

Buhari's Army Of Occupation In Igbo-Land: The Making Of Another Jihad And Ethnic Cleansing

(**SBCHROs, Onitsha Nigeria, 30th of November 2016**)-The affiliate rights and supportive democracy groups and the leadership of **Southeast Based Coalition of Human Rights Organizations (SBCHROs)** are deeply alarmed and worried concerning the deployment of more battalions of members of the so called "Nigerian Army" and their war-like heavy equipment to all the strategic roads in the Southeast or Igbo part of Nigeria. Igbo travellers and road users have reported the laying of siege by Jihadist elements in the Army on strategic roads in the Southeast particularly at boundary posts in Imo/Abia and Port Harcourt axis; Enugu (Nsukka) and Benue (Oturpa) axis; Anambra (Onitsha Niger Bridgehead) and Delta (Asaba) axis and Ebonyi (Abakiliki) and Enugu axis.

By adding a quotation mark (" ") to Nigerian Army, we make bold to say that the "Nigerian Army" of present composition is nothing but "an armed assembly substantially peopled, dominated and commanded by the descendants of late Shehu Othman Dan Fodio"; a 19th Century Jihadist and founder of Islamism in northern part of Nigeria.

Before the massive deployment under reference, the Southeast has been under siege and police state with thousands of army, navy and police roadblocks scattered at right, left and centre of the Southeast Roads particularly on Trunks A and B Roads. In all these, the stocks-in-trade of the soldiers, police and navy personnel so stationed are: targeting and killing of defenceless citizens; indiscriminate arrests; extortion and other corrupt practices; using different forms.

For instance, there are documented evidence from rights groups like **Amnesty International and Intersociety**; showing the patterns and trends of security roadblock extortion in the Southeast Zone as well as late evening house raids, killing and torturing of innocent and defenceless citizens; which all arose on account of sustenance of an army of occupation by Jihad-prone administration of Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari.

While Army and Navy recklessly indulge in the recruitment of civilians as roadblock extortion agents (i.e. at Niger Bridgehead and Uga Junction in Onitsha); personnel of the Nigeria Police Force openly and brazenly collect N50 or N100 notes from each commercial transporter. In some areas where military roadblocks are mounted, the Jihadist soldiers openly collect tolls at gunpoint.

The Nigerian Security Forces deployed on Southeast Roads have between July/August 2015 and May 2016, massacred between 150 and 250 defenceless citizens or more and injured over 300 others (**Amnesty International and Intersociety: 2016**). According to **Intersociety (December 2015)**, a total of N1.03billion was illicitly collected and pocketed by the personnel and authorities of the Nigeria Police Force from 750 roadblocks mounted on Southeast Roads between 21st October and 21st December 2015; on average of N500million per month.

Intersociety and Human Rights Watch had also in their respective previous investigations empirically established a nexus between **Police Roadblock Killings and Police Roadblock extortions** particularly on Southeast Roads and their strategic entrances (**Intersociety 2011; and HRW 2010**). To **Intersociety, Police Roadblock Corruption or Extortion and Killings on Southeast Roads arose out of the Southeast Blue-Collar Culture (i.e. concentration of commercial activities and cash transactions in the Zone)**. This was the case in the Zone until end of January 2012 when most of the 3500 police roadblocks in the area were dismantled, following public outcries and advocacy voices and investigations lead-conducted by **Intersociety**.

That was then! Today, and since the inception of the Buhari Administration in late May 2015; particularly since August 2015 when Nnamdi Kanu's IPOB organized nonviolent and peaceful street protests in Southeast and South-south areas of Nigeria, coupled with Buhari Administration's brazen disposition towards radical Islamism; a dangerous dimension, by way of **ethno-religious cleansing or Jihadism** has been added, coded and embedded into the operational modes of the Nigerian Army, Navy and the Police in the Southeast Zone.

Further attestation to this is the brazen domination of the command structure of the so called "Nigerian Army" in the Southeast Zone under its 82nd Division in Enugu; by carefully selected officers of Jihadist background; from the GOC of the 82nd Division to his Spokesman; from the Commandant of the Onitsha Military Cantonment to the Commander of the 144 Battalion in Ukwa, near Aba in Abia State, etc.

These are in addition to the age-long hegemonic and Jihadist inspired **structural and physical violence** against the Igbo race and their ancestral enclave; leading to massacre in recent years of tens of thousands of them and destruction and bastardization of their properties, infrastructures and cultural values. Under the Buhari Administration, for instance, the infrastructural decay in Igbo land or Southeast has risen to unprecedented proportions.

The state of federal roads in the Zone is in tatters; railway system in the area is moribund; the Enugu International Airport is skeletal and a ghost yard; to mention but a few. Yet fiscal revenue accruals including those from taxes, import duties, oil and gas exploration and other sources; which originate from the Zone, are used to run governance and service the people of the Jihadist background in upper north.

Saddening and alarming, the greatest threat to Southeast Zone and sanctity of its Christian Religion is the ongoing Jihadist and ethnic cleansing operations launched against the People of the Zone by the Buhari Administration, using **descendants of the arch Jihadist; late Shehu Othman Dan Fodio**; uniformed and armed; under the guise of the "Nigerian Army".

These Jihadists, who are responsible for the massacre of not less than 250 defenceless citizens and injuring of over 300 others between July/August 2015 and May 2016 in the Zone; have further chosen to be **repeat-perpetrators**, by launching **a season two** ethno-religious cleansing operation tagged: "Exercise Python Dance". We see the "operation" as nothing but **genocide, ethno-religious cleansing, depopulation, psycho-physical warfare and racial enslavement and persecution**.

Consequently, we make bold to say that all the reasons given by the so called "Nigerian Army" for its intensification of the genocidal operations under reference are expressly unfounded, watery, untenable and grossly unsubstantiated.

As a result, we hold as follows: **(1) That the so called "Nigerian Army" raised false insecurity alarms; (2) That street protests are not armed rebellion or traditional street crimes of kidnapping, armed robbery or murder; (3) That IPOB and MASSOB are not armed opposition groups waging war against the Federal Republic of Nigeria or any part thereof; (4) That Southeast Zone is not a war zone or a zone at war with the Federal Government or Federal Republic of Nigeria; (5) That there are no security threats of unprecedented proportion or Northeast magnitude in the Southeast Zone warranting the present military siege or police state in the Zone.**

(6) That "Nigerian Army" is crude and an illiterate army with no knowledge of the meaning and definition of Rules of Engagement; (7) That "Nigerian Army" has continued to criminalize and stigmatize the nonviolent activities of IPOB to the point of saddening and alarming proportions; (8) That while the Southeast, which is a Zone in peace and non war Zone is being hunted, persecuted and pushed to the wall; the troubled Zones like Northeast and violent groups like the Fulani Janjaweed are being cuddled, petted and protected.

(9) That the "Nigerian Army" and its Commander-in-Chief are killing, wounding, torturing and persecuting citizens and the Southeast Zone that have chosen nonviolence and law abiding living; whereas violent entities and Zones including Boko Haram and Fulani Janjaweed are being rewarded and given presidential treat and protection. (10) That there are no credible official crime statistics from the Nigeria Police Force in the Southeast Zone, detailing the patterns and trends of violent crimes such as kidnapping and armed robbery in the Zone; showing increase or decrease; warranting the involvement of the "Nigerian Army" in the flooding of the Zone with troops and weapons.

(11) That soldiers are not professionally trained to catch kidnappers and armed robbery or arsonists or burglars or rapists; or engage in fighting street crimes and they do not have mental and ICT expertise to do same. (12) That hiding under the guise of "fighting kidnappers and armed robbers" as a cover to actualize their Jihadist intents have been exposed and shamed. (10) That "Nigerian Army" resorted to such useless and mockery excuses as a cover to execute their Jihadist and ethnic cleansing operations.

(13) That the use of Fulani Herdsmen by the "Nigerian Army" as one of the excuses for invasion of the Southeast is deliberate and a further cover to be hidden under to perpetrate its planned unprovoked war or mass killing and torture mission; (14) That the Fulani Janjaweed or Herdsmen have massacred over 140 defenceless Christians in Southern Kaduna alone, in the past six months; yet the "Nigerian Army" turns blind eyes; likewise similar massacres in Agatu (Benue State), Nimbo (Enugu State), Akokwa (Imo State), Asaba and its environs (Delta State), etc; with the "Nigerian Army" looking the other way; but wasting unnecessary energy and weaponry chasing, massacring, wounding, torturing and persecuting defenceless Igbo-Christians for the purpose of pleasing its Commander-in-Chief.

Real Reasons For The So Called "Operation (Exercise) Python Dance": The real reasons for the genocidal operations under reference are for *ethno-religious cleansing and socio-economic corruption and strangulation of the Southeast Zone and its Environs.*

That is to say that the Jihadist component of the Nigerian Army led by Lt Gen Turkur Buratai decided to launch and intensify the heinous operations so as (1) ***to cripple and strangle the social and economic activities in the Southeast Zone by scaring the investors away; chasing away traders coming to patronize Southeast economy; and crippling leisure, recreation and other cultural activities.*** (2) ***Turning the Southeast Roads into extortionist money making arenas by way of structured or organized and open ended extortion.***

(3) Depriving the pastoral or Diasporan people of the Southeast or Igbo race their sacred rights to visit their ancestral communities and see their loved ones particularly during the Xmas and New Year period. (4) Depriving the Christian People of the Southeast and South-south Zones of exercise of their sacred religious rights to commemorate the birth of their Saviour Jesus Christ during the Xmas period. (5) Causing untimely death through suffocation, scorching heat or cold and chronic traffic gridlock of newly born babies, unborn babies, terminally sick persons, old age persons and heavily pregnant women.

(6) Causing the perishing and death of domestic livestock and cooking items; occasioned by chronic traffic gridlock and standstill created by the Jihadist soldiers on Southeast Roads particularly at the Onitsha Niger Bridgehead; the major entrance into the Southeast Roads and Zone. (7) Forcing thousands of Xmas Holiday makers of the Southeast and the South-south extractions to sleep on the road for days under scorching heat or cold and mosquito and other insect bites; owing to Jihadist army created chronic traffic gridlock. (8) Subjecting the Xmas Holiday makers of the Zone to both physical and psychological torture and other degrading treatment or punishment and exposing them to random armed robbery and other criminal attacks.

Total Blockage Of Onitsha Niger Bridgehead: The most disheartening, wicked and condemnable of it all is the last week total blockage of the Niger Bridgehead by the Jihadist soldiers. Despite the industrial hazard or dilapidating or sinking condition of the Bridge; requiring steady less load capacity; the Jihadist soldiers have moronically and sheepishly cordoned off and blocked the two main lanes of the Bridge in front of Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu Statue. The two lanes were blocked with empty drums painted in military colours with a narrow space for only one vehicle passage. The Ojukwu Statue is also routinely abused by the Jihadist soldiers squatted under a tent by its corner. The Statue is steadily spat at and defaced. Urination around its brick is also a routine.

The Onitsha Niger Bridgehead is notorious for chronic traffic gridlock and this is very hellish during Xmas period and other major activities in the area. In December 2015, 17th of December, to be specific, the Jihadist soldiers stationed near it opened fire and killed over 10 jubilant IPOB members, who were singing and dancing after news broke out that a Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered for immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Nnamdi Kanu; leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra. Citizen Nnamdi Kanu is still the **SBCHROs' Prisoner of Conscience**.

After the massacre, the Jihadist soldiers took away most of the corpses and later dumped and abandoned three of them at Onitsha General Hospital. The Jihadist soldiers later went on rampage; blocking the Bridge and causing hellish conditions for Xmas returnees of 2015. Over 300 live fowls and dozens of goats suffocated and died. Four persons including a heavily pregnant woman, a newly born baby and an aged woman were reported dead; all as a result of chronic traffic gridlock created by Jihadist soldiers.

Today, they are at it again; by abandoning two tents built for them to watch over vehicular and other traffic movements, to out-right blockage of the two lanes for obvious ethno-religious cleansing reasons. They also want the sickening Niger Bridgehead to collapse so as to ground the Zone socially, economically, culturally, technologically, industrially and politically; having conspired wickedly to stop and abandon the Second Niger Bridge Project. These explain while we held that ***Buhari Army's occupation of Igbo-Land is the making of another Jihad and Ethnic Cleansing***

Calls:

1. Call on Governor Willie Obiano of Anambra State, who faces a second term election in late 2017, to wake up from his gubernatorial slumber and demilitarize his State. He should particularly get the blockage of the Niger Bridgehead de-blocked and cleared for easy flow of traffic for Xmas returnees. The Jihadist soldiers should be removed from the blockage scene and forced back to their tents nearby, to watch over vehicular movements and decongest the traffic.
2. Governor Willie Obiano should also get the personnel of the FRSC to disappear from the same scene to allow Xmas returnees a free hand to make use of the Bridge and its adjoining roads; other than habitual traffic law breakers.
3. Call on all the people of good conscience particularly the Christian leaders, governors, legislators and other public office holders from the Southeast Zone to reject and rise in condemnation of the ongoing intensification of "operation ethno-religious cleansing of the Igbo Race" and insist on demilitarization of the Zone.
4. Call on the Buhari Administration and its Jihadist army commanders to stop pushing the Igbo Race to the wall and back out of the ongoing unprovoked pogrom against the Igbo Race in all its ramifications. It must be made to understand that the Presidency of Nigeria is not a weapon to enslave and crush the Igbo Race as nothing or nobody; except God, lasts forever.
5. Call on all churches, CSOs and members of the academic body and professional bodies of the Southeast extraction to rise in legitimate defence of their Christian religion and other legitimate religious worship in non-violent, steady and constructive manners.
6. Call on Governor Willie Obiano to particularly visit the Niger Bridgehead to see things for himself; and reverse himself immediately if he has a hand in the genocidal blockage.
7. Call on other Southeast Governors to rise to the occasion by paying a visit to President Muhammadu Buhari for the purpose of demilitarizing the Southeast Zone and allowing the people of the Zone a breathing space including right and freedom to worship their predominant Christian religion.
8. Call on the mass media (audio, audio-visual, print and web media) to visit the Onitsha Niger Bridgehead to see things with their own eyes and assess the enormity of nuisance and hindrances deliberately created by Jihadist soldiers for innocent people of the Southeast and the South-south Zones particularly the 2016 Xmas returnees or holiday makers.
9. Call on them, too, to visit other similar military road blockages across the Southeast for the purpose of raising alarms to get them removed and demilitarized.

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