**Abs: Ort, Datum:**

**An:**

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje

Office of the Governor

Government House, Kano

Kano State

NIGERIA

**Concerns the Conviction of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu**-- Please forward to Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje--

Dear Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje,

I am writing in concern for Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, a 22-year-old singer sentenced to death. In February 2020, Yahaya Sharif-Aminu composed a song that allegedly contains derogatory comments against Prophet Muhammad SWT. This prompted his arrest in March. Also, his family members were forced to flee their home when on 4 March angry youths protested against the song and set fire to the family’s house, located at Sharifai quarters in Kano Municipal Local Government Area, northern Nigeria. No one was arrested or prosecuted for the violence.

On 10 August, Yahaya Sharif-Aminu was arraigned before an Upper Shari’a Court in Kano and convicted of blasphemy. He remains remanded in Kano prison. Following his conviction, there has been a huge outcry by several individuals and religious bodies urging you, the Governor to sign his execution warrant. Yahaya Sharif-Aminu is appealing the death sentence.

I have serious concerns about the fairness of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu’s trial and the framing of the charges against him based on his WhatsApp messages. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. No one should ever be sentenced to death or executed. The imposition of the death penalty following an unfair trial violates the right to life and hasty trials undermine the ability of convicted persons to seek effective remedies for the inadequate legal representation they had received at trial. Moreover, the use of the death penalty for blasphemy violates Nigeria’s obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which restricts the use of the death penalty to the "most serious crimes", which according to international law are crimes that involve intentional killing.

I therefore request that Your Excellency:

Refrain from signing any execution warrant for Yahaya Sharif- Aminu and release him immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,