



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Phone: +41 22 791 6111 Fax: +41 22 791 0361
Email: infowcc@wcc-coe.org www.oikoumene.org

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6285
Direct e-mail: dcb@wcc-coe.org

Geneva, November 16, 2020

To:

- The WCC member churches in Nigeria
- Cristian Council of Nigeria
- Christian Association of Nigeria

A pastoral letter to the churches and people of Nigeria

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

To the churches and people of Nigeria,

Grace and peace from the God of life and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Christian greetings from the World Council of Churches on behalf of your sisters and brothers in the global ecumenical fellowship of churches.

We have been following with great concern the recent developments in your country in relation to the EndSARS protest and the mass demonstrations that started peacefully in early October 2020. The protesters called on the government of Nigeria to disband the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in light of the extrajudicial killings, torture and brutality of which it was accused, and to address other national issues such as banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism. We noted how the peaceful protests enjoyed the broad support and solidarity of the churches and people of Nigeria.

We were, however, shocked by the violence perpetrated on 20 October against unarmed protestors at Lekki Tollgate, Lagos, by security force personnel using live ammunition. We joined the voices of condemnation in Nigeria and around the world regarding the use of deadly force against unarmed people. We shared in the concern of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the churches and people of Nigeria in response to this situation.

We are aware of the hijacking in some cases of peaceful protests by criminal elements, resulting in the looting and destruction of public and private properties, and of ethnic and religious interpretations of the protest movement, giving rise to counter-protests in some parts of the country. The consequent undermining of unity and solidarity in the cause of peace and justice in Nigeria is extremely regrettable. We have sent a letter to President Muhammadu Buhari urging his government to end the crisis, and to ensure justice for the victims of SARS brutality and the Lekki Tollgate victims. Further, we have urged the government of Nigeria to act decisively to address the legitimate demands of the protesters.

As people of God, we are called to stand together in solidarity with one another, upholding each other in prayer, supporting those who are made vulnerable socially and economically, the displaced persons and those who have lost their means of livelihood due to the crisis.

The WCC conveys its solidarity and support to the churches of Nigeria as they seek to fulfil their essential ministry for justice, peace and human dignity and rights at this difficult and dangerous moment in the life of the nation. We pray that you may experience the presence and the love of God even in the midst of these challenges.

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Saucă
Interim General Secretary
World Council of Churches