

To whom it may concern,

In the light of recent reports concerning the deteriorating health of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, we are urging mosques around the world to hold prayers for him during their Jum'a salat this Friday 19th January.

Sheikh Zakzaky suffered a stroke earlier this month aggravating an already poor condition caused when he was shot during a military attack on the Islamic Movement two years ago in the city of Zaria.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission and other supporters of the sheikh have called on the Nigerian government to release him from unlawful detention so that his health can be assessed and he can receive medical treatment accordingly.

The sheikh's ordeal began after he was shot along with his wife, Zeenah, and arrested during an orgy of violence unleashed over three days in December 2015 on supporters of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in what was widely seen as a bid to curb the movement's growing popularity. At least 1000 civilians, mostly Islamic Movement supporters, were killed in the attacks and hundreds arrested.

Three of Sheikh Zakzaky's children were killed in front of him.

As a result of the attack Sheikh Zakzaky has already lost the sight of one eye and the use of one arm.

Despite a court order demanding the pair's release Nigerian security services stubbornly refuse to set them free.

The 2015 attack on the IMN is the subject of a complaint by the IHRC to the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

The Islamic Movement, headed by Sheikh Zakzaky, was founded in the late 1970s as a student movement. Since its establishment, it has grown into a peaceful social and religious movement with supporters and members of all ages and from all walks of life. Today estimates of its popularity vary, but most estimates say the Islamic Movement enjoys the support of between 10-15 million people across Nigeria. It is non-sectarian, counting supporters from both Sunni and Shia communities, and also maintains exceptional relations with Nigeria's large Christian population. It is opposed to terrorism and has spoken out and campaigned strongly against the likes of Boko Haram as well as being critical of the government.

Sheikh Zakzaky has been at the forefront of opposing corruption and tyranny in Nigeria. He has spoken out about abuses by the police and army as well as the excesses of politicians. His honesty and integrity has won him the support of people from all over the country from all backgrounds.

Despite being repeatedly subject to attacks by the security forces in the last three years Sheikh Zakzaky has ensured that his supporters remain peaceful and not be provoked into resorting to violence themselves. His peaceful resistance against a corrupt political system has not stopped the Nigerian government imprisoning him without access to healthcare or legal advice, or indiscriminately attacking and killing his supporters during peaceful demonstrations.

IHRC is heartened by the offers made by various countries, such as Indonesia and Turkey, to Nigeria that they are happy to receive Sheikh el-Zakzaky in order that he can get the medical treatment he needs.

Supplications will be made at Friday prayers in mosques in the UK and countries all over Europe, the US, the Middle East and Africa, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Malaysia amongst other places.

We humbly request that you join in this necessary endeavour to help secure the sheikh's release so that his health needs can be attended to as soon as possible.