

Special Report

Welcome To Southeast Region-Nigeria's Headquarters Of Official Highway Robbery

(How police, military and paramilitary formations pocketed N100b from roadblocks in 40 months: August 2015-Dec. 2018)

(Chima Ubani Center, Onitsha Nigeria: 24th December 2018)-Nigeria's Southeast Region has become the country's headquarters of *official highway robbery* with largest number of security roadblocks in the country. This special report: **welcome to Southeast Region-Nigeria's headquarters of official highway robbery**, is originally contained in Intersociety's just released special report, titled: ***Under Buhari & Osinbajo: Many Have Gone & Crippled for Life in Eastern Nigeria***; an 82-page research report attached with a 62-page photo album of victims of the military massacre operations; perpetrated between August 2015 and September 2017 or a period of two years.

The report: **Southeast as Nigeria's headquarters of official highway robbery** also arises from a sub research done by Intersociety to ascertain the economic costs of the military massacre operations in Eastern Nigeria particularly in the Southeast and the Igbo Delta area of Delta State. The **economic costs of the Nigerian military massacre operations in Eastern Nigeria** was a sub-research done to ascertain the quantifiable costs of the massacre operations and their negative effects on general economy and its activities in the Region, covering August 2015 to December 2018 or a period of 40 months.

The official highway robbery in Southeast Nigeria is targeted at exposing the rabid corruption going on in the country's security forces particularly the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Army as well as paramilitary formations stationed or drafted to the Southeast Roads and others linking the Region with the rest of the country. The research and its findings not only made mockery of the present central Government's so called "anti corruption crusade" but also exposed the NPF under outgoing IGP Ibrahim Idris as the most corrupt security organization in Nigeria with chronically incurable corruption indices. Police corruption under the outgoing IGP; particularly *roadblock and custody extortion or bribery* has digitally tripled and risen to an apogee.

The outgoing IGP Idris, who has severally been accused of corruption and abuse of office, is one of the loudest noise makers or paper noise makers against corruption in Nigeria, yet he is still seen by most Nigerians as a *vicarious promoter of police corruption* in the country. Apart from the outgoing IGP reportedly seeking for an illegal tenure extension from the country's ruling cabal, having been due for legal retirement on 3rd January 2019; he had probated and reprobated on the issue of "police roadblocks in Nigeria" particularly in the Southeast Region.

Lately on 17th December 2018, he ordered for "immediate removal of all police roadblocks in Nigeria to facilitate free movement or flow of traffic during the Christmas season". According to the Guardian Newspaper report of 17th December 2018, the IGP's order was "with immediate effect". The outgoing IGP also warned the newly recruited 6,000 police constables "against engaging in corruption and denting the image of the Nigeria Police Force, which has maintained a zero corruption stance".

According to Punch newspaper report of 22nd December 2018, titled: *no place for corruption, indolence in today's Nigeria Police, IG warns new officers*, the outgoing IGP's warning was given to the newly recruited 6,000 police constables in Nigeria. He specifically gave the anti corruption "warning" in Ibadan, Oyo State in Southwest Nigeria during the passing out of 285 police constables June 2018 intakes that graduated from the Police Training College, Eleyele, Ibadan in Oyo State.

Contradictorily, **Intersociety's** research findings contained in this special report have found the NPF under outgoing IGP Ibrahim Kpotum Idris as Nigeria's den of official corruption, perpetrated in *blue collar patterns*. As a matter of fact, the Nigeria Police force is *stinking faeces of corruption* in the country. Apart from the textual content of this special report, it is also backed with 16 photos and two video clips. The photos were pictured or captured by **Intersociety's** field under-covers and other concerned members of the public.

Attached below, with each graphically described, the 16 photos were taken in different locations within Southeast Region including in the cities of Onitsha and Aba with most of them taken in early December 2018. One of the two video clips involves a member of the Mobile Police Force (MPF) caught collecting and pocketing bribe from a commercial motorist on a Southeast Road while the second video involves a young male passenger travelling to Port Harcourt with AGOFERE Motors from the Southeast, shot on his leg and critically wounded by one of the mobile police personnel that mounted a roadblock along Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway in Rivers State.

The passenger was shot following arguments over N50 roadblock extortion. The police officers manning the roadblock including the one that shot and wounded the passenger later converged to take him to hospital. Such is a clear instance of what innocent passengers and commercial motorists and other road users pass through on daily basis in the hands of personnel of the NPF and other security personnel stationed on Southeast Roads. The 16 photos attached below involve police personnel, soldiers and civilian extortionists hired by soldiers; caught in the act or extorting money or collecting bribes from commercial motorists and other road users on Southeast Roads.

The compliance or otherwise of the outgoing IGP's order for "the removal of all roadblocks across the country" particularly in the Southeast Region and roads linking the Region with the rest of the country was also monitored by **Intersociety's** monitoring team and as expected, the IGP's directive ended up as "a paper directive or order".

Intersociety's monitors had crisscrossed several Federal and State roads on Saturday, 22nd December and Sunday, 23rd December 2018 and found the IGP's directive in gross breach. Roads visited included Atani-Ogwoikpere, Onitsha-Owerri and Asaba-Benin Federal Roads as well as Onitsha Niger Bridge end and Upper Iweka/Borrowmeo Roundabout end of the Onitsha-Enugu Expressway and couple of State roads. Calls made across Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States clearly indicated same results or failed compliance with the outgoing IGP's directive.

At Atani-Ogwiukpere Federal Road and its adjoining Ozubulu Road in Ogbaru, Anambra State, seven police roadblocks were sighted on Saturday, 22nd December 2018. Between Upper Iweka end and Ozubulu end of the Onitsha-Owerri Dual Carriage Way, ten police roadblocks were sighted same date at each of the two lanes making up the Dual Carriage Way. Between Coker Junction in Asaba and the entry point or Asaba end of the Niger Bridge, which is less than one kilometer, five roadblocks (three police roadblocks and two FRSC roadblocks) were sighted.

At each of these roadblocks visited, it is “business as usual”. Vehicles particularly private vehicles were indiscriminately being parked or delayed for several minutes on queue; causing serious gridlock or long traffic jams, before being impounded for silly reasons such as “checking vehicle papers”. Between Asaba Coker Junction and the entry point of the Niger Bridge in Delta State, the personnel of the Nigeria Police and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) were busy parking vehicles and collecting bribes, causing queue leading to blockage of the Onitsha Premier Brewery and Niger Bridgehead axis of the Onitsha-Enugu Dual Carriage Way particularly the lane leading into Asaba.

Each of the commercial vehicles in the named area is instantly forced by police personnel to part with N50 or N100 notes while private vehicles are indiscriminately parked and impounded for “incomplete vehicle papers or particulars”. For personnel of the FRSC, theirs include collection from each of the commercial vehicle drivers, using hired civilians, of N200 to N500 notes, as case may be, for “overload”. The personnel of the FRSC also impound and book private vehicles with reckless abandon, for “traffic offenses” or not having “complete traffic toolkits” or having “faulty break and trafficator light or signs”.

Summed Statistics

Officers and personnel of the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Military and the Paramilitary formations in the Southeast Region and Igbo Delta area in Delta State had in the past 40 months (August 2015 and December 2018) pocketed over N100b or \$330m from security roadblock extortion and other corrupt practices. The breakdown indicates that the Nigeria Police Force pocketed N78.02b, the Nigerian Military (Army, Navy and air force) N6b and Paramilitary formations (Custom, FRSC, NAFDAC and NDLEA) N16b; totaling N100.02b or \$330m.

Intersociety’s research and investigation, spearheaded by Emeka Umeagbalasi (criminologist and graduate of security studies with post graduate expertise in peace studies and conflict resolution) found further that there are not less than 3000 police roadblocks on Southeast Roads and those located in Igbo Delta area of Delta State, mounted by not less than 15,000 police personnel.

There are also about 100 military roadblocks in the Region manned by over 1000 military personnel including soldiers, air force (in Enugu) and navy personnel. Found too are not less than 20 roadblocks mounted on Southeast Roads and others linking the Region with the rest of the country by the personnel of the Nigerian Custom Service; in addition to thousands of other roadblocks mounted by the personnel of the Federal Road Safety Corps and several operational patrol squads belonging to the personnel of NAFDAC and NDLEA crisscrossing the Southeast Roads and raiding various markets, warehouses and homes in the Region; with sundry extortions as their chief motive.

The N78.02b criminally pocketed by the Nigeria Police Force in the past 40 months from States of Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Igbo Delta parts of Delta State involves N26, 16b pocketed from defenseless and law-abiding citizens of Anambra State; N22.08b from Abia State, N10.98b from Imo State, N7.5b from Enugu State, N6.5b from Ebonyi State; and N4.8b from innocent citizens of Igbo Delta and other victims in the Southeast. The N4.8b was illegally collected by the police personnel manning “police-stop-and-move” or mobile roadblocks in Southeast Region and Igbo Delta sub-region.

From the above account, therefore, out of N100.02b extorted from the citizens of the Southeast and those of the Igbo Delta area of Delta State, N78.02b or 78% comes from the Nigeria Police Force; leaving the remaining N22b to military and paramilitary formations in the Region. The Southeast Region and its Igbo Delta counterparts are also found to have the highest number of security roadblocks and incidence of security extortion and related corrupt practices in Nigeria. The roadblock and its extortion menace in the Region have further brought about *police and military or mobility insecurity* in the Region.

Background

The huge economic costs or losses incurred are technically characterized as *mobility insecurity* caused by criminal activities of thousands of armed police personnel and tens of hundreds of armed soldiers and other military personnel permanently stationed on major Southeast roads; in addition to thousands of road and street touts who go about with reckless abandon; extorting sundry levies and tolls on Southeast and Igbo Delta roads.

Through lopsided composition of the military and police formations and their leadership at national and Southeast/Igbo Delta levels, *Fulani insecurity* has also been added in the *insecurity list* of the People of Southeast Region including Igbo Delta population. Many communities in Igbo Land have become victims or potential victims of *Fulani terrorism*.

The Lagos-Benin-Asaba-Onitsha Expressway which links the Region to Southwest and North is also hellish and nightmarish for the People of Igbo Nation, going by the unspeakable number of *official criminal activities* by the drafted soldiers, police and customs personnel; all targeted at innocent, defenseless and law-abiding citizens of the Southeast and Igbo Delta.

The menace of road touting and associated criminal activities including extortion and other forms of *street crimes* is a direct offshoot of recent militarization and associated corrupt practices on Southeast and Igbo Delta Roads. The militarization and police siege in the Southeast have further given rise to intensification and escalation of *four-layered insecurity* in the old Eastern Region; in addition to *Fulani terrorism* in rural Igbo communities.

The *four-layered insecurity* are: (a) *military insecurity* including roadblock and off roadblock extortion, terrorization of Igbo rural communities and coercive isolation of communal lands and forests for Fulani Herdsmen, sexual harassment, extrajudicial and unlawful killings, abductions, disappearances and physical and psychological torture; and (b) *police insecurity* including roadblock and off roadblock extortion, extrajudicial killings and torture, aiding and abetting criminal activities of street urchins and road touts, commercialization of criminal investigation and breeding of youth militancy or violence.

The rest are: (c) *road tout insecurity* including road, street and marketplace extortion, thuggery, stealing, drug abuse, armed robbery, robbery and kidnapping; and (d) *street and white-collar criminality or insecurity* including armed robbery, robbery, kidnapping, carjacking, burglary, housebreaking, arson, murder, sexual violence, ritualism, drug trafficking as well as cybercrimes such as fraud and fraudulent money transfer, advance fee fraud, etc.

Street urchins and road criminals including those involved in snatching bags, cash and other personal valuables as well as those in random or targeted robberies (robbery and armed robbery) are presently on a rampage on major Southeast Roads particularly in Anambra State; operating uncaught and with reckless abandon. Sometimes, if not in many cases, they share their loots with the drafted police personnel and soldiers in order to be protected or shielded uncaught. At other times, they are hired by military personnel to collect criminal tolls for them; in their presence and under their protection or cover.

Dangers of innocent road users or travelers losing their lives and properties in the hands of the drafted armed police personnel and soldiers or military personnel are also very high; unless such travelers are capable of “buying their freedoms” with cash sums demanded at gunpoint.

Private vehicle owners are routinely extorted or framed if they resisted. Some of them also run the risk of being shot dead or wounded; or arrested, in the case of drafted police personnel; or have their vehicles impounded, frog-jumped, tortured and extorted or even shot, in the case of soldiers and other members of the armed forces (i.e., navy personnel) at a roadblock. Commercial vehicles and their drivers and conductors are worst hit or treated.

Patterns

Patterns of police roadblock extortion on Southeast Roads bear blue-collar outlook (direct extortion using stationed police personnel). In the case of police personnel, load-carrying vehicles with passengers are made to “pay” double (i.e., for loaded wares and passengers). For instance, each load-carrying L300 bus with passengers is forced to part with at least N250 at each police roadblock.

In the case of drafted soldiers and other military personnel as well as paramilitary bodies like the Federal Road Safety Corps, patterns of their extortion are different; bearing white-collar outlook (indirect extortion using hired third party or civilian touts or points-men).

N6b Military Extortion

In this case (military extortion), 608 buses, Datsun, Lorries, and trailers loaded with wares are mostly targeted. For trailers and Lorries loaded with wares or goods, N1000 is collected from each of them at every military checkpoint; and for lesser others, N500 is collected from each of them. As severally stated and highlighted in our previous reports, soldiers and other military personnel are now in the habit of hiring the services of touts and street urchins on daily and percentage basis to collect criminal tolls for them from targeted motorists and other road users.

Such is rampantly the case at the Asaba and Onitsha Niger Bridgehead Army roadblocks and the Uga Junction/Atani Road Navy roadblock; all in Anambra State. Others are the Ugwuoba Old and New Roads Army roadblocks in Enugu State and the Asa Boundary, Osisioma and Isiala-Ngwa Army roadblocks as well as the Owerre-Nta Navy roadblock; all in Abia State, etc.

The Uga Junction/Atani Road Navy roadblock is so “lucrative” and expansive that it now extends its extortionist network to the *payment of permission fee for roadside trading and begging* as well as *vehicular loading and offloading*; jointly called “Navy fee.” It is so bad that Navy Personnel stationed at the Junction and its environs now allocate sales portions at roadsides for new roadside petty traders and mobile hawkers for fees ranging from N3, 000 to N5, 000 from each of the new petty traders or mobile hawkers.

Sand excavators excavating sand at the Ogbaru and Fegge sides of the River Niger banks are also not spared. One of the Ogbaru Navy’s patrol vans is permanently stationed along Niger Street by Creek Road at Fegge part of Onitsha, close to River Niger bank; to collect “daily returns” from sand excavators and sand tipper drivers.

Other roadblocks created by the Ogbaru Naval Base are Okpotu-Uno and St Gregory Catholic Church Junction Navy Roadblocks along Atani Road in Ogbaru; Enamelware Plastic Industry Navy Roadblock, located along Onitsha-Owerri Expressway in Onitsha, Niger Street by Creek Road Navy Roadblock and Harbour Industrial Navy Roadblock.

The stock in trade of these roadblocks mounted by the Onitsha/Ogbaru Naval Base is torture, extortion, and other military corrupt practices. At the Enamelware Navy Roadblock along Onitsha-Owerri Road, once it is 7pm, the dual carriage way is totally blocked with the road users and motorists subjected to untold gridlock and other hardships as well as sundry extortions.

As published by Daily Sun Newspaper of 18th March 2018, the Sand Dealers Association and their members, numbering over 50 in Onitsha and Ogbaru had on 24th February 2018 staged a peaceful protest against the personnel of the Nigerian Naval Base in Ogbaru, Anambra State. The protest was against sundry extortion suffered by the Association and the Sand Tipper Drivers Union in the hands of the Ogbaru Naval Base personnel.

The protesters had alleged constant extortion and harassments by Navy Personnel against their members including recent shut down of their sites and chasing away of their workers; causing several boats bringing sands to them to capsize. The authorities of the Ogbaru Naval Base had claimed that “one of the tipper drivers knocked down one of their personnel and ran away.” It is likely the tipper driver was being persecuted for refusing to pay another “navy toll” after he must have paid same to different navy personnel at their roadblock.

Each of the sand dredgers is forced to part with imposed huge sums running into thousands of naira daily while each tipper Lorry moving sands from Ogbaru or Onitsha to another is forced to part with N200 per trip at each of the two Navy roadblocks along Atani Road. This further means that each tipper Lorry parts with at least N4000 daily at the two roadblocks on average of ten trips a day and N200 per trip.

From our recent investigations and calculations, the Uga Junction/Atani Road Navy roadblock illicitly collects from Onitsha residents not less than N200, 000 per day. The Asaba, Onitsha Niger Bridgehead, Asa Boundary, Osisioma, IsialaNgwa, Ugwuoba New Road, Ugwuoba Old Road, and Oturpa-Ninth Mile Army roadblocks and juicy others are firmly believed to be illicitly collecting or milking not less than N100, 000 each per day. In all, an average of N50, 000 is illicitly collected on a daily basis by each of the existing 100 military roadblocks on Southeast and Igbo Delta Roads.

Some Lorry and Trailer drivers plying the roads located around the Military roadblocks mentioned above told **Intersociety** recently that refusal to part with such demanded sums at each of the military roadblocks could instantly attract violent reprisal from soldiers or navy personnel. Such violent reprisal includes impounding of their Lorries or busting of their tyres or shattering of their windscreens, in addition to being frog-jumped, beaten to a pulp or tortured or even shot.

The drivers also complained of selectiveness or “racial consideration,” whereby drivers of Fulani-Hausa Muslim background are made to suffer less extortion and highlighted animalistic treatments as against their Igbo or other Southern counterparts who are worst hit. These, they attributed to the fact that “most of the military personnel drafted or stationed on Southeast roads are officers and personnel of Fulani-Hausa Muslim background.”

Presently, there are as much as 100 military checkpoints drafted to major roads in the Southeast and Igbo Delta. During the said military massacre operations, characterized as “Army Python Dance or Internal Security Operations in the Southeast,” over 200 military roadblocks existed. Each of these military roadblocks is manned by the average of five military personnel and maximum of ten military personnel or more. At major military roadblocks, military personnel deployed in each of them are not less than ten with some having as much as 20 personnel each.

Consequently, there are between 500 and 1000 military personnel or more presently drafted or stationed on Southeast and Igbo Delta Roads. With N50, 000 projected daily extortion average, the 100 military roadblocks in Igbo Land had illicitly collected from the People of the Southeast and Igbo Delta in the past three years and four months or from August 2015 to December 2018 (40 months) a total sum of not less than N6billion or \$20m; translating to N5m daily, N150m monthly and N1.8b per year or N6b in 40 months.

N78b Police Extortion

From our recent studies, too, the Nigeria Police Force responded to the militarization of Southeast and Igbo Delta by raising or creating not less than 750 police roadblocks between August 2015 and August 2016, 1500 police roadblocks between August 2016 and August 2017 and 3000 police roadblocks between August 2017 and December 2018. An average of five police personnel mans each of the police roadblocks; while others as “mobile patrol roadblocks” are usually manned by two police personnel or members of each police patrol team using a pickup or Hilux van.

In all, therefore, there are presently about 15,000 drafted armed police personnel on Southeast and Igbo Delta roads with about 3000 police roadblocks; 7,500 between August 2016 and August 2017 with 1500 police roadblocks; and 4,750 between August 2015 and August 2016 with 750 police roadblocks.

These military and police roadblocks have been created and maintained since August 2015 by the country’s military and high police commands. The color under which they were drafted (Army Python Dance and Internal Security Operations) was approved by the central Government of President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

The drafted military and police personnel include those stationed on the following critical Federal and State roads: Enugu-Onitsha (Express), Onitsha-Awka-Oji/River-Enugu (Old Road), Enugu-Nsukka-Oturkpa, Enugu-Abakiliki, Abakiliki-Okigwe, Abakiliki-Ogoja, Onitsha-Owerri (Express), Onitsha-Nsugbe-Adani (Old Road), Atani-Ogwuikpere-Ndoni, Umuahia-Port Harcourt and Oba-Nnewi-Okigwe Federal Roads.

Others are Okigwe-Orlu-Owerri, Aba-Ikot-Ekpene, Uturu-Okigwe-Abakiliki, Ekwuluobia-Oko-Ibinta, Umuahia-Ariam-Ikot-Ekpene, Owerri-Elele-Port Harcourt, Umuahia-Obowo-Owerri, Umuahia-Bende, Igbo-Ukwu-Ezinifite-Uga-Umunze, Oba-Nnewi-Nnobi, Amawbia-Nise-Agulu-Ekwulobia-Uga, Nnewi-Nnobi-Orakwu-Agulu Roads, etc.

The roadblocks and extortions are sustained in the Southeast and Igbo Delta using *blue-collar* and *white-collar* classifications. Anambra and Abia States are worst hit owing to their *blue-collar* classification or high commercial activities. As a result, most, if not all federal and state roads linking them are flooded with extorting police personnel; likewise many, if not most of their city and inter-city roads and adjoining routes. Major roads linking Agbor and Asaba and environs to Southeast are also not spared or freed from menaces of the drafted military, police and customs personnel.

Police extortions in the Anambra and Abia States are sundry or come in various forms including those arising from private vehicle owners over vehicle papers, intra and intercity as well as inter and intra-State commercial vehicles carrying passengers and goods; likewise trucks, motorcycles, and tricycles conveying wares or goods from places to places within each of the two States.

For every SHUTTLE or L300 bus loaded with passengers (only) in Anambra State, it is N50 at every police roadblock, and extra N200 is paid if loaded with goods and passengers. For every commercial motorcycle or tricycle or Datsun or medium range truck loaded with goods, it is N200 at every police roadblock, and for every private vehicle owner accused of “incomplete” vehicle particulars, the least demanded extortionist sum is N4, 000 or more, which must be paid randomly or on the spot to avoid being dragged to police station and have his or her vehicle impounded and indented as “stolen vehicle”. The owner, in many cases, is also detained and bailed with illegal bail fees, ranging from N10, 000 and above.

Police extortions in Enugu and Ebonyi States, and to an extent, Imo State, are not as “lucrative” as those of Anambra and Abia States. Such extortions are majorly concentrated on critical Federal and State roads as well as few commercial areas of the three States, such as Ogbete, Abakpa, and Nsukka in Enugu State; Abakiliki and Afikpo in Ebonyi State, Orlu and commercial parts of Owerri in Imo State. The same non-uniformity applies to many roadblocks in the five Southeast States, as well as those in Agbor, Asaba and their environs; all in Delta State; a State with approximately 40% Igbo population.

The average amount illicitly collected daily from each police roadblock on Southeast Roads also differs according to their *blue-collar* and *white-collar* classifications. This is determined by the available number of persons and vehicular capable of being extorted. Persons and items under extortion are found more in Anambra and Abia, and to an extent, Imo State (i.e., because it shares a boundary with two blue-collar States of Anambra and Abia), than Enugu and Ebonyi States.

While Anambra and the Abia States are presently dominated by persons engaged in commercial activities with large concentration of “persons with limited education” and “cash carriage”; Enugu and the Ebonyi States are largely “civil service” or white collar State with large concentration of “persons living with literacy” and “salary earners”; likewise Imo State to a large extent.

This is also the case going by differences in amounts being criminally pocketed on a daily basis by each of the police roadblocks drafted on Southeast and Igbo Delta roads. For instance, an average of N40, 000 is illicitly collected daily by each of the police roadblocks in Anambra and Abia States while that of Imo State is less with N30, 000. Enugu and the Ebonyi States have a lesser sum of N25, 000 as minimum sum criminally collected on a daily basis by each of the police roadblocks in the two States.

Cases also abound in Anambra and Abia States where some police roadblocks illegally collect on a daily basis as much as N70, 000 each. These roadblock extortions under calculation do not include thousands of naira unlawfully collected daily as “bail fee” from each of the arrested and detained citizens. The likes of Special Anti Robbery Squads of the Nigeria Police Force criminally collect as low as N100, 000 or as much as N500, 000 and above from each of their arrested, detained and tortured persons. Similar situations are the case with Police Anti Cult Personnel or Anti Bunkering Police and Navy Personnel or Squads.

Further, between August 2015 and August 2016, out of not less than 750 police roadblocks in the Southeast, Anambra accounted for at least 250, Imo 150, Abia 200, Enugu 100 and Ebonyi 50. Between August 2016 and August 2017, out of not less than 1500 police roadblocks in Igbo Land, Anambra took at least 500, Imo 200, Abia 400, Enugu 200 and Ebonyi 150; and out of not less than 3000 police roadblocks presently deployed in the Region since September 2017, Anambra accounts for 800, Imo 500, Abia 700, Enugu and the Ebonyi States 800 or 400 police roadblocks each.

The recent increase in police roadblocks in Enugu and Ebonyi States was done using “Fulani Herdsmen attacks” and “Ebonyi and Cross River boundary/communal disputes” as cover. Flooding of the Southeast with the heavy presence of armed military and police personnel and associated indiscriminate roadblocks is fueled by corrupt practices by the military and police high commands. These corrupt practices are characterized as “police beat or roadblock returns.” Such deployment and creation of roadblocks are usually done using “insecurity” in the Southeast Region as a cover.

In recent years, especially since August 2015, the old Eastern Region has been thrown into police and military siege; with “election security,” “Fulani Herdsmen attacks,” “internal security operations” and “Biafra secessionist agitations” as excuses. A clear case in point was the public announcement made by Anambra State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Garba Umar on 30th October 2017 of deployment of “16,000 police personnel, 10,000 soldiers, 5,000 naval personnel and 3,000 air force personnel for the 18th November 2017 Governorship Poll”.

Such massive deployment of security personnel is usually turned into an avenue for criminal enrichment through sundry extortion and other corrupt practices. Apart from massive casualty figures and injuries inflicted on hundreds of unarmed and defenseless citizens of the Region, the robust economic activities in the Region have also been brutally disrupted and shattered.

Intersociety had on 11th December 2011 released a report of its national investigation concerning the Police Roadblock Extortion across the country including Southeast Region, where over 1,500 police roadblocks were identified, out of over 3,500 police roadblocks across the country. The national investigation covered a period of three years; June 2009 to December 2011.

Anambra State was used as a case-study State; with Southeast Region as a case-study zone. This followed the largest concentration of the police roadblocks and their graft practices in the State and the Zone respectively. Anambra and Abia States as at then had 400 police roadblocks each, followed by Imo State with 300 and Enugu and the Ebonyi States with 200 each. The naira note benchmark used as criminal toll fee then was N20 note as against today's N50 and N100 notes.

In the end, we found that the over 3,500 police roadblocks across the country criminally fetched the Nigeria Police Force a total sum of N53.4Billion in three years; out of which the Southeast accounted for the lion's share of N32.2Billion, followed by Southwest and South-south with N8.2Billion each; North-central N2.1Billion; and Northeast and Northwest with N1.2Billion each. The national investigation was built on the report of **the Human Rights Watch, USA** of August 17th 2010 (**Everyone is in on the Game: Corruption & Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force**) in which **Intersociety** prominently featured.

The outcome of **Intersociety** investigation led to the dismantling of most of the over 3,500 police roadblocks across Nigeria including over 1,500 in the Southeast and 800 in Anambra and Abia States. They were majorly dismantled in January 2012 when retired IGP M.D. Abubakar became the IGP and made skeletal police roadblocks as his important policy trust.

The random police roadblocks, especially in the Southeast and its States of Anambra and Abia, were restored by retired IGP Solomon Arase on assumption of office in 2015 with most of them stationed in the Southeast including its two major link roads of the Lagos-Benin-Asaba-Onitsha Express Way and the Port Harcourt-Aba-Umuahia-Enugu Expressway. The former IGP Arase had hidden under "police operation or internal security operations against Biafra secessionist violent protests" to flood the Region with thousands of police extortionist roadblocks till date.

Statistical Breakdown

Generally, at N40, 000 per day, the 250 police roadblocks on Anambra roads between August 2015 and August 2016 illicitly collected N10m per day, N300m per month and N3.6b per year. At N40, 000 per day, the 200 police roadblocks in Abia State during the period unlawfully milked the People of the Southeast a total of N8m per day, N240m per month and N2, 88b per year; with N30, 000 per day for each of the 150 police roadblocks then in Imo State, a total of N4.5m was illicitly netted per day, N135m per month and N1, 62b per year.

Also with N25, 000 per day for each of 100 police roadblocks in Enugu then, N2.5m was unlawfully collected per day, N75m per month and N900m per year; and with N25, 000 for each of the 50 police roadblocks in Ebonyi State then, a total of N1, 25M was illegally collected per day, N37.5m per month and N450m per year.

Between August 2016 and August 2017, at N40, 000 per day, the 500 police roadblocks on Anambra roads then illicitly collected N20m per day, N600m per month and N7, 2b per year. At N40, 000 per day, the 400 police roadblocks in Abia State then unlawfully milked the People of the Southeast a total of N16m per day, N480m per month and N5, 76b per year; with N30, 000 per day for each of the 200 police roadblocks then in Imo State, a total of N6m was illicitly netted per day, N180m per month and N2, 16b per year.

Also with N25, 000 per day for each of 200 police roadblocks in Enugu then, N5m was unlawfully collected per day, N150m per month and N1.8bm per year; and with N25, 000 for each of the 150 police roadblocks in Ebonyi State then, a total of N3, 75m was illegally collected per day, N112.5m per month and N1, 35b per year.

Between August 2017 and August-December 2018, at N40, 000 per day, the 800 police roadblocks on Anambra roads must have by the end of December 2018 illicitly collected N32m per day, N960m per month and N15, 36b in sixteen months. At N40, 000 per day, the 700 police roadblocks in Abia State must have by the end of December 2018 unlawfully milked the People of the Southeast a total of N28m per day, N840m per month and N13, 44b in sixteen months; with N30, 000 per day for each of the 500 police roadblocks in Imo State in the named period, a total of N15m must have been illicitly netted per day, N450m per month and N7.2b in sixteen months.

Also with N25, 000 per day for each of 400 police roadblocks in Enugu in the named period, N10m must have been unlawfully collected per day, N300m per month and N4.8b in sixteen months; and with N25, 000 for each of the 400 police roadblocks in Ebonyi State in the named period, a total of N10m was illegally collected per day, N300m per month and N4.8b in sixteen months.

The remaining 200 police roadblocks making the total projected number of police roadblocks in Igbo Land including Igbo Delta State to 3000; are those stationed in different Igbo parts of Delta State (from Agbor to Asaba and environs) as well as those manned by “police-stop-and-move” teams using Hilux or Pickup vans; usually manned by personnel of Police SARS and the Regular ranks and file of the Force.

At an average of N20, 000 per “police-stop-and-move” roadblock since August 2015, the People of the Southeast or Igbo Nation including Delta Igbo have lost in the hands of such “mobile roadblocks” N4m per day, N120m per month and N4.8b in 40 months or August 2015 to December 2018.

Among the “police-stop-and-move” patrol teams caught by **Intersociety** field under-covers mounting roadblocks and extorting money from motorists and other road users was a police patrol van marked “NPF 8527 C” belonging to the Anambra State Police Command; caught at POKOBROS by Atani Road Junction in Ogbaru Local Government Area of the State. The police patrol team had six police officers: three Inspectors and three Sergeants; and operationally led by Inspector Nnana Uchenna. They were caught collecting N50 and N100 notes at gunpoint from motorists including operators of tricycles and SHUTTLE buses on 17th December 2018.

N16b Extortion from Paramilitary Formations

From informed sources, there are not less than 20 roadblocks mounted by the Personnel of the Nigerian Customs Service on Southeast and Igbo Delta roads. These Custom roadblocks are mounted or operated inside the Southeast and on major roads leading to the Region; particularly the Lagos-Benin-Asaba-Onitsha and the Port Harcourt-Obigbo-Asa-Aba-Umuahia-Enugu Expressways; targeting Igbo businessmen and women and their goods and services.

There are four State Commands of the Nigerian Customs Service in Igbo Land or Southeast; namely: Imo-Abia Command, Anambra Command, Enugu-Ebonyi Command and the Zone C Command located in Owerri. There is also “Federal Operations Unit” of the Service operating in Igbo Land. Personnel of the Lagos, Edo (Benin) and Rivers (Port Harcourt) Commands of the Nigerian Customs Service are majorly part of those in charge of the Custom roadblocks mounted on the named two federal roads; targeting Igbo businessmen and women and their wares for extortion.

There are three major types of roadblock extortion going on at the 20 Custom roadblocks; with one of them called “officer-on-duty” extortion; involving bribes given to “officers-on-duty” at each Custom roadblock by drivers of container or lorry-loaded goods so as not to be subjected to “delay tactics or deliberately designed time wasting”. Extortions by the Personnel of the Nigerian Customs Service do not include legitimately confiscated or impounded offensive or legitimate contraband goods or loss of same; whether their seizure was done selectively or out of malice or vindictiveness.

The “officer-on-duty” form of extortion is targeted at container or Lorry drivers carrying “non-contraband goods” who do not want to pass through tedious paper checks and delay tactics by Customs personnel at a roadblock. Minimum of N10, 000 per driver is given to stationed “officers-on-duty” at each Custom roadblock, and such amount is incorporated into sums charged by drivers from the owners of the goods; called “money for Custom.”

There is also similar one charged by drivers from owners of “old clothes and shoes” (okirika products). This is shared according to the number of Custom roadblocks on a particular route and given to designated points-men holding extortionist briefs for the stationed “officers on duty” at each Custom roadblock.

The third Custom roadblock extortion is the act of compromising the laws of the land for a criminal fee; involving collection of huge sums from owners or drivers of seized or impounded contraband goods and getting them released; or advance payment of huge sums (settlement) by each of the cartel members involved in importation of contraband or legally prohibited goods. Such legally prohibited goods include firearms and ammunition, certain harmful drugs and other items legally prohibited from being imported.

In summation, each of the 20 roadblocks mounted by Personnel of the Nigerian Custom Service in Igbo Land or those outside the Region but targeting Igbo businessmen and women and their goods are validly projected to be illegally collecting at least N400, 000 per day; translating to N8m per day for the 20 Custom roadblocks; N240m per month and N11, 52b in 40 months. Some of the roadblocks make as much as over N1m each per day.

Personnel of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) operating in Igbo Land or Southeast and Igbo Delta are also not free from the raging crime of extortion ravaging the Region.

The Federal Road Safety (FRSC) extortion does not include fines validly charged and receipted by the Corps from defaulters of road traffic offenses but includes such collected from commercial drivers as bribes particularly the “load” and “overload” (loaded with passengers and wares) carrying buses and others. In this, civilian points-men are hired and strategically positioned meters away from each of the FRSC roadblocks to collect extortionist sums ranging between N200 and N500 or more per driver and for each roadblock.

For NAFDAC, illicit or prohibited drug dealers such as importers of Tramadol and Codeine, etc, are their major extortionist customers done through advance payment or settlement running into millions of naira per month and per illicit importer or dealer; amounting to billions in the past 40 months. NDLEA Personnel is not in the habit of creating and operating indiscriminate roadblocks but routinely engaged in operational patrols and raids. Most of those arrested are usually extorted or charged if they refused to “cooperate.”

Some corrupt Personnel of the NDLEA operating in the Region are also found to be working hand in hand with corrupt personnel of the Nigeria Police Force in the area of “suspects’ transfer or handover”; whereby those arrested by Police in drug-related cases, rightly or wrongly, and who failed to meet the exorbitant and illegal bail fees demanded, are transferred to NDLEA for harsher bail conditions or prosecution for drug offenses.

Sometimes, such arrested and detained suspects held by Police are doubly extorted by the personnel of the Nigeria Police Force and the NDLEA; especially when initially arrested by the Police and extorted before handed over to the NDLEA for further extortion.

In all, not less than N4.5b is generally projected to have been extorted in 40 months from the People of Southeast and Igbo Delta by the trio of NDLEA, FRSC, and NAFDAC; on average of N115m per month and N4.5b in 40 months; in addition to N11.5b criminally collected and pocketed in the past 40 months by corrupt personnel of the Nigerian Custom Service, totaling N16b.

Calls:

- *All military roadblocks in Igbo Land or Southeast Region and Igbo Delta, numbering not less than 100 and their police counterparts, numbering not less than 3000 must permanently be dismantled; with military and police personnel manning them withdrawn and moved out of the Region.*
- ***Intersociety** is also calling for total discontinuation and end of police and military roadblock extortions and commercialization of criminal investigation and other police duties in Igbo Land.*
- *The Nigeria Police Force must revert and return to professionalism and intelligence policing including mental and electronic policing intelligence or mental-machine policing intelligence*
- *There shall be a presidential directive by the central Government of Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari and Prof Yemi Osinbajo, which says it is fighting corruption, to the authorities of the Nigerian Military, the Nigeria Police Force and Paramilitary formations operating in the Southeast Region to return the whopping N100b criminal or extortion proceeds to coffers of the Governments of Anambra, Abia, Imo, Enugu and Ebonyi States.*
- *In returning the criminal proceeds, the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force shall return a total of N78.02b extorted, the Nigerian Military N6b, the Nigerian Custom Service N11.5b and other Paramilitary formations (FRSC, NDLEA and NAFDAC) N4.5b, totalling N100b or \$330m.*
- *The percentage ratios for the return shall be 30% to Anambra State Government, 30% to Abia State Government, 15% to Imo State Government, 12.5% to Enugu State Government, 12.5% to Ebonyi State Government and extra 5% compensation from the robbed N100b to the Government of Delta State.*
- *The present Buhari and Osinbajo Government shall issue further directive to the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Military and the affected Paramilitary formations to fish out the lists containing names of their officers and personnel posted to the Southeast Region and road routes linking it between August 2015 and December 2018.*
- *The purpose of fishing out the names of officers and personnel of the affected security agencies shall be to have the N100b criminal proceeds deducted from their monetized remunerations including pensions of those already retired; in addition to commensurate deductions from the remunerations of the IGP or the immediate past IGP; the COAS, the Chief of Defense Staff, the Chief of Naval Staff and central heads of the affected Paramilitary formations (Custom, FRSC, NDLEA and NAFDAC).*
- *The Governors of the Southeast and Delta State and other top political office holders and leaders from the Region are called upon to immediately and formidably rise to the occasion to effectively checkmate the militarization and northernization of top military, police and other critical security formations and command structures in Igbo Land.*

- *For purpose of Xmas holiday and to ensure free flow of movement of persons and vehicular on Nigerian roads particularly in the Southeast Region, the authorities of the NPF and the Federal Government of Nigeria including the Nigerian Army and the Federal Road Safety Corps should discontinue at roadblocks indiscriminate impoundment of vehicles and checks on vehicle papers or particulars or traffic offenses as well as demand and collection of roadblock tolls or bribes. Vehicles can only be rarely stopped and checked on intelligence trail or surveillance.*
- *Special joint security bodies shall be moved to strategic Nigerian roads and junctions/roundabouts particularly the Asaba and Onitsha axis of the Niger Bridge to free them of traffic congestions and other forms of human and motorized traffics.*

Signed

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