

## **Beyond The Release Of Detained Nnewi Traders: What Nigeria Police Force Must Do**

### **---Intersociety**

**(Chima Ubani Center: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018)**-All the 43 innocent traders trading at Nkwo Nnewi Markets including members of the Nnewi Motor Spare Parts Dealers Association in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, arrested and detained on phantom allegations of “terrorism”, “arson” and “murder” leveled against them by the Anambra State Police Command have been released. They regained their freedom last night on orders of the Force Headquarters Abuja flowing public outcries trailing their unlawful arrest and detention by Police.

The innocent and defenseless traders were arrested in the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018 near their market stalls and detained for eight days without trial and paraded on orders of the Inspector Gen of Police for phantom offenses of “terrorism”, “arson” and “murder”.

While 33 of them were criminally paraded on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018; ten others were detained but excluded from the list of those criminally paraded. One of them, Abubakar Mohammed, arrested alongside the innocent Igbo traders was deliberately removed from the list of those criminally paraded on account of his ethno-religious identity.

The 33 paraded traders were released relatively unconditionally, while four out of the remaining reportedly lost N1.2m (N300, 000 each) to a police extortion racketeer operating within the State Police Command using an unnamed legal practitioner as a front or points-man. It is possible that the ten persons were excluded from the list of those paraded because of their acceptance under duress to pay huge sums as criminal bail fees.

The affected traders were said to have been threatened by the police extortion racketeer to deny offering such criminal bail fees, said to have been handed over to the police lawyer front. **Intersociety**, earlier this morning spoke to the Chairman of the Motor Spare Parts Dealers Association in the Market who confirmed their release and criminal loss of N1.2m; saying the affected traders were either afraid to speak out or under pressure to deny same to avoid possible police reprisal.

We welcome the release of the 43 traders but demand for thorough investigation into the allegation of loss of N1.2m and recovery of same if proven to have been extorted. The extortionist lawyer and his or her paymasters, if truly exist in the instant case, and found culpable, must be sanctioned.

The Anambra State Police Command must also disclose publicly the full identities of the police Inspector said to have been killed and others allegedly injured and hospitalized. Such disclosure must include his or her photo taken from the scene of crime, his or her live photo (full length) as well as his or her community, LGA and State of origin; in addition to video clip of his or hers from crime scene to hospital morgue; his or her police entry service or entry number and where and how he or she was killed. Demanded too are the biodata of those allegedly injured and hospitalized.

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**For: Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law**