

## **Nigerian Army's False Claims Against Slain Innocent Biafra Activists: Graphic Accounts (1)**

**(Intersociety, Nigeria: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017)**-As a follow up to our public statement of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017, we the **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)** have resolved to release the following statement containing graphic accounts of incessant massacre and injuring by Lt Gen Tukur Buratai led Nigerian Army and other security agencies including the Nigeria Police Force of defenseless pro Biafra activists in Southeast and parts of South-south Nigeria.

This statement of ours is in further response to the Nigerian Army's armada of lies contained in its recent report following its kangaroo Special Board of Inquiry set up on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 to look into allegations of gross rights abuses by its key personnel and commanders in Northeast, Southeast and parts of South-south Nigeria in the course of its counter insurgency operations and undemocratic and unconstitutional involvement in nonviolent public assemblies in Nigeria. The Nigerian Army had in its recent report claimed that "no single citizen was killed during its violent crackdowns on innocent and nonviolent pro Biafra campaigns and campaigners".

The said massacre and maiming took place in not less than ten different occasions and locations leading to total death of not less than 270 citizens and injuring of over 370 others. We make bold to say that we will sit by or say or do nothing when litany or armada of lies is heartlessly told against the murdered and the maimed innocent citizens of Nigeria who got massacred in the course of assertion of their democratic and constitutional free speech nonviolently and peacefully.

As severally stated and contained in our previous public statements, the referenced massacre was a result of violent military and police crackdowns on pro Biafra agitators who strictly applied locally, nationally, regionally and internationally recognized or sanctioned nonviolent methods by way of night vigil, prayer/singing rallies and crusades, open street protests and processions as well as ghost street or sit-at-home protests for the purpose of compelling the Nigerian authorities to holistically address the age long three hydra headed monsters of *structural, direct and cultural violence* against the Igbo Ethnic Nationality in Nigeria which started way back in 1945.

Totality of these international best practices of democratic free speech is called *nonviolent self determination agitations or campaigns*; recognized and legalized by AU and the UN and laid in existing and legally binding treaties or conventions which the Federal Republic of Nigeria willingly, obligatorily and dutifully acceded to and retained till date.

Also as severally observed and stated in our previous statements, the Nigerian Army headed by Lt Gen Tukur Buratai is solely responsible for 75% of the killings and maiming while the Nigeria Police through its SARS and Anti Riot or Mobile Police units is responsible for 20%; with the Nigerian Navy, SSS and others accounting for the remaining 5%. The worst of it all is that the Nigerian Army particularly its present command structure is ethnically and religiously lopsided including its formations and command structures in Southeast and South-south Nigeria; making it a willing tool for the ethnic cleansing operations under reference.

During the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016 pro Biafra heroes day massacre at Onitsha Army Barracks, for instance, some survivors interviewed, who were taken to Onitsha Barracks and held for over a week without charge; narrated how soldiers and civilians of the northern Muslim background jubilated noisily and reigned curses on Igbo People on sighting military truck-loads of slain and injured pro Biafra activists while their Southern counterparts of Southeast and South-south background broke down tears and cried uncontrollably.

Instances also abound where the operational commanders of the Nigerian Army and Police Force made several attempts to turn such nonviolent and peaceful rallies, processions and protests into violence by provocatively opening fire with live bullets on them at the middle of the protests so as to find grounds to inflict heavy fatalities or casualties and justify their murderous actions. Yet despite the refusal of the peaceful protesters to be provoked, the soldiers and police still went ahead and killed them in their dozens in each of the protests.

### ***Graphic Accounts:***

**Onitsha, Awka and Nnewi: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2015:** Several peaceful street protests were held and soldiers and Police SARS and Mobile Police responded violently by opening fire at the peaceful protesters with live bullets leading to instant death of at least six citizens. Similar protests took place in Asaba, Delta State, Enugu, Enugu State, Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Igweocha or Port Harcourt, Rivers State and Aba, Abia State. The protests recorded scores of death and dozens of injuries.

**30th August 2015 Death Toll:** Among the six citizens that were shot dead by soldiers and police are Citizens Ebuka Nnorom of Ufuma in Anambra State and Obasi Maduka of Oshiri-Ebonyi State. The bodies of four others were recovered and taken away by soldiers and police. Over ten persons were injured in the protests. Among those that were killed in Yenegoa and Igweocha or Port Harcourt protests are late Citizens Christian Okechukwu and Daniel Chukwualue.

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 IPOB Mega Protest in Onitsha and its Environs:** The peaceful protest started in the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and was tagged “IPOB vigil/occupy Niger Bridge Road sides”. The protest continued on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 and extended to Onitsha Upper Iweka, Owerri Road and Obodoukwu Road, etc. The protest, observed by the leadership of our organization, was peaceful and well organized with leaders of IPOB hand-walling themselves by the road sides ensuring free flow of vehicular and human movements.

Hours later signals and killer instructions were given to the soldiers of the 302 Artillery Regiment Onitsha by the then GOC of the Enugu 82<sup>nd</sup> Division and the Army headquarters in Abuja as well as by the then Inspector General of Police (Solomon Arase) for the protesters to be violently crushed or quelled; leading to instant death of at least 13 persons and injuring of not less than 30 others. The then Inspector General of Police specifically directed the senior police commanders in the Southeast and South-south zones to “apply maximum force and quell the protesters”.

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 Death Toll:** A total of not less than 13 persons were killed and among them are: Miss Anthonia Nkiruka Ikeanyionwu (a student of the Federal College of Education (Technical) at Umunze in Anambra State); Kenneth Ogadinma ( from Abia State), Chima Onoh ( from Enugu State), Angus Chikwado ( from Anambra State) and Miss Felicia Egwuatu ( from Anambra State). The remaining eight citizens shot and killed by soldiers of the Onitsha Military Cantonment led by Col Isa Abdullahi Maigari were taken away to undisclosed locations till date.

**17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Post Court Judgment Jubilation Massacre at Onitsha Niger Bridgehead:** Hours after an Abuja Federal High Court presided over by Hon Justice Ademola Adeniji delivered a ruling ordering for unconditional release of Citizen Nnamdi Kanu, jubilant IPOB members numbering between 60 and 100 or more went into spontaneous celebration and marched from Nkpor to Ojukwu Statue at Onitsha Niger Bridgehead where they met some soldiers of northern Muslim extraction who opened fire on them, killing not less than 12 of them and injuring at least 15 others. All the dead bodies of those killed and some injured ones were taken away by soldiers to Onitsha Army Barrack while others were rescued and saved by friends and relatives. They were later taken to or deposited at some private hospital including the Multicare Hospital at Nkpor.

The murderous soldiers later traced the Multicare Hospital where the injured were taken to for treatment and raided it around 10.8pm in the late night of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and abducted 17 persons including the injured, their friends and relatives. Those abducted included those the soldiers arrested at the scene of the massacre. The killer soldiers under their commander then (Col Isah Abdullahi Maigari) later returned 11 of those they abducted to the hospital. The returned were those at the point of death requiring urgent life saving treatments before they were abducted by soldiers.

Sadly, four of them later died in the hospital due to loss of so much blood and their abduction by soldiers. Those held at the Barracks were detained for days until we intervened leading to their release at the State CID where they were later taken to and dumped. Three out of those killed and taken away by soldiers were later dumped at the Onitsha General Hospital on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015. Their corpses were recovered and moved to their families in February 2016 through the joint efforts of our leadership, IPOB officials and their families, leading to their interment in their respective communities in Ebonyi and Abia State sometime in February and March 2016.

**17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Death Toll:** Not less than 12 persons were killed and among them are Citizens Okwu Friday, Michael Nweke (37) (from Ezza North LGA) in Ebonyi State; buried on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2016; Peter Chukwuma Nwankwo (26) (from Ezza South LGA) in Ebonyi State; buried on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2016, Mathew Ndukwe Kanu (25) (from Akanu-Ohafia LGA) in Abia State; buried on 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 and Chigozie Ezeji (32) (from Idemmili North LGA) in Anambra State.

The names above mentioned did not include three others that died in the hospital during treatments. A total of 27 persons with terminal bullet wounds were taken to the Multicare Hospital alone for treatment following the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 massacre; out of which 4 died. Several others with terminal bullet wounds also ran away from hospitals to their private homes for self medications fearing their abductions by soldiers.

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 Massacre at Aba:** Members of IPOB in their hundreds had gathered in the premises of former Igbo National College now renamed *National High School*. The gathering was for prayers and singing rally for the release of Citizen Nnamdi Kanu and ors. Few hours before noon of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the Abia State Police Command and its Aba Area Command then headed by CP (now DIG) Habila Hosea and ACP Peter Nwagbara respectively ordered their personnel to storm the place; saying they received a distress call and matching order from then IGP, Solomon Arase.

About thirty minutes later soldiers of 144 Battalion at Ukwa Ngwa near Aba, then commanded by Lt Col Sidi Umar Kasim, SSS and naval personnel and other members of the Abia State Joint Security Taskforce mobilized by Governor Okezie Ikpeazu stormed the place. Moments after their arrival, soldiers took battle positions and corked their rifles loaded with live bullets and seconds later, they opened fire at the IPOB crowd, killing dozens instantly and injuring over 30 others.

As the survivors were scampering for safety and jumping the School's perimeter fence, soldiers again opened fire on them and gunned down some of them. Police personnel also joined them in the shooting spree; leading to at least 22 of them excluding 16 members of the group whose lifeless bodies were later dumped in two burrow pits along Aba Port Harcourt Road on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

Thirteen of the dumped corpses were discovered on 12<sup>th</sup> February by local whistle blowers while three were found days later in another burrow pit behind a Mosque near Aba. The thirteen corpses were set ablaze on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 by suspected agents of the State Government or the culpable soldiers of the nearby 144 Battalion. Amnesty Int'l later had during their visit to the burrow pit on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 discovered that the lifeless bodies of the slain IPOB members were tied with cut pieces of Biafra flags. The corpses went up in suspicious flames 48hrs after we wrote and delivered a letter to the Government of Abia State over the public health hazard, etc of the dumped corpses.

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 Death Toll:** Not less than 30 persons were killed in the Aba prayer/singing rally and among them are: Citizens Uche Friday (30yrs) Abia State, Emeka Ekpemandu (35yrs) Imo State, Chiavoghlefu Chibuikem Abia State, Nzubechi Onwumere Imo State, Peter Chinecherem Ukasoanya (27yrs) Abia State, Chigozie Cyril Nwoye (23yrs) Enugu State, Chukwudi Onyekwere (26yrs) Imo State and Uchechukwu Nwachukwu Abia State. Scores of defenseless citizens numbering about 15 were also shot and killed in Aba during similar street protests of 18<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and one of those killed is Citizen Chibuzor Maduagwu Paul (28yrs) from Imo State.

That is to say that out of the 8 slain citizens identified or mentioned above, when added to 16 lifeless bodies of IPOB members dumped in two burrow pits, will bring the total number of recovered or seen bodies killed to 24. The rest were taken away by soldiers till date. Those slain and dumped bodies who had their hands tied behind their backs with cut pieces of Biafra flags technically suggest that they were taken to the burrow alive before being killed while those that have their eyes tied may most likely have been killed elsewhere before being dumped in the burrow. It is also likely that the former were forced to carry the lifeless bodies of the latter to the burrow pits after which they were tied and shot dead.

**29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016 Major Massacre in Onitsha, Nkpor And Asaba:** Of all the massacres under reference, those of Nkpor, Onitsha and Asaba were the most bloody and recorded the highest number of fatalities or casualties. The IPOB leadership and other leading pro Biafra campaigners had chosen Nkpor part of Anambra State as the venue for their 2016 Biafra Heroes Day Anniversary; having nonviolently and successfully marked same in Enugu and Umuahia in 2015 and 2014 respectively.

The leadership of the Indigenous People of Biafra had on 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, addressed a letter to the Government of Anambra State through then State Commissioner of Police, CP (now AIG) Mr. Hosea Karma. The letter was dated 23<sup>rd</sup> and signed on 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 by Mr. Uchenna Asiegbu; the group's head of the Directorate of State. The CP was constitutionally charged in the letter to ensure that anniversary was a hitch free and the event venue provided with security. The said letter was successfully couriered to the CP four days to the anniversary.

Shockingly, the then CP and the Government of Anambra State, on receipt of the letter, neither invited the signatories to the letter/their representatives, nor made any public pronouncement concerning the status of the letter; and unknown to organizers of the event including the IPOB, the letter became a counter measure and an instrument for perfection of plans for unspeakable State violence and crackdown that were unleashed on organizers, their supporters and other innocent members of the public including early morning travelers and church service returnees on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The letter was used as counter measures leading to maximum mobilization of the State Joint Security Taskforce and deployment of more military reinforcements from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu.

**Signed:**

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

- **Emeka Umeagbalasi, Board Chairman**  
**Mobile Line: +2348174090052**
- **Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Esq.**  
**Head, Civil Liberties & Rule of Law Program**
- **Chinwe Umeche, Esq.**  
**Head, Democracy & Good Governance Program**
- **Florence C. Akubilo, Esq.**  
**Head, Campaign & Publicity Department**

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

Website: [www.intersociety-ng.org](http://www.intersociety-ng.org)

