



**The Rev. The Hon. Fred Nile MLC** ED., L.Th.,

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Stop the Religious Genocide in Africa**

### **Campaign to Support Nigerian Christians**

### **For immediate circulation**

Yesterday, Rev Fred Nile MLC delivered an Adjournment Speech in the Legislative Council highlighting the plight of Nigerian Christians who have for many years been suffering persecution and genocide.

A campaign to encourage the Prime Minister to address this issue at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is being organised by the Barnabas Fund. Supporters of persecuted Christians the world over are encouraged to sign the petition at:

**[savenigerianchristians.org](http://savenigerianchristians.org)**

The transcript of Rev Nile's speech has been extracted from the NSW Parliamentary *Hansard* below:

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (00:14):** I speak on the persecution of Nigerian Christians. I was recently visited by a delegation led by Christian charity Barnabas Fund Chief Operations Officer Jude Simion concerning a matter that has been covered recently by the press, namely the continuing genocide of Christians in Nigeria. Many may think that Nigeria is a distant land, but it is a fellow Commonwealth country and I think it is important that we keep up to date with the affairs of our neighbours. Jude Simion brought to my attention an open letter

to the Prime Minister, which he has organised as part of a campaign and petition for Australia to address the plight of Christians in Nigeria. The open letter can be supported by members of the public going to the petition's website and signing it at [savenigerianchristians.org](http://savenigerianchristians.org). I read the letter because I believe my colleagues in this House should be made aware of what is happening. The letter is addressed to the Prime Minister of Australia and says:

*I am alarmed that Nigerian Christians have suffered a surge of extremist violence with at least 8,400 Christians murdered since 2015 and over two million Nigerians displaced from their homes.*

*I am shocked that the Nigerian authorities are not bringing perpetrators to justice, and that Christian communities are not being protected adequately, despite the authorities claims that they are safe.*

*This is not primarily so-called "tribal violence" as Boko Haram declared in August 2016 that they would "blow up every church and kill all citizens of the cross", and armed militant Fulani herdsmen cry "Allahu Akbar" in their attacks, leaving thousands of victims maimed, burned, kidnapped or forced to flee.*

*I urge you today to bring this to the attention of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, and to consider diplomatic pressure and policy responses to the following:*

*The Nigerian Government's failure to respond adequately to the violence,*

*The need for persecuted communities to be protected, and*

*The need for Nigerian authorities to bring perpetrators of violence to justice.*

*All these issues need to be addressed if we are to save lives and improve the welfare of Nigerian Christians, and all civilians affected by this unrestrained violence.*

I echo the concerns in this letter. I encourage all my colleagues to lend their support to this campaign. The best way to defeat inequity is to shine the light of day on it. Twenty-one Christians were massacred this year while attending a wedding. Many

such atrocities occur only because the international community is kept in the dark and people largely do not know what is happening. One village head from the Middle Belt region told the Barnabas Fund this year that:

*We are tired and we do not want to bother others about our tragedies. We seem only to be reporting deaths and attacks, and people are weary of our reports.*

It really is a tragedy that things are so bad that some people in the international community simply see this as normal, as business as usual. In the past I have lobbied for the community to acknowledge racial and religious-based genocide in Africa. This is just another such case that needs to be addressed urgently. I hope that this open letter does in fact get a response from the Prime Minister of Australia. The best way that we can apply pressure to the Government of Nigeria is to address this issue at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Mr Simion reminded me during our meeting that the horrendous policy of apartheid was ended through such international diplomatic pressure. There are people in New South Wales who have family and friends in Nigeria, many of whom are Christian. These are our citizens too, and they expect us to speak for them when they have no effective voice.

**Media inquiries:**

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