

Northern Christian Leader in APC denounce their Party, says they won't vote Muslim-Muslim ticket

Northern Christian leaders in the All Progressives Congress has called on Nigerians not to vote for any ticket that was not mixed between Christians and Muslims during the 2023 elections. According to them, since the Muslim-Muslim ticket for the presidency was divisive, it must be rejected by all patriotic Nigerians.

They bared their minds during the APC Northern Christian Leaders Summit, with a declaration that the insinuation that Northern Muslims would not support a Christian running made was untrue and divisive. Among the leaders who spoke during the event were a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Ba bachir Lawal; former Speaker, House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara; former Minister of Youths and Sports Development, Solomon Dalung; Senator Ishaku Abbo (Adamawa North) and several other Christian leaders in Northern Nigeria. Lawal, who was also the chairman of the occasion, said colleagues within and outside the APC expressed shock over their reaction to the APC's Muslim-Muslim ticket in the 2023 general election, saying it was a grand conspiracy against the Northern Christians.

The former SGF said, "Our opposition has some historical basis. There were times in the past when Christians produced the Deputy Governors in Kebbi, Niger and Kaduna states. Now, it is wholly Muslim-Muslim tickets. "It is worth noting that all these are happening in the APC-controlled states. They are threatening to do likewise in Gombe, Kogi and Adamawa states.

"It is also now a recurring practice in the North whereby any Christian traditional ruler that dies is replaced with a Muslim Prince, albeit from the ruling family even if the most qualified and preferred prince is a Christian. The recent case of Billiri Chieftom in Gombe State is still fresh in our minds.

"Proof of its anti-Christian agenda is that our party itself has completely eliminated Northern Christians from its NWC (National Working Committee) and NEC (National Executive Committee). All our protestations as party members have been completely ignored by the party leadership.

"But as members of the APC, we have the right to continue to express our indignation at these happenings and will not give up until we secure the justice that is due us.

"The main purpose of this historical narrative is to let you know that for the APC, a Muslim-Muslim ticket has been a long-term political strategy and not a one-off decision. Thus, all this talk of competence as the reason for the choice of the Muslim VP are balderdash and diversionary. This is a calculated anti-Christian exclusion agenda that is being implemented.

"We see this ticket as an assent to the current and continuing educational, economic and

political marginalisation of the Northern Nigerian Christians.

"Christians all over the country see this MM ticket as a deliberate and premeditated attempt to introduce and firmly entrench religion into the politics of this country. This, of course, will lead to further disharmony in the hitherto fragile coexistence of the Nigerian society, disrupt peace and hamper both social and economic development of the country.

"Christians, and indeed most enlightened Nigerians are at a loss as to why people that intend to govern a country with our kind of diversity would choose this path to power. This is very divisive and must be rejected by all patriotic Nigerians. "Implied in this ticket is the insinuation that Northern Muslims are not



willing to vote for a ticket that has a Christian on it and on which they are not represented. It is our belief that northern Muslims would have seen the justice in a Muslim-Christian ticket and would have given it their overwhelming support had the party been inclined to do so.

"A corollary to this mindset is that Christians should also not vote for a ticket in which they are not accommodated. Unfortunately, this is the message we get loud and clear from this MM ticket. This is truly a wake-up call for all Nigerian Christians. We didn't start this religious politics, the APC and its candidates did; so, all of us should take note and act as appropriate."

While advising his APC colleagues to spare them the sanctimonious lectures on "competence" and the cliché "religion of the candidates does not matter", Lawal added that, "The truth is that the 2023 presidential election will be all about religion, and sadly, you started it; religion does matter in this context; so be ready for the consequences".

Lawal said, "It is important to reiterate that we Nigerian Christians want to live in peace and harmony with all practitioners of other religions. We want to enjoy social and economic developments like other parts of the world but without peace, justice and religious harmony, this is not possible.

"On our part, we neither seek to oppress nor dominate anyone or any religion. But we will also resist anyone trying to discriminate against us and our religion. We were not the ones that started this fight. The APC started it and must be ready to carry the cross it has created. Blaming Christians and heaping insults on CAN will take them nowhere.

"For, how do they expect Christians to keep silent when a northern state governor publicly states that they pressured (Bola) Tinubu to get a northern Muslim VP because they did not believe him to be a good Muslim? Is the VP going to be the National Deputy Imam? How do they expect us to keep silent when another northern state governor goes to Osun State and urges them to vote for someone just because he is a Muslim? Was he there for the election campaign or "dawah"? What can be a better example of religion in politics than demonstrated by these governors?

"Clearly, there is an agenda to politically, religiously, and economically suppress and oppress the Northern Christian. But we are up to the task. We will protect ourselves. The PVC and our prayers will be our weapons of choice and we will massively deploy them in 2023.

"But while we are ready to battle this politics of exclusion and oppression, we are open to discussions with any one who wants to engage with us in good faith."

Dogara, on his part, said with the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the APC, Nigeria was going the way of the Nazi Germany. The former Speaker of the House of Representatives, who said the APC wanted to disintegrate Nigeria like USSR and Yugoslavia, added that the party looked like a "janjaweed" party. According to him, Nigeria of 2022 is not the Nigeria of 1993 adding that the presidential candidate of the APC, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has made a fatal error of judgment.

Dogara also supported the position of other Christian leaders on the Muslim-Muslim ticket, with a call on Christians to seek for an alternative platform in the 2023 elections. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Truth must be told that anyone who is not bringing us together is consciously tearing us apart", Dogara added.

Senator Abbo said no Northerner would fight his brother because he is a Muslim, adding that they were fighting injustice. He called on Nigerians to reject every divisive tendency of individuals to divide the people.