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## **NIGERIA | Kaduna Church Hosts Local Peace Building Event**

An Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Church in Tudun Nupawa, Kaduna in Northern Nigeria held a “Friends Day Service” on Sun., April 13 as part of peace-building efforts with the local community.

Around 50 Muslim traditional rulers and clerics attended the service, 15 received gifts at the end of the service. The dignitaries and over 50 disadvantaged and disabled Christians and Muslims subsequently joined the congregation for lunch.

During speeches, Senator Aziz Zego, chairman of the event’s planning committee, said that commitment to peace should not only be in words but also visible in deed, while Sheikh Dahiru Adamu, the Imam of the Salam’at Jumu’at Mosque Bachama, Tudun Wada, called on members of both religious communities to live in peace in order to ensure development, stability and progress.

This is the second major peace building outreach by the ECWA Church, which is located in a predominantly Muslim community. In August 2012, the church donated food to six mosques in the area in a goodwill gesture aimed at assisting underprivileged families with their post-Ramadan feasts. The handover of the items, which included bags of sugar, maize, millet and beans, occurred at the residence of the local traditional ruler Alhaji Shuai'b Balarbe, the Sarkin Dutse, Tudun Nupawa, who also attended Sunday’s service. The church was attacked or burned during every outbreak of religious violence. However, following the 2012 peace-building event, Muslim youths protected the church from potential attacks when violence broke out later that year.

Commenting on Sunday’s event, Rev. Yunusa Nmadu, senior pastor of the ECWA church and CEO of Christian Solidarity Worldwide–Nigeria (CSW-N) said, “As Christians it is our responsibility to love our neighbors as ourselves and this is without exception. We did what we did to demonstrate the love of Christ and to contribute to peace building in our community knowing that as a local congregation, we are meant to impact our immediate community positively with the message of peace and reconciliation, which is at the heart of our faith.”

The reconciliation effort in Kaduna comes as continuing violence by the Islamist terror group Boko Haram claimed more lives. According to a senator from Borno State, on April 12 the sect murdered at least 210 people in attacks on several towns in Borno State. Boko Haram gunmen reportedly killed at least 37 people in Ngoshe Sama Village in Gwoza Local Government Area (LGA) on April 13 and in Kaigamari Village in Konduga LGA on April 14. Elsewhere, official figures state 71 people may have died in what is thought to have been a suicide bombing at Nyanya motor park on the outskirts of the federal capital, Abuja, on April 14. Eyewitness statements suggest the figure may be higher.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of CSW, said, "CSW congratulates the ECWA church in Tudun Nupawa for strengthening the courageous peace-building initiative that began in 2012. As Boko Haram's divisive acts of appalling and indiscriminate violence continue to claim hundreds of innocent lives, there is a pressing need for more members of both faith communities across the country to initiate similar peace-building efforts to break down barriers of distrust and to foster reconciliation, unity, and the concept of common and equal citizenship, regardless of tribe or creed."