



**Press briefing on the Unguarded Declaration by A Purported Coalition of Arewa Youth Groups Against the People of Igbo Extraction, by the Director General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Professor Oshita O. Oshita, *fspsp*, held in Abuja on June 9, 2017**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

I welcome you to this press briefing on the recent inciting statement credited to a purported coalition of Arewa Youth Groups threatening people of Igbo ethnicity to vacate the northern part of Nigeria by October 1, 2017. This is saddening, coming at a time when Nigeria requires the positive energies of every citizen to strengthen the resilience of our communities to withstand the harsh socio-economic conditions confronting the citizenry. Such unguarded statements are capable of disrupting the sustained efforts of the Federal Government towards inclusive diversity management and national cohesion.

The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria recognizes the rights of every citizen to live, work and conduct business freely in any part of the federation. Nigeria is a heterogeneous state and therefore, the expression of differences is not unusual in the context of multicultural and multi religious social relations. However, such expressions (words and actions) must not undermine the rights of other citizens as to infringe on their fundamental human rights thereby negating the corporate existence philosophy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is important to note that as a country, Nigeria requires the constructive contributions of all her citizens to build a stronger and more competitive nation that can provide for everyone.

The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) wishes to thank all groups and individuals who have condemned the virulent statement by the so-called coalition of Arewa Youths. In particular, IPCR is grateful to the Northern governors' forum, elders, groups, individuals and all other peace-loving Nigerians who have strongly condemned and spoken against the subversive statement aimed at forcing people of Igbo Extraction to vacate their states of residence in northern Nigeria. The widespread condemnation is a clear indication that the call does not reflect the views of the people of northern Nigeria. While noting the reactions of the police and other security agencies thus far, IPCR would like to urge them to be more proactive in tracking and bringing to book all

perpetrators of incendiary statements in accordance with the provision of the laws of the federal republic of Nigeria.

As an institute, IPCR condemns separatist movements and agitations that sidetrack constitutional processes. Research also shows that sectarian agitators almost always make claims in isolation from the general population they purport to represent. While condemning those fanning the embers of interethnic and inter religious hostilities, IPCR is appealing to all Nigerians to always exhibit high sense of patriotism, civility and responsibility in our utterances and actions. The cost of peace is peaceful coexistence, which every Nigerian can afford but the cost of violence is injury, destruction, displacement and possible death, which every Nigerian must work to avoid. We all count losses in violence, and must do everything to prevent it.

In conclusion, I appeal to members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm to practice their noble profession with sensitivity to conflict in the common interest of our dear country. At this time, the best we can do as journalists is to mainstream peace in our reportage. I therefore urge media practitioners to avoid the use of inciting and other materials that may promote hatred and negatively impact on sensibilities of other Nigerians and the corporate existence of our country.

Thank you.

**Long live IPCR**  
**Long live Federal Republic of Nigeria**