

Press Statement

**Jointly Issued by Concerned Citizens of Kano State and the
Kano State Christian Community Represented by CAN**

(to be jointly known and called)

KANO COVENANT

In the last several months, the peace and tranquility of Kano State has come under severe strain occasioned by the threat as well as the actual eruption and escalation of ethnic and religious tension and violence in parts of Nigeria, especially in the North East. Some of this violence has been claimed by fringe groups that masquerade as defenders or promoters of religion to terrorize and harm innocent Nigerians, Muslims and Christians alike, while some of it has been perpetrated by ordinary criminal gangs who are bent on making an already bad situation even worse.

This unfortunate situation has led to anxiety as well as ethnic and religious tensions in Kano State thus placing ethnic and religious minorities in the State in a state of apprehension and even fear. The proliferation of rumors through text messages and the unethical exploitation of the situation by some ethnic and socio-cultural groups in the country as well as a section of the media has not helped matters at all. As Nigerians who come from or live in Kano State and who, in most cases, have no other place to call home but here, we are deeply concerned by these unfortunate developments and wish to seize this opportunity to state as follows:

a) Nigeria is a federation of multiple ethnic identities and religious beliefs governed by a constitution that recognizes the freedom of

thought, conscience and religion and the freedom to manifest and propagate same without let or hinderance. The Nigerian Constitution is not an ordinary document. It is a **covenant** which commits and binds all Nigerians to all the principles contained in it. It is therefore incumbent upon all Nigerians, especially Muslims and Christians, to respect the principles of the constitution and give life to them through their utterances, actions and relationships.

b) In view of the above we, commit ourselves to observing this sacred **covenant** and call on all Muslims and Christians from, living in or visiting Kano to observe same by respecting the rights and freedoms which the Nigerian Constitution guarantees, including the right to hold divergent religious beliefs. If God had wished differently, he would have made us all either Muslims or Christians or even animists. The fact that this is not so, indicate that such is His wish. We are not the first to be in this situation. Our prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) had lived peacefully, under covenant, with Christians and Jews.

c) We further commit ourselves to doing everything within our power to help preserve and protect the lives and properties of all Nigerians living in Kano State, without regard to ethnic and sectional affiliations and religious beliefs. We make this commitment fully convinced that it is in accordance with the tenets not only of the Nigerian Constitution but also of all monotheistic religious traditions and beliefs, especially those of Christianity and Islam. God has said in the Holy Qur'an, "He who extinguishes a life is like he has extinguished humanity as a whole" and also said in the Scriptures, "

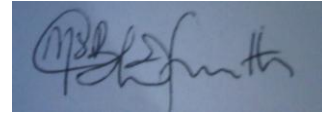
d) We call on all Nigerians from, living in or visiting other parts of the country to eschew ethnic hostility, religious intolerance and senseless violence and live in peace, harmony and brotherhood

with each other so that our country, Nigeria, may know peace once again. We particularly call for the protection of all ethnic and religious minorities wherever they may be across the country because they are the most vulnerable and helpless among us.

So help us God.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, loopy initial 'B' followed by 'ishaq Bashir'.

Bashir Is'haq Bashir
Kano Covenant
15/01/2012

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ransome Bello'.

Bishop Ransome Bello
CAN Chairman, Kano
15/01/2012