

**Human Rights Council  
Forum on Minority Issues  
Sixth session  
Geneva, 26-27 November 2013**

**Agenda Item .3 - Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities.**

**Intervention presented by: Josephine Ako — OHCHR 2013 Minorities Fellowship Programme**

Ms Chairperson

Ms Independent expert

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

First, I would like to thank the office of the High Commissioner for giving me the opportunity to participate in the 2013 minority fellowship programme

As stipulated in Article 1.2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, states must take action through law and policy in order to protect and promote the rights of minorities and their identities, we agree with the provision stated in Draft Recommendation no. 5I that states should ensure that all cases of intimidation, harassment, persecution and other serious human rights violations against religious minorities are thoroughly and immediately investigated and perpetrators punished. Appropriate measures, including legal assistance, should be made available to religious minority groups as required in order to document cases of violence or intimidation and effectively prosecute those who commit attacks on them and communal violence.

However, we are deeply concerned with the challenges and problems encountered in Nigeria in its fight against terrorism; Nigeria doesn't seem to be making headway in its efforts to defeat the Islamist insurgency and also addressing the issue of impunity.

We expect the Nigerian government to demonstrate its commitment to uphold minority rights in the country. For these reasons we would like to make the following recommendations:

- The government should intensify its efforts on fight against terrorism
- The government should reinforce its anti-terrorism law to address the issue of impunity
- To encourage and support programs aimed at peaceful coexistence between different ethnic and religious groups in the country
- To promote interreligious dialogue at all levels Thank you!

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