



## URGENT NEED FOR DIALOGUE WITH THE SHIA-IMN

The Shia **Islamic Movement of Nigeria** (IMN) is a religious and political organization based in the northern region of Nigeria. The Islamic Movement is headed by Sheikh [Ibraheem Zakzaky](#), a Shia cleric who founded the group in Nigeria. He has been detained several times due to accusations of civil disobedience under military regimes in Nigeria during the 1980s and 1990s and is still viewed with suspicion or as a threat by some Nigerian authorities. In December 2015, the Nigerian Army raided his residence in Zaria and shot some of his followers, including two of his sons, and since then he has been under state detention in the nation's capital.

Last month (November 2016), the Shia members had a deadly clash with Nigerian Police in Kura Local Government Area of Kano State where more than 50 civilian lives were lost. In this clash it was also reported that one police officer also lost his life. This occurred while the IMN members were on a **Ashura Yaumun Arbain** ([a march to commemorate the death of Imam Hussein](#) the Prophet's grand son-PBUH), which later turned to be a demonstration demanding for the release of their leader.

Apparently, [IMC's](#) Community Peace Observers (CPOs) from the Community Peace Action Network ([CPAN](#)) in Kaduna and Kano states are reporting signs of future protests by the group, who demand the immediate release of their leader, his wife, and other members in detention by the Nigerian army. The protest is likely to spill over to Kogi, Jigawa and Katsina States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

There are also rumors in Kano and Kaduna state of a mass protest against the detention of Sheik Zakzaky in the upcoming Maulud celebration on Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2016, a day celebrated by some Islamic sects for the birth of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH). CPOs warned of possible confrontations between the group and the Nigerian military, which might lead to loss of lives, again.

Furthermore, after the recent release of a [White Paper](#) report by the Kaduna State government, the CPOs are calling for dialogue between the government and the Shia group. Some CPOs expressed strong opinions that frequent protests, threats, and agitation by the Shia group is an early warning sign of another Boko Haram-like crisis if the government does not employ dialogue with the group now. They also advised engaging key stakeholders such as Religious leaders from CAN and JNI, Traditional leaders, Civil society organizations, to help government explore alternatives to bring an end to the tension. CPOs are also of the opinion that citizens should be allowed to practice their religion as long as they are not infringing on the rights of others.

The above report was generated from the Interfaith Mediation Center's ([IMC](#)) community based Early Warning and Early Response network commonly known as Community Peace Action Network ([CPAN](#)).

IMC is a non-profit, non-governmental faith based organization envisioning an inclusive society free from violent ethno-religious conflicts. We aim to prevent violence and promote trust and relationship building by fostering dialogue among people of different faiths and communities in Nigeria. Specifically, IMC is a community-based organization that specializes in Muslim-Christian dialogue and mediation. While the CPAN is the IMC's Early Warning Early and Response (EWER) system which comprises of trained interfaith volunteers at the grassroots level, responsible for monitoring, collecting and disseminating conflict and peace information. The purpose of CPAN is to neutralize potential conflict, identified as early as possible through information collection and verification and share the information for appropriate response and conflict resolution.

We look forward to your support in joining us to resolve conflicts through dialogue and mediation.

Thank you

**Community Peace Action Network**  
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