

International community castigated for ignoring terrorism in Nigeria

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FALLS CHURCH, Va.—The international community has ignored terrorist violence and attacks in Nigeria, insisted Samson Ayokunle, president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The Nigerian convention is the largest Baptist World Alliance organization in Africa, with about 3.5 million members in 10,000 churches.



Samson Ayokunle (at podium), president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, accused the world community of devaluing Nigerian lives in its lack of response to attacks by Boko Haram, a jihadist group that seeks to establish Sharia law in the West African nation. “My consternation is in the attitude of the international community toward the huge destruction going on in Nigeria,” Ayokunle said. “The earnestness with which they intervened in the ISIL attacks in Syria and Iraq, or the Taliban problem in Afghanistan, etc., is not shown in

the case of Nigeria.”

He accused the world community for devaluing Nigerian lives.

“Does it not matter to the rest of the world if Boko Haram continues to kill hundreds of people every week? Are these people less human than those being killed in other places where they have gone to directly intervene? My people are being killed like animals, and the whole world is just watching.”

Ayokunle was responding to the latest spurt of attacks by Boko Haram, a jihadist group that seeks to establish Sharia law in the West African nation.

Thousands killed

Boko Haram conducted the Baga massacre in northeastern Nigerian in early January, causing an unknown number of deaths. Estimates range from dozens to more than 2,000. In April 2013, more than 185 people were killed and more than 2,000 homes were destroyed as a result of fighting between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram.

Up to 2014, the group killed more than 5,000 civilians in Nigeria. Since 2009, Boko Haram has abducted more than 500 people, including 276 schoolgirls in April 2014. An estimated 1.5 million Nigerians have fled their homes because of threats and attacks.

“The situation is pathetic,” Ayokunle declared. “The main targets in all these attacks are the Christians first and any other person that opposes them. Any town they enter, after killing the Christians there, they go ahead to bring down all the churches there, sparing the mosques.

“Major Christian cities such as Gwoza and Mubi, among others, have fallen to them. Christians in cities such as Michika and Baga are also on the run.”

Church ‘under siege’

“The church is under siege of severe persecution,” he said.

Baptists have been directly affected, he added “No Christian church is standing anymore in Mubi, where more than 2,000 Baptists fled the city through Cameroon when Boko Haram attacked.”

These Baptist Christians returned to Nigeria through another town, Yola, but never reached their homes.

“They have become displaced and are now living in displaced people’s camps scampering for food, without decent accommodation and naked,” Ayokunle said.

Baptist buildings were burned, and Baptist homes were vandalized, he reported.

The conference president and Baptist pastors have fled Plateau state, another region attacked by Boko Haram, he said. “Our Baptist high school in Mubi has been closed, while our Baptist pastors’ school in another neighboring town, Gombi, was indefinitely shut down.”

Ayokunle expressed appreciation for the prayerful support of Baptists and other Christians and requested financial support to assist those who have been displaced by the terrorist attacks.

“Continue to join us in prayer so that the gates of hell might not prevail against the church of Christ in Nigeria,” he urged.