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Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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IIRF in support of Religious Liberty Partnership Statement on Nigeria

(Bonn, 06.06.2019) The International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) supports a Statement on Nigeria released by the Religious Liberty Partnership calling on Christians worldwide for prayer and action. Entitled the 'Abuja Statement on the Crises in Central Nigeria', the document states that though "there has been a long history of disputes between nomadic herders and farming communities across the Sahel," the current attacks in Nigeria, "can no longer be attributed to desertification or to a struggle for resources." The attacks "now occur with such frequency, organisation and asymmetry that references to 'farmer-herder clashes' no longer suffice."

The Statement calls on the Nigerian government "to ensure that all of Nigeria's religious communities enjoy religious freedom, including the right to manifest and propagate their beliefs as enshrined in Article 38.1 of the Nigerian Constitution" and to "urgently facilitate the release of Leah Sharibu, Alice Ngaddah and the remaining Chibok Girls."

"This is a clear statement of the truly dire situation facing Christians in the North and Middle Belt of Nigeria," said Mervyn Thomas, Chairman of the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP) and CEO of CSW (UK). "By holding our annual RLP consultation in Abuja this year, Christians from around the world were able to gain a clear understanding of the problems and to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Christian family in Nigeria."

The Deputy-director of the Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) of the World Evangelical Alliance charged with the Sub-Sahara African countries, Dr. Fernando Da Silva, Johannesburg (South Africa), remarked: "For the sake of my conscience, I cannot keep

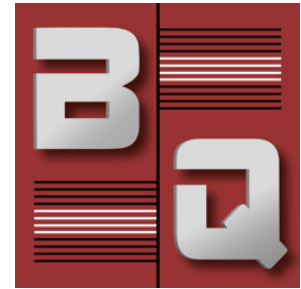


Dr. Fernando Da Silva, WEA RLC Deputy Director and IIRF co-worker, during his speech © Dr. Werner Nel

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A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwonline.com

Department of Theological Concerns of World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/TN-47-1-Jan-2018.pdf

Giving Hands – International Charity
www.gebende-haende.de

International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIS) of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) of the World Evangelical Alliance (International Headquarter, German Branch Tübingen, EU-Office Brüssel)
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary (Bonn, Linz, Zürich, Prague, Tirana, Istanbul, São Paulo, Delhi)
www.bucer.org

missiotop – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance)
www.missiotop.org

Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations of the World Evangelical Alliance

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
www.europeanea.org

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/tc/

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

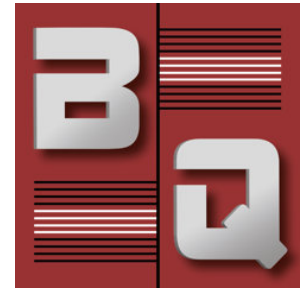
WEA Sustainability Center
www.wea-sc.org

World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

SOS World (Brussels)
www.sosworld.be/page-daccueil/

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quiet while thousands of people are being killed and persecuted for their faith in Christ. Therefore, I stand on behalf of them anywhere in Africa and beyond. I also remember and pray for all relatives affected by these atrocious and inhuman actions.” Da Silva is also the Director of the IIRF Observatory for the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and Regions.

Another affiliate of the IIRF, Drs. Werner Nel, Pretoria (South Africa), chaired a discussion of the RLP Research Task Group in Abuja on definitions of persecution and persecution scales using various terminology. He had conducted a survey among the RLP member organisations on their views, in order to avoid an inflated use of the term persecution. The research was conducted together with the chair of the task group, the IIRF Co-Director, Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer, based in Cape Town (South Africa) and Giessen (Germany), who did not attend due to his teaching obligations at Freie Theologische Hochschule in Giessen.

Other IIRF members in attendance were Prof. Dr. Janet Epp-Buckingham, Ottawa (Canada), who is the current editor of the International Journal for Religious Freedom and a member of the IIRF Academic Council, as well as Rev. Godfrey Yogarajah, chairman of the IIRF Board (also Deputy Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance and Executive Director, WEA Religious Liberty Commission), and Advocate Yamini Ravindran of the Colombo office (Sri Lanka) of IIRF.

For additional information on the Abuja Statement or the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP), please contact Brian O’Connell, RLP Facilitator: Brian@RLPartnership.org.

Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1:** Dr. Fernando Da Silva during his speech, on the left Linus Pfister, Hilfsaktion Märtyrerkirche and RLP board member © Werner Nel
- **Photo 2:** Dr. Fernando Da Silva, WEA RLC Deputy Director and IIRF co-worker, during his speech © Werner Nel
- Abuja Statement on the Crises in Central Nigeria ([pdf](#))
- Abuja Erklärung zu den Krisen in Zentralnigeria (German version, [pdf](#))
- Website of the Religious Liberty Partnership: <https://rlpartnership.org>
- Website of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF): <https://iirf.eu>

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