

Truth dies when we mislabel evil

By Sa'adiyyah Adebisi Hassan

To solve any problem, you must first understand it. If you don't, you cannot fix it. Every problem must be properly named and accurately defined. Once it is deliberately mislabeled, any attempt to solve it becomes hypocritical it won't heal, it will fester and escalate. Let me illustrate with what we see every day in Nigeria: When armed criminals invade a village, kill innocent people, burn homes, and loot properties, the headlines call it a "clash." When terrorists attack worshippers or schoolchildren, it's described as a "security breach." When bandits kidnap hundreds, we hear "unknown gunmen." When heavily armed herders invade farmlands and massacre the farmers, it's called a "farmer-herder clash."

How can a society solve what it refuses to name correctly? That's not a clash it's cold-blooded violence (genocide) That's not a security breach its terrorism. The proper label matters, because when you water down evil with soft words, you protect the oppressor and blame the victim. You turn murder into "conflict," and you hide injustice behind vocabulary.

The Constitution, the Secular State, and What It Really Means

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria the supreme law of the land clearly declares that Nigeria is a secular state. Every law, code, or edict must submit to it. Yet today, some states enforce religious-based laws applying only to Muslims, even though both Muslims and Christians are equal citizens under one Constitution. That sends an unmistakable signal: an attempt to place religion above the national charter. This is not hostility toward faith it's a call for fairness and constitutional order. As Muslims, we must remember that Islam itself stands for justice, equality, and protection of the weak. Any system that creates division or dual standards violates both Islam's essence and the Constitution's authority.

Deborah Case is A Tragedy and a Test of Justice

Consider the case of Deborah Samuel Yakubu a Christian student at Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto. She was accused of "blasphemy," dragged out of a security room, stoned, and burned alive by a mob chanting "Allahu Akbar." In a video, one youth proudly held up a matchbox and declared: "We killed her, we burned her remains." Yet the justice system responded by charging only two suspects with "criminal conspiracy" and "inciting public disturbance," not murder. The video showed

dozens of perpetrators, many of whom were never arrested, and some even celebrated publicly. To make matters worse, several lawyers appeared voluntarily to defend the killers sending a disturbing message: commit violence in the name of religion and still walk free. And then people insist "there's no targeted persecution of Christians in Nigeria." That's not objectivity that's denial of truth.

The Logical Trap: "Not Only Christians..."

Some respond, "Many Muslims are also being killed." Yes, that's true and we mourn every innocent life, regardless of faith. But honesty demands precision. These killings are mostly carried out by Jihadists, extremist elements terrorists and criminal gangs not by Christian militias. And in many of the attacks across the Middle Belt and certain northern communities, the victims have been predominantly Christian farmers and villagers.

Refusing to acknowledge this pattern is moral evasion. When communities are repeatedly attacked for their faith or identity, let's call it what it is targeted violence (genocide) not a "communal clash." Misleading terms only deepen the wound.

Why This Matters Beyond Words?

A society that mislabels atrocity will never confront it will normalize it. A state that pardons killers while ignoring victims destroys its own legitimacy. A government that turns a blind eye to one group's pain while amplifying another's breeds resentment and distrust. And when citizens compete over who suffers more, the real enemies grow stronger. This is not about religion it's about justice, truth, and the protection of human dignity. If no one can show that Deborah's killers were punished, then stop saying there's "no targeted violence." The video exists. The failure of justice is real. The trauma is real. Christians don't need to scream to prove their suffering. What they need is justice swift, firm, and fair. And as Muslims, standing for justice is part of our faith. Stop hiding behind "it's not only Christians." "Stop defending the indefensible.

Stand for what is right. Because if you justify injustice today, it will come knocking at your own door tomorrow.