

## **Miss World in Nigeria**

### ***Was it a good idea?***

**ABUJA (Nigeria)** – A massacre. More than two hundred Christians have been killed. The Islamic Integralists have sacked, destroyed and killed in the name of their religion. They had already condemned the Miss World contest, but the arrival of ninety “beauty queens” during the Ramadan, has inflamed people’s feelings. In spite of that the show has gone on and the final has been moved to London.

Now, after more than two hundred people have died, the doubts on the decision of the organizers have arisen.

In twelve of the Nigerian states the “Sharia” is in force: women have to wear a long veil which covers them from head to toe. There is the ban on the use of cosmetics and public stoning is the punishment for women accused of having sex outside marriage.

Last year, some women were whipped in the public square just because “scantily dressed” and last summer Amina, the thirty-year-old woman accused of adultery for the son she had had after her divorce, has been condemned to stoning. Before Amina’s, there was Safiya’s case...

Was it a good idea, then, to organize a “scantily dressed” parade showing the sign of a new culture, the “advanced” one, in a country where the human rights are oppressed? Was it a good bargain to set up a show of thousands of dollars in a country where children are still dying of hunger?

After the organizers’ decision, in spite of the numerous polemics, there was someone who thought that the show would certainly be a good thing: Miss world 2001 was a Nigerian girl and following the contest rules the new Miss was to be crowned in Nigeria. Organizing the show in another country would be equivalent to surrendering to the Islamic Integralists.

How could a beauty contest (by the way fairly debatable from the point of view of values) be a solution to make the Integralist look over their views?

**LONDON (22 /11/ 2002)** - In spite of the massacre, the show went on and Miss world was crowned at the Alexander Palace. During the show the girls followed a moment of silence for Amina Lawal. Did the ninety “beauty queens” want to show their social engagement?

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