



**THE BARONESS COX
HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW**

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC
Secretary General
The Commonwealth
Marlborough House
London SW1Y 5HX

14 September 2020

Dear Patricia,

We write to highlight urgent concerns about escalating violence in Nigeria, where attacks led by Boko Haram, Fulani herdersⁱ and other Islamist militia continue in northern and central-belt states, with reports of increasing violence in the south-east.

- According to a report by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, entitled ‘*Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?*’, thousands of civilians have been killed and elements of the Nigerian Government may be complicit in violence.
- The APPG’s concerns reflect the findings of a report by Amnesty International, ‘*We dried our tears: Addressing the toll on children of Northeast Nigeria’s conflict*’, which concludes that the Nigerian armed forces have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during their operations.
- The Nigerian army’s former Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Theophilus Danjuma, whom some of us have met and spoken to, says the armed forces are “not neutral; they collude” in the “ethnic cleansing in... riverine states” by Fulani herders. He insists that villagers must defend themselves because “depending on the armed forces” will result in them dying “one by one. The ethnic cleansing must stop.”

The State's failure to protect its citizens is a clear breach of its obligations under the Commonwealth Charter in respect of human rights. There is now an urgent need (a) to ensure adequate protection and aid for those suffering the loss of family members and the destruction of their homes and livelihoods; and (b) to end impunity by ensuring that complaints related to human rights violations are promptly, independently and impartially investigated, and those responsible are held to account after fair trials.

We write, therefore, to ask whether you are able to respond on behalf of The Commonwealth and to raise these urgent concerns with the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group. We would be very willing to meet in person (or perhaps more practically, online via zoom) to discuss how we might proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Baroness Cox

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws QC

Jim Shannon MP

Lord Williams of Oystermouth, Archbishop of Canterbury 2002-2012

Lord Carey of Clifton, Archbishop of Canterbury 1991-2002

Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Lord Bishop of Coventry

Philip Mounstephen, Lord Bishop of Truro

Lord Stoddart of Swindon

Lord Anderson of Swansea

Lord Cormack

Sir Geoffrey Nice QC

Ayo Adedoin, International Organisation for Peace and Social Justice

Ewelina Ochab, Coalition for Genocide Response

Mervyn Thomas, CSW

Dr Khataza Gondwe, CSW

Neville Kyrke-Smith, Aid to the Church in Need (UK)

Dr John Eibner, Christian Solidarity International

Ann Buwalda, Jubilee Campaign

ⁱ We recognise the important distinction between the Fulani in general (a diverse group of millions of people with hundreds of clans) and the sub-group of well-armed, radicalised Fulani who carry out attacks.