



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **TEACHING OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: NSCIA COMMENDS GOVERNOR DIKKO RADDI, URGES OTHERS TO FOLLOW SUIT**

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), under the leadership of its President-General, the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alh. Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni commends the acts of justice, fairness and inclusivity- all of which mirror the eternal precepts of Islam- exhibited by His Excellency, Dr Dikko Umar Radda, the Executive Governor of Katsina State, through the reintroduction of Christian Religious Studies in primary and secondary schools across the state. This development is worthy of commendation, especially as it conforms, once again, to the Islamic principles of equity, fairness, and justice.

It is common knowledge that the religion of Islam condemns the persecution of the minority in its totality. During the first century of Islamic suzerainty over Arabia, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasised the rights of the minority regarding freedom of belief and worship and strove to ensure that they were not only protected, but also safeguarded against persecution.

While the NSCIA is unequivocally in support of the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in Muslim-dominated states, it however calls for reciprocity in Christian-dominated parts of the federation. The Council therefore urges the Governors of the South Eastern, South Southern and some South Western states, where the teaching of Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) is prohibited, to learn from the good example of Governor Radda.

The case of Rivers State University, where the Muslim students and staff have been denied their right to assembly anywhere on campus to observe their five daily prayers, sums up the persecution of Muslims in Southern Nigeria. The students initiated a Fundamental Rights application at the Federal High Court, Port Harcourt Division vide Suit No: FHC/PH/150/2012, which was subsequently determined in their favour. However, rather than restoring the rights of the Muslim students, the University and the State Government appealed the judgment. The Rivers State

Ministry of Justice filed an appeal at the Court of Appeal in Appeal No: CA/PH/614/2013, and the Appeal Court affirmed the decision of the trial court in 2017. In the same vein, rather than undertaking a self-retrospection and letting the dictates of justice stand, the Rivers State Government, through the law office of E. C. Ukala & Co., went ahead to file an appeal at the Supreme Court (No: SC/055/2018), which has unfortunately not been heard to date.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the progress, development and advancement of the Nigerian nation are, and shall continue to be ineluctably linked to the preparedness of the political class to eschew injustice, partisanship and arrant abhorrence for pluralism in state governance. These found ample demonstration in Governor Radda's recent executive order, if as such it may be described. The NSCIA is of the strong opinion that this is the path that all stakeholders in our nation should tread as a categorical imperative.

*Signed.*

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Secretary-General