



**AKWA IBOM STATE ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA, USA INC.**

**NATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

**P.O. BOX 651, WARREN, MICHIGAN 48090**

[www.AKISAN.org](http://www.AKISAN.org)

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July 13, 2009

*His Excellency* Obong (Barr.) Godswill Akpabio  
The Executive Governor of Akwa Ibom State  
Wellington Bassey Way  
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State  
Nigeria

**SUBJECT: APPEAL TO END THE ABUSE, TORTURE AND PERSECUTION OF OUR CHILDREN AND CARETAKERS IN THE NAME OF RELIGION**

Your Excellency:

The leadership and members of Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria (USA), Inc. (AKISAN) have again read, heard, discussed, prayed, watched and followed the stories of our children being manhandled and traumatized; their caretakers arrested and/or threatened; and the protagonists left to their own devices. Last year we advocated on behalf of the abused and abandoned children. We are especially troubled that this is again at issue after your and the House of Representatives' positive actions to move their concerns in the right direction. These actions included the Child's Right Act, the arrests of some provocateurs, your proclamation and promised donation to their causes.

AKISAN proudly supports the commendable work of Mr. Sam Itauma and CRARN to rescue and rehabilitate our children, who for no fault of theirs are subjected to unimaginable atrocities because some 'pastor' claims they are possessed or are witches. The images from last year's broadcast are still very raw in the minds of our community. AKISAN is disgusted that in 2009, a pastor can allegedly use 'law enforcement' to travel across the country to exercise some 'kidnapping' action while the local police command stands as watchmen. This begs the question why we have police commissioners in each state; and whose jurisdiction is it on a given day.

We hold firmly that if the children (our future) are treated with such disfavor when the government is aiming to universally educate them, our progress can and only will be measured by the value with which we regard them today. AKISAN affirms that our children must be protected from all enemies; whether from within and without. We further assert that those who risk their resources to cater and help our children should equally be protected as their work is of paramount importance. Specifically, we assert that the government needs to utilize all pertinent resources to protect CRARN, their staff and their management.



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As a people, we are known and recognized by how well they treat the weak and vulnerable. Akwa Ibom has a history of hospitality to its fellow citizens and strangers. It is unfathomable that our children and their caretakers should be subjected to this level of persecution and abuse as have taken place in our state. We demand protection for CRARN, its residents, its staff and for all who are engaged in the difficult task of taking care of the children who are the victims of opportunists and those who profit from their misfortune.

AKISAN would be remiss if we did not thank you for your intervention, visit to CRARN and outward show of support for these children. We know it made a major difference in the turn of events. We are thankful for the promised donation and hope the funds will be available soon for the large tasks at CRARN.

We thank the State Police Commissioner for the intervention and release of Mrs. Itauma and Staff, though we are disturbed that his command was treated so inconsequentially by the arrest in the first instance. We hope there shall never be another such instance without due process in the future, and that everyone will be treated with a measure of respect. AKISAN insists that elements like Mrs. Helen Ukpabio and others similarly situated should be put on notice that our children are our most valued treasures and their false stigmatization and strong arm persecution should cease immediately.

Therefore, we earnestly hope His Excellency will take appropriate steps to eradicate this horror from our community and support this and other safe havens for these traumatized children. We recognize that these expected changes will require re-education and re-orientation of our communities about their beliefs. AKISAN is hopeful for a strong community without these unwelcome events.

Sincerely,

Mike Essien, Esq.  
*Legal Counsel, AKISAN*  
Czar, Abused Children Relief

Obong Umana  
*National President, AKISAN*