



Aid to the  
Church in Need

ACN CANADA

*Montréal, June 6, 2022*

## **Aid to the Church in Need statement about the Pentecost massacre in St. Francis Xavier Church in Owo, Nigeria**

**The pontifical international charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is deeply shocked by the horrific attack which took place at the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, in Owo, Ondo State, southwest Nigeria, during Pentecost Sunday celebrations, June 5th, and which caused the death of many people, including children.**

The thoughts and prayers of ACN are with the victims, with the injured, their families and the entire Catholic community in Ondo.

“It is Pentecost Sunday, a time every Catholic is expected to be in Church to commemorate the solemnity. It is so sad to say that while the Holy Mass was going on, men of unknown origin, wielding guns, attacked St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church,” said Fr. Augustine Ikwu, director of communications for the Diocese of Ondo, in a statement sent to ACN.

“Many are feared dead, many others injured and the Church violated,” he said.

“The identity of the perpetrators remains unknown while the situation has left the community devastated,” added the Catholic priest.

“Meanwhile, all the priests in the parish are safe and none was kidnapped,” says the priest, dispelling rumours to that effect which circulated on social media.

“The bishop appeals that we remain calm, be law-abiding and pray for peace and normalcy to return to our community, state and country,” the statement ends.

ACN denounces this outburst of violence, yet another terrorist act in Nigeria, one more on the long list of crimes against Christians. The country in general has been rocked by episodes of violence, banditry and kidnappings that, although affecting all ethnic and religious groups in the nation, have led to a long list of major attacks on the Christian community over the last few decades.

Just last week Aid to the Church in Need organized a press conference with Archbishop Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso, Archbishop of Kaduna, to speak about the insecurity and the

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violence in Nigeria. Although the problems come from a variety of directions, Archbishop Matthew stated clearly: “The government has failed us completely; it is the absence of good government that is causing this. Bandits, Boko Haram, kidnappings, these are all symptoms of injustice, of the corruption that is in the system. Unless we can get to the root of the issue, we will be fighting a losing battle.”

The massacre took place in the southwest of Nigeria, a place that hasn’t been affected until now by the insecurity and violence which generally affect the north and the Middle Belt.

While the problem may be mostly internal, the West, says the archbishop, is also to blame. “It takes two to tango. Our leaders steal our money and take it to the West, to Switzerland, Paris, London, Frankfurt. If the West didn’t accept their money, they would leave it at home. The Western governments collaborate with our leaders.”

Aid to the Church in Need calls on all political and religious leaders in the world to firmly and explicitly condemn this terrorist attack at the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, in Owo, Ondo State, in southwest Nigeria, during Pentecost Sunday celebrations.

*NOTE: Aid to the Church in Need has received videos of the attack at the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, which verify the claims contained in this article. Due to the sensitive and graphic nature of the images, the charity has chosen not to share them.*

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