

**Intersociety Tasks Delta State And Southeast Governors And Their Security Agencies To Ensure Road Traffic And Hitch Free Xmas/New Year Activities**

**(Intersociety, Onitsha Nigeria, 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2016)**-The **International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law (Intersociety)** has written the Executive Governor of Delta State, Mr Ifeanyi Okowa; demanding that he mobilizes members of his State's Joint Security Taskforce or JTF, for the purpose of ensuring free and unobstructed movement of vehicles, goods and persons along Onitsha-Asaba-Benin Expressway; particularly from the Old Asaba Tollgate to the foot of the ailing Niger Bridge in this Xmas/New Year period as well as saving the ailing and 51 years old Niger Bridge from imminent collapse.

The letter, dated 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2016 and titled:***2016 Xmas Season: Ensuring Free Flow Of Traffic And Decongestion Of The Ailing Niger Bridge From Its Asaba End***, follows our field observation that there exists about four roadblock obstructions from the Old Asaba Tollgate to the foot of the ailing Niger Bridge; caused by various branches of security agencies in Delta State particularly the Federal Road Safety Corps, the Special Anti Robbery Squad, the General Duty or Regular department of the Delta State Police Command and soldiers drafted from the 302 Artillery of the Nigerian Army in Onitsha.

For instance, when we visited, there were and still are personnel of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force at Asaba end of the Old Tollgate; stationed at the centres of the double lanes of the Road, causing obstructions and gridlock. At Oko Junction, there are personnel of the Regular or General Duty branch of the Nigeria Police Force; engaging in silly and flimsy checking of vehicular papers and wares with intents to extort; and at the foot of the Asaba end of the Niger Bridge, there is a military roadblock, causing a snail pace movement of vehicles, wares and other road users.

We had in the letter to Delta Governor called on him to mobilize the Delta State Joint Security and Road Emergency outfits for the purpose of decongesting the areas under reference. We further demanded that no unit of the referenced outfits particularly all units of the Delta State Police Command and the Delta State Sector Command of the FRSC should be allowed to mount roadblocks or station their personnel at the centre of both lanes of the Onitsha- Asaba-Benin Expressway.

It was also part of our demand that all the units of the Delta State's Joint Security Taskforce should be made to join in decongesting the areas under mention and ensure free movement of vehicles and citizens in this Xmas/New Year period and that the Delta Governor should, importantly, get the authorities of the Nigerian Army to get their personnel to retreat from the centre of the Asaba end of the foot of the ailing Niger Bridge.

We added that all military drums mounted at the centre of the Asaba end of the Expressway and the foot of the ailing Niger Bridge must also be removed and tents, if not already exist, should be set up for them by the corner of the Expressway, from where they can watch over and ensure smooth and speedy movement of vehicular, goods and persons in this Xmas/New Year period.

On the same account, the Southeast Governors and their various security agencies particularly the Army, Navy and Police are reminded of our earlier demand that all roads in the Zone must be free of security obstructions particularly in this Xmas/New Year period. Mounting of roadblocks for the purposes of flimsy checks on vehicular papers and roadblock extortion must not be condoned and tolerated this critical festive period. The Federal Road Safety Corps officials stationed at the foot of the ailing Niger Bridge, harassing and extorting road users as well as mobile police personnel stationed under the ailing Bridge who have become serial extortionists, must be made to disappear from the centres of the Bridge's link roads and quarantined at the road corner.

Governors Willie Obiano of Anambra State, Rochas Okorocha of Imo State, Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State, Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State should routinely lead members of their Joint Security Taskforces to their strategic road boundaries and connecting routes to ensure that their people returning home for Xmas and New Year festivities are not trapped on account of corruptible, negligent and other unprofessional conducts of security agents such as soldiers, navy and police personnel stationed on Southeast roads who serially engage in extortion and its associated "returns" for their commanders and bosses.

Where roads are horribly bad and impassable, the Governors must provide palliatives to ensure free movement of vehicles, goods and persons. In Anambra State, for instance, Governor Willie Obinano should ensure that Nnobi-Igboukwu Road is made passable. Also Nnobi Junction, Nkwo Igboukwu Junction, Uga Community Roundabout, Ekwulobia Roundabout, Nwagu-Agulu Junction, Agulu-Nanka Junction, Amawbia-Nise Roundabout, Nkpor Roundabout, Ugwu-Nwanosike Roundabout Ogidi, Owerri Road and Obodoukwu Junction, etc, all noted for their notoriety in traffic gridlock particularly during Xmas and New Year period; should be placed in the top priority list of the Government of Anambra State earmarked for this festive season's road decongestion projects, if any.

In addition to our ongoing undercover monitoring of criminal conducts of soldiers, police and navy personnel on Southeast roads particularly as they concern extortion and other corruptive and abusive conducts, we appeal to citizens particularly the road users to capture electronically as much and as expertly or discretely as possible those soldiers, navy and police personnel collecting N100, N50, N200 or N500 naira notes from commercial trucks and motorists and send the images, their locations and dates to [info@intersociety-ng.org](mailto:info@intersociety-ng.org). Attachment of senders' identities is strictly optional.

**Signed:**

**Emeka Umeagbalasi, Board Chairman**

**International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law (Intersociety)**

**Mobile Line: +2348174090052**

**Email: [info@intersociety-ng.org](mailto:info@intersociety-ng.org)**

**Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Esq.**

**Head, Civil Liberties and Rule of Law Program**

**Mobile Line: 2348180771506**

