the strongest terms the violations of human dignity committed by Boko Haram, whose leaders propagate an ideology of hatred that births violence against anyone who does not submit to their worldview,
- f) Expressing outrage at the atrocities perpetrated in the name of the establishment of an Islamic caliphate: the forced displacements, the murders, the kidnapping, the torture and abuses, the destruction of property and livelihoods,
- g) Reiterating that women and children are among those who suffer the greatest harm in war-torn societies as they are often victims of devastating forms of physical and psychological violence, including sexual violence, forced conversions, slavery, and that women are the first to be affected by lack of infrastructure as they struggle to care for the wounded and the weak,
- h) Expressing grave concern at the great loss and damage these terrorist attacks have incurred on EYN since the beginning of the insurgencies in 2009, in particular the high toll of more than 8'000 human lives lost, several hundred women and girls abducted, 700'000 members having been displaced within Nigeria or having fled to the neighbouring country of Cameroon, some 1670 EYN churches or worship centres having been destroyed,
- i) Bearing in mind recent statements, letters and prayers in support of the people in Nigeria, issued by the United Nations, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Church of the Brethren USA (COB) and the United Methodist Church USA (UMC),
- j) Welcoming the voices from Muslims and Islamic organizations that take a firm stand against the ideology held and the acts perpetrated by Boko Haram and related terrorist groups, such as the statements made by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), the Abrahamic Peace Centre Kaduna,
- k) Applauding the efforts made by churches and organizations of whom we know that they are actively involved in alleviating the plight of the people in north-eastern Nigeria, the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), the interreligious NGO Lifeline Compassionate Global Initiative (LCGI), COB USA for providing emergency relief to EYN, the WCC for establishing a centre to promote interreligious harmony, justice and peace,

- 1) Expressing concern that the urgent call for funding (16 September 2014) by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has not yet been met by the international community, resulting in a severe underfunding of the UNHCR mission in Nigeria,
 1. *Resolve* to partner with the people in north-eastern Nigeria to create new perspectives for a life of peace,
 2. *Commit* ourselves to
 - *alleviating the suffering of the displaced Nigerians*, Christian and Muslim, by providing food and improved shelters, buying land for permanent settlements, building houses, building latrines and constructing wells,
 - *supporting those who suffer from physical and psychological trauma* to recover their health by offering counselling to victims and by training and equipping co-workers in partner organizations in counselling,
 - *creating livelihood opportunities* in order to allow people to secure the necessities of life by supplying agricultural equipment, seeds and fertiliser, and by specifically empowering women through skill training and children in enabling them to attend school,
 - *promoting peaceful and constructive relations between Christians and Muslims* through joint refugee settlements and care programs, the establishment and support of peace initiatives in camps and communities that have been affected by violence, while advocating for constructive Christian-Muslim relationships at the local, regional and national levels,
 - raising awareness in Europe and encouraging people to pray, dialogue and speak up publicly and to make donations towards the relief and reconstruction work in north-eastern Nigeria
 3. Applaud the *Government of Nigeria* for having developed a National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security,
 4. Call upon all *Governmental Agencies, Civil Society organizations, donors* and all *people of good will* involved in relief and reconstruction work to *plan and act*
 - according to the best practices of responsible humanitarianism ('do no harm')
 - proactively promoting peace between religious (denominational) and ethnic groups
 - informed about and appreciative of local initiatives, skills and knowledge
 - in alignment with the above mentioned National Action Plan, which includes
 - o ensuring the participation of women and youth at all levels of the reconstruction and peace process
 - o making the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls a priority
 - o intensifying advocacy against traditional and cultural practices that inhibit or obstruct the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325
 - o promoting awareness of national and international laws concerning the rights and protection of women and girls
 - o supporting the establishment of special courts to try the violators of women and girls
 5. Call upon all *ethnic and religious communities* to embrace and actively accompany victims of any kind of violence, in particular victims of sexual violence, by
 - creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe
 - sensitizing the members of the community with regard to the specific situation of victims
 - coordinating support (trauma counselling, pastoral care, health care, etc.)
 - condemning any form of stigmatization of individuals who have suffered from sexual violence