

The Roles of Muslims Scholars in Minifying Religious Extremism for Religious Tolerance and Peace Building in Nigeria

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Abstract : Insurgency, religious extremism and other related religious crises become hydra-headed in Nigeria, which caused destruction of human lives and properties worth of billions naira. As result, millions people were displaced and million children were out of school most of whom from Muslims community. The wrong teaching and misinterpretation of Islam by some Muslim community fuel the spread of extremist ideology hatred among Muslim sects, non-Muslims and emergency of extremist groups, like Boko Haram. A multi-religious country like Nigeria to realise its development in all human aspects, there must be unity and religious tolerance. Many agreed that changing the ideologies of insurgents and religious extremism will require intellectual role with vigorous campaign. Muslim scholars can play a vital role in promoting social reform and peaceful coexistence. This paper discusses the importance of unity among Muslim community and religious tolerance in light of the Qur'an and the Hadith. The paper also reviews the relationship between Muslims and non Muslims during the life time the Prophet (S.A.W.) in order to serve as exemplary model. Contemporary issues such as religious extremism, sectarianism, intolerance and their consequences were examined. To minify religious intolerance and extremism, the paper identifies the roles to be played by Muslim scholars with references from Qur'an and Sunnah. The paper concludes that to realise overall human development and eternal salvation, Muslim should shun away from any religious crises and embrace unity and religious tolerance. Finally the paper recommends among others that only pious and learned scholars should be allowed to preach in any religious gathering, Muslim should exercise patience, tolerance in dealing with Muslims and non Muslims. Muslims should leave by example from the teaching of Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W.).

Keywords : Muslim scholars, peace building, religious extremism, religious tolerance

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