



AFRICA/NIGERIA - Cardinal Onaiyekan: "Boko Haram insurgency is an anomaly in the socio-religious environment of the Nigerian nation which does not truly reflect the Country's Muslim/Christian relationship"

Abuja (Agenzia Fides) - Nigeria is "the greatest Islamo-Christian nation in the world" where the two major religions in the Country live in harmony with each other and with the faithful of other religions. This was stated by Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, in a paper presented during a seminar on religious freedom organized by the German Bishops' Conference, recently held in Muenster.

As a result, says Cardinal Onaiyekan the Boko Haram insurgency is an anomaly in the socio-religious environment of the Nigerian nation which does not truly reflect the Country's Muslim/Christian relationship. "Because of our occasional and sporadic outburst of ethno-religious violent clashes, there is the unfortunate tendency to overlook the very important fact that in the normal lives of our people, there is a commendable measure of peaceful and harmonious living together across religious lines" the Cardinal added.

According to Cardinal Onaiyekan, the answer to the violence carried out by Boko Haram cannot be just military, but must also include political and religious dialogue. The policy, according to the Cardinal, has its share of responsibility because some political parties have facilitated group actions or have deliberately refused to assist the central government in dealing with the situation that has arisen in the north-east, Boko Haram's land of action. "But it seems that the situation is changing," said the Cardinal. "All the political forces have now realized that we are facing a common menace and all need to join hands to deal with it".

The Nigerian authorities have announced that in the first three months of 2014 more than a thousand people have been killed in attacks carried out by the sect, and in the same time period, 249 446 people have fled their homes. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 28/03/2014)