

*Appendix 4:*

## **Reaction to the Zamfara Declaration**

*New Nigerian*

December 19, 1999

Ibrahim M. Umar

The Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani has declared Sharia law. The State Assembly unanimously endorsed the move. The Muslim faithful were glad. Christians, under the auspices of CAN, in a press conference in Kaduna vowed to fight the move while secular fanatics like the Governor of Kaduna State arrogantly declared it “unconstitutional.”

Now as enlightened Muslims, the question we should put forth is: What is the position of the Holy Qur’an on this issue? A true Muslim has no authority or constitution greater or above the Holy Qur’an, which has been described as, “A guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear God.” (HQ II:2) The lives of Muslims must be governed by the verdict of the Holy Qur’an. Allah declared, “If any fail to judge by (the light of) what God has revealed, they are (no better than) unbelievers.” (HQ V:47) The next verse concludes with, “And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what God hath revealed they are (no better than) wrong doers.” (HQ V:48) Still a succeeding verse stated: “If any fail to judge by (the light of) what God hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel.” (HQ V:50)

Almighty God said to Prophet Mohammad (SAW) “To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety; so Judge between them by what God hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee.” (HQ V:51)

Secularism, which has been imposed on Muslims in the words of Sheikh Shariff Saleh, a renowned Hadith Scholar, is “An erroneous innovation that must be disregarded.” Imposition of secularism on the Muslim population is a violation of their fundamental right to live according to the guidance of their Holy Book.

The greatest enemy the Muslim community has today in the attempt to live by the Sharia, according to Professor Tijjani El-Miskin, is not the Christian, the Jew or the Pagans but the secular fanatics who profess to be Muslims. According to the Holy Qur’an, “In their hearts is a disease; and God has increased their disease; and grievous is the penalty they (incur) because they are false (to themselves).” (HQ II:10) These secular zealots are real hypocrites who have been brainwashed and rendered renegades by Western education and propaganda such that, when Sharia is mentioned, their hearts are filled with disgust, contempt and horror.

What are we to do with such as reject the establishing of sharia? This is what God told His Prophet (SAW), “O Prophet, strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is hell, an evil refuge (indeed)!” (HQ LXI:9)

Sincere Muslims should not allow themselves to be intimidated and cowed by this bunch of diehard renegades. I quite agree with Malam Yakubu Ali, former editor of the *New Nigerian*, that constitutionally in a Federal System like Nigeria, Zamfara State has

the right to adopt Sharia, and that if for all the past decades Muslims were tolerant of secularism being forced upon them, why can't these secular fundamentalists also be tolerant of Muslims choice done through a democratic means? We now know who have zero tolerance.

Governor Makarfi and his likes should be warned of God's ultimatum. "Those who reject the Book (Qur'an) and the (revelations) with which We sent Our apostles shall soon know, when the yokes shall be round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged in the boiling fetid fluid; then in the fire shall they be burned." (HQ XL:70-72)

Similarly governor Makarfi and his likes are only expressing their ignorance by pointing out that there are followers of other religions in Zamfara. Sharia is only applied on Muslims; its aim is purely justice and it respects the rights of non-Muslims to live according to their culture and laws. Those who vainly argue that Muslims are allowed to perform their prayers and already have Sharia courts that administer Muslim personal law such as marriage and inheritance should answer God: "Then is it only a part of the Book that you believe in, and do you reject the rest?" (HQ II:85) Islam is a complete way of life. Our politics, economy, social and cultural affairs, as well as external relations as Muslims, must be conducted in accordance with Qur'anic provisions. The constitution which we have is promulgated by mere filthy mortals. It is just a medley of confusion that does not deserve any recognition (above the Qur'an) from any sincere Muslim. The power and authority to make laws belongs to God and God alone. Those who abrogate unto themselves this power are no better than Pharaoh and they will definitely end up in hell with him, accursed and rejected.

To all sincere Muslims our reaction to Zamfara Declaration should be positive and cheerful. According to Malam Ali Gabciya, Imam University of Maiduguri Central Mosque, "It is not a matter of personal opinion. All of us should congratulate Governor Sani. Sharia will reduce social vices. We hope other states will follow suit."

As to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), their reaction is not surprising. Their religion has never been propagation or defence of Christianity, but opposition to Islam. Their threats are but empty rantings of desperate men with neither focus nor wisdom. The only good thing is that we have serious Christians like Reverend Maikudi from Jos, who went on air over the BBC and declared that the same tenets of the Islamic Sharia are enshrined in the Bible and the declaration of Sharia in Zamfara is a welcome decision as it will curtail social vices like prostitution, theft, disrespect to parents, consumption of intoxicants, adultery, etc. Islamic states from the days of the Holy Prophet (SAW) through the Ottoman Empire down to the Sokoto Caliphate have always provided cover and protection to Christians and allowed them to live according to their laws. It is those without the knowledge of history that express blind fears based on mere assumptions.

However, I agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Usman Bugaje who cautioned that the Sharia should be implemented with absolute wisdom and sincerity. We should not allow euphoria and emotion to blind our vision and perception. If we reduce our march to the ideal Qur'anic state into mob action, terror and violence against others, we will end up doing more harm than good, more so in the exalted name of Sharia. God Himself warns: "O you who believe, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just; that is next to piety, and fear God. For God is well acquainted with all that ye do." (HQ V:9)

Our advice to the Federal Government is that it should allow the component parts of the federation – the states – to exercise their rights under a federal system. Any attempt to sabotage or halt Governor Sani from carrying out the Sharia law will bring an unpleasant backlash. Devoted Muslims will not take it lightly. This is a democratic era. Any attempt to suppress the Islamic way of life will breed the type of violence we have in the Middle East, with Algeria and Egypt as good examples.

Even the Turkish Generals who are bent on ensuring that Professor Niometin Erbakan does not establish an Islamic government are yet to see the last. Divine punishment in the form of earthquakes is only one of the signs.

Any state that chooses to have Sharia law in Nigeria should be allowed. More so, it is the choice of the majority. Malcolm X has always said it, “It is either the bullet or the ballot.” However, we prefer the ballot.