

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## Issued at the Conclusion of the Meeting on the Abuja Declaration for Sustainable Peace and Religious Harmony

Adopted in Abuja, Nigeria, on March 21, 2026

### PREAMBLE

We, representatives of the Christian and Muslim communities of Nigeria, have convened today in Abuja together with the First Step Forum. In profound concern over the persistent violence in the Middle Belt and the North of our country, yet driven by the shared conviction that peace is a divine mandate, we declare:

### 1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE CRISIS AND ITS ROOT CAUSES

We acknowledge the unspeakable suffering of communities decimated and displaced by armed conflict, banditry, and religious extremism. We recognize that a lack of security, competition over scarce resources—exacerbated by climate change—and a culture of impunity are undermining our social cohesion and the dignity of every human being.

### 2. OUR SOLEMN COMMITMENT AS FAITH LEADERS

As leaders of our respective faiths, we jointly commit to:

#### a. Rejecting Instrumentalization

We unequivocally reject all forms of violence committed in the name of God or religion. Faith must never serve as a pretext for political, ethnic, or sectarian aggression.

#### b. Early Warning and Mediation

We will strengthen local interfaith committees to identify communal tensions at an early stage and de-escalate them through dialogue before they turn into violence.

#### c. Healing and Reconciliation

We will foster spaces for forgiveness, trauma healing, and restorative justice within our congregations and communities.

### **3. DEMANDS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

We call upon the Federal Government, the administration, and the security forces:

#### **a. Equitable Protection for All**

To make the protection of the civilian population the highest priority, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation, ensuring absolute neutrality of the state.

#### **b. An End to Impunity**

To ensure the rigorous prosecution and conviction of perpetrators through the rule of law, thereby restoring public trust in state institutions.

#### **c. Sustainable Land Management**

To implement lasting solutions for farmer-herder conflicts through modern agricultural policies and fair land-use rights at all levels of government.

### **4. APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

We call upon international partners and the global community to partner with the people of Nigeria in their quest for stability:

#### **a. Protection of the Vulnerable**

To prioritize the protection and support of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Middle Belt and the North within all humanitarian and diplomatic frameworks.

#### **b. Support for Civil Society**

To provide technical and financial assistance not only to state entities but specifically to grassroots civil society and religious peace initiatives.

#### **c. Holistic Engagement**

To recognize that lasting peace requires a combined effort in security, economic development, and the promotion of religious freedom.

## **5. THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN IN NIGERIA**

In addition to the core issues of promoting peaceful co-existence, we offer ourselves to also engage in the proclamation and proper upbringing of children and ensure a better future for them.

### **CLOSING STATEMENT**

While thanking the FSF for this great initiative, we agreed to make further representation to them to escalate these efforts by putting together an action plan for the next steps in advancing the overall objective of this dialogue, which is to foster religious freedom and peaceful co-existence amongst the people of Nigeria.

**Peace is not a final destination but a journey that begins together.**