



# NIREC

## Nigeria Inter-Religious Council

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### **2026 FIRST TRIANNUAL MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT ROCKVIEW ROYALE HOTEL, ADETOKUNBO ADEMOLA CRESCENT, WUSE II, ABUJA, FROM 5<sup>TH</sup> TO 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2026**

#### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

##### **PREAMBLE**

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), under the leadership of the Co-chairmen; the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Eminence, Most Rev. Dr. Daniel C. Okoh, and 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, held its 2026 First Triannual Meeting at Rockview Royale Hotel, Abuja, from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2026. The theme of the meeting was "Religious Literacy for National Cohesion".

The Opening Session had in attendance the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), His Excellency, Senator Dr George Akume, CON; the Secretary General of Religions for Peace Global and the African Council of Religious Leaders, Dr Francis KuriaKagama, represented by Dr Rozilla Adhiambo; the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev Ignatius Ayau Kaigama; traditional rulers, religious leaders, senior government functionaries, distinguished members of NIREC and members of the interfaith organizations in Nigeria.

The meeting was declared open by the SGF who emphasized the importance of dialogue as a key instrument for nation building. The Co-chairmen in their respective remarks called on Nigerians to rise above prejudices and build a nation where diversity is celebrated and every citizen feels safe, valued, and respected, regardless of their faith. The Executive Secretary of NIREC, Rev. Fr. Prof. Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua, in his welcome address, appreciated the Co-chairmen for sustaining the hope in peaceful coexistence of Nigerians through their consistent dedication and commitment to continuous dialogue, peace building and unity.

Two papers were presented on the theme of the meeting by Dr Ukertor Gabriel Moti of the Department of Public Administration, University of Abuja, and Dr Hakeem Onapajo, Assistant Director, Legislative Centre for Security Analysis, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, (NILDS), National Assembly, Abuja. The speakers, in their separate presentations stated that religious literacy is the ability to understand, interpret, and engage with

religious beliefs, practices, and identities in an informed, respectful and context-sensitive manner. The members of the NIREC Youth Forum were successfully trained by the *Integral human development Regional Advisor, Africa Council of Religious Leaders - Religions for Peace (ACRL-RFP), Nairobi, Kenya, Dr. Rozilla Adhiambo on Social Justice and Mental Health Awareness.*

## RESOLUTIONS

Sequel to 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. **renewed its** commitment to unity of purpose and faith for the peace and development of Nigeria by encouraging members to speak in harmony and focus on understanding of each other's religion much more than just tolerance;
2. **called on** religious leaders at all levels to dissociate themselves from and speak out against those manipulating religion to cause mayhem and hatred while urging government to take decisive measures against them;
3. **encouraged** clerics of all faiths to seek deeper knowledge of the Holy Books that will provide guidance for good understanding and correct interpretation.
4. **challenged** government to **immediately end** the heightened insecurity in the nation that has led to loss of lives and property, as doing so is the only evidence of sincerity of purpose and commitment to providing safety to the citizens,
5. **affirmed** NIREC's commitment to sustain and expand its activities to the grassroots through the establishment of the States and Local Government Inter-Religious Councils to create more awareness and education to religious groups in particular and Nigerian citizens in general;
6. **decided to consult with the** National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and other relevant bodies to ensure the integration and implementation of inter-religious dialogue in the Nigerian educational curriculum to provide training of young students in tertiary institutions under the General Studies Programme;
7. **decried the** deplorable nature of the Nigerian roads which serve as death traps where citizens are exposed to accidents, kidnapping and robbery and called on governments at all levels to quickly intervene as a means of alleviating the burden of insecurity on Nigerians;
8. **charged the** Federal Government to revitalize the Nigerian economic policies to provide empowerment, employment and job opportunities to vulnerable youths in the country as a way of curbing restiveness and criminality;
9. **denounced** the high level of drug abuse and other vices among the youth and called on the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to intensify the fight against drug dealers and abusers as a means of protecting the youth and securing the future of the country;
10. **called on the** Federal government introduce an effective livelihood training and social protection strategy in schools and NYSC Camps to address the problems of drug abuse.
11. **reiterated** the call for the establishment of State Police to enable states to be more involved in securing lives and property within their jurisdictions.


12. **warned** politicians to desist from weaponizing religion for their political gains and reassured Nigerians that no religious group would adopt or anoint particular candidates for elections in Nigeria;
13. **declared firmly** that terrorists, kidnappers, bandits and gunmen are criminals that do not represent any religious or ethnic group and they should always be described and decisively dealt with as such;
14. **tasked** government to be proactive in providing substantive relief and compensation to victims of incessant attacks across Nigeria and charged security agencies to also redouble their efforts in protecting the citizens;
15. **emphasized the** earlier call on the Federal Government to establish special courts for the quick administration of justice, to ensure that perpetrators of heinous crimes are expeditiously served their deserved punishments and guarantee that crime has consequences because justice delayed is justice denied;
16. **lamented over** the continuous loss of senior military officers on the battlefield and urged government to stop the embarrassment forthwith while demanding a thorough investigation of the circumstances in which senior military officers are ambushed and killed easily by terrorists in order to guard against such serious lapses in the future; and
17. **appreciated** the Co-chairmen of NIREC for their astute leadership that has assisted the Council in achieving its set goals and objectives.

## APPRECIATION

The Co-chairmen and members of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) profoundly appreciated the support of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, towards the success of NIREC meetings and programs. The Council also thanked the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Dr. George Akume CON, for his cooperation and presence at the opening session of the meeting. The Council equally appreciated the Guest Speakers for their wonderful presentations, thanked the Secretary General Religions for Peace Global for his support and representation at the meeting and acknowledged interfaith partners, the media and other distinguished guests for their presence at the opening ceremony and their goodwill messages. The Council also expressed its unreserved appreciation to its members, including the NIREC Youth Forum, for their active participation at the opening and closed-door sessions.

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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