



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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February 26, 2020

Most Reverend Augustine Akubeze
Archbishop of Benin
President
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria
Abuja, Nigeria

Your Excellency:

On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) I write to express my solidarity and support on the eve of your nationwide prayer procession to take place this Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020 and the procession that your entire Conference of bishops will conduct during the general assembly. These events are historic and courageous manifestations of the Church's witness to Christ's call to be peacemakers in the world.

I am aware of the immense suffering and loss of life caused by Boko Haram and ISIS in northeastern Nigeria that has also spilled over into neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad. We join you in deploring their wanton violence and in calling on the international community to assist the security forces of Nigeria to protect all life and re-establish the rule of law.

I am also very concerned by the growing number of attacks and loss of life and property caused by the conflict between herders and farmers in the middle belt of Nigeria. You, the shepherds of the Catholic Church have issued numerous statements calling on your government to provide security for all people, to bring perpetrators of violence to justice and to resolve the root causes of these two areas of conflict.

I plan to write a letter to our Department of State and to the National Security Council to urge them to take note of your Lenten actions for peace and to follow your advice as expressed in your many statements on the violence.

As you proceed with your plans to Lenten prayer processions, know that our prayers and support are with you in ecclesial solidarity.

May Jesus Christ our Prince of Peace and Mary, the Queen of Nigeria and the Queen of Peace be with you throughout your Lenten journey.

Fraternally yours,

+ *David J. Malloy*

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford

Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace