



## **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja**

### **Press Release**

**No: MFA/PR/2026/120**

#### **NIGERIA, HOLY SEE REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO PEACE, DIALOGUE AND STRONGER BILATERAL RELATIONS.**

The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, has reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to strengthening its longstanding diplomatic relations with the Holy See, describing the partnership as one anchored on shared values of peace, dialogue, human dignity, religious harmony, and sustainable development. The Honourable Minister made the remarks while receiving the Secretary for Relations with States and International Organisations of the Holy See, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, during a courtesy visit on Monday, 6 July 2026.

Welcoming Archbishop Gallagher to Nigeria, Ambassador Odumegwu-Ojukwu noted that the visit coincides with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the Holy See, describing the milestone as an opportunity for both parties to reaffirm their mutual commitment to advancing peace, international cooperation, and intercultural dialogue. The Honourable Minister commended the Catholic Church for its significant contributions to Nigeria's national development, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, and community development. She acknowledged the Church's longstanding role in promoting social cohesion and improving the well-being of communities across the country.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, including security in Nigeria and its impact on citizens and faith-based institutions. The Honourable Minister outlined the Federal Government's ongoing efforts to strengthen national security through enhanced recruitment of security personnel, improved inter-agency coordination, and sustained measures aimed at addressing the root causes of insecurity. She reaffirmed the Government's commitment to protecting lives and property while ensuring an enabling environment for religious freedom and socio-economic development.

**Archbishop Gallagher acknowledged Nigeria's strategic role in Africa and commended the Government's efforts to address security challenges. He reiterated the Holy See's readiness to continue working with Nigeria in promoting peace, justice, reconciliation, social cohesion, and humanitarian cooperation.**

**The discussions also underscored the critical role of religious institutions in promoting moral values, national unity, youth development, and interfaith dialogue. Both parties emphasised the importance of sustained collaboration between government, faith-based organisations, and civil society in fostering peaceful coexistence and countering violent extremism. Archbishop Gallagher further praised the vitality of the Catholic Church in Nigeria and expressed appreciation for the growing contributions of Nigerian clergy and diplomats within the Holy See. He welcomed the expanding Nigerian diplomatic and ecclesiastical presence in the Vatican, expressing confidence that it would further deepen bilateral engagement.**

**The Honourable Minister reaffirmed Nigeria's resolve to deepen cooperation with the Holy See in areas of mutual interest and expressed optimism that the enduring partnership would continue to contribute to regional peace, humanitarian initiatives, intercultural understanding, and global efforts to promote human dignity and sustainable development. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the excellent state of bilateral relations and pledged to further strengthen cooperation for the mutual benefit of Nigeria and the Holy See.**

**Signed:**

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebiefa, anipr  
Spokesperson,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja  
Monday 6, July 2026**