

Anambra Governorship Election 2017: All Hands Must Be On Deck To Ensure Credible And Popular Poll

.....Intersociety & SBCHROs

(Onitsha Nigeria: 7th October 2017)-The leaderships of **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)** and **Southeast Based Coalition of Human (and Indigenous) Rights Organizations (SBCHROs)** are calling on all critical stakeholders in the Anambra Governorship Election, scheduled for 18th November 2017 to ensure that all hands are on deck to deliver secured, credible, free and popular poll for the electorates and the entire residents/citizens of the State.

These critical stakeholders including the Police, SSS and other para-military formations; INEC, Human Rights organization and other advocacy CSOs; professional bodies and workers unions, social bodies including faith, urban and community entities and organizations; media, 37 contesting political parties/candidates and their "first class" counterparts including the State incumbent as well as other stakeholders must work hard to ensure that everything before Man, Law and God is done with respect to the all important gubernatorial poll.

Our critical appraisal of the situations on the ground so far including candidates' campaign methodologies, INEC's assurances and roles of the security agencies especially those of the Nigerian Army and the Nigeria Police Force; still indicates clearly that INEC, security agencies and parties/candidates are not operating or conducting themselves within bounds or electoral parameters tailored in international best practices and universal adult suffrage.

For instance, with less than 41 days to go, the INEC National Headquarters and the Anambra State Resident Commissioner and his management staff are still making empty and unscientific promises of "flawless" and "credible" Governorship Poll in the State without matching their words with action.

The Anambra Resident Electoral Commissioner, till date, has not publicly presented to the general public, Anambra electorates and other core stakeholders the graphic details of the state of the National Register of Voters for Anambra State and comprehensive account of the readiness of their critical staff and departments especially the all important ICT department and sub departments of the Commission at their Abuja and Awka headquarters and the 21 LGAs of the State.

It is still our critical observation that Abuja INEC Headquarters and the Anambra Resident Electoral Commissioner have, till date, left blank spaces or have not provided answers to the following critical questions: *As it stands now, how many polling units/booths are ready or designated for the 18th November Governorship Poll in Anambra State? Are there evil forests' and hanging polling booths for the poll? What is the fate of Anambra's former rigging fields especially those located in Omambala area of the State (Anambra East, Anambra West, Ayamelum and Oyi LGAs) where polling booth is still located almost every 200 meters? How credible and authentic is Anambra's 4.611 polling booths?*

Others are: *By INEC's legal mandate of continuous voters' registration and revalidation, how many newly registered voters issued with PVCs or other legally permissible voting cards have been captured and readied for the 18th November Poll? By the same legal mandate, what is the total number of Anambra's current registered and eligible voters? How many of them form the bulk of transferred voters, dead voters, revalidated voters, deleted voters and newly captured voters?*

The rest are: *What is the state of INEC's controversial card readers and their role on the 18th November Governorship Poll? What about the preparedness of all the staff and critical departments of the Commission especially its all important ICT heads and personnel at Abuja, Awka and 21 LGAs?*

What is the present body language (i.e. who is he working for?) of the INEC's National Director of ICT "one Mr. Chidi Nwafor"? Is he working for Nigerians or does he have any nocturnal relationship with APGA Governor/second term bidder or PDP Candidate or APC Candidate/APC controlled Federal Government? What are the body languages of the likes of Oge Oranyelu, Emeka Nnaji (HOD of INEC-ICT in Anambra), Christian Okoroigwe, Moses Aniche and Clifford Ugwu; all personnel of Awka INEC ICT section? Are they working for Nigerians or someone else in this coming governorship poll? Is there any nocturnal or malicious relationship between them and the named INEC National Director of ICT?

There is urgent need for Abuja INEC Headquarters and its Anambra State Resident Electoral Commissioner to come clean; publicly and critically clarify and respond to these dark issues mentioned above. That is to say that INEC assurances and promises of "conducting flawless and credible Governorship Poll in the State" without providing irrefutable and convincing public answers to the said issues; are totally unbelievable and rejected. The authorities of the Commission and participating political parties and their candidates and other advocacy stakeholders are hereby called upon to beam all their searchlights in the direction of the conducts and actions of the ICT heads and departments of the Commission in Abuja, Awka and the Commission's offices in the 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State.

The roles of security agencies especially the Nigerian Army and the Nigeria Police Force, so far, are nothing short of creation of electoral insecurity and commercialization of pre election security in the State. Our recent visit to Onitsha Upper Iweka, for instance, clearly shows that the area and the entire State are under siege by tens of thousands of "policing hoodlums". We counted not less than 20 police roadblocks at Upper Iweka alone. The said 20 police roadblocks translate to 80 personnel in an area measuring not up to 3 kilometers or average of four police personnel per roadblock.

The arenas of the said Onitsha Upper Iweka besieged by the riotously extortionist police personnel are Chisco Park to Upper Iweka Flyover, terminating at Old TRACAS Park (five police roadblocks), Old MICMERAH Park to Aba Park, joining Owerri Road and terminating at Obosi Electrical Market (six police roadblocks), Owerri Road by Obodoukwu Road/Ogbaru Relief Market (three police roadblocks) and Obosi Electrical Market to Ezeiweka Road Junction/ITC Park, terminating at Down Flyover/Ekene Dilichukwu Mega Park (five police roadblocks). Other police roadblocks in the area are scattered in adjoining service lanes including Abuja/Peace Mass Park by Oguta Road Junction of Upper Iweka.

We had also observed the patterns of toll collection and other extortionist activities of the stationed police personnel at Onitsha Upper Iweka. Apart from malicious boldness and impunity with which they harass, intimidate and rob motorists, we further observed that average of 10 private vehicles are parked, maliciously queried and extorted on daily basis at each of the roadblocks at Onitsha Upper Iweka.

The least sum being collected at gunpoint from each private car operator on the spot is N5, 000. Each commercial motorcyclist or tri-cyclist carrying wares is forced to part with N200 per trip; likewise each commercial bus loaded with goods. By Intersociety statistics, each of the 20 police roadblocks at Onitsha Upper Iweka maliciously fetches the Nigeria Police Force not less than N40, 000 daily, which further translates to N800, 000 per day and N24M per month.

That is to say that the Nigeria Police Force, Anambra State Command, on behalf of the scandal infested IGP and his Police Management Team, criminally makes N24M per month from Onitsha Upper Iweka alone especially since this pre election season policing deployments in September 2017. These have clearly exposed the sinister motives of the IGP's recent announcement of deployment of over "21,000 Policemen for 2017 Anambra Governorship Election". These over 21,000 policing hoodlums have turned Anambra State into nightmare and security of the graveyard.

We have also observed the campaign styles of the "first class" governorship candidates in the State especially those of the incumbent, PDP and APC Candidates. Most of these campaigns have remained non issues based tailored in voodooist antagonism. These further suggest that it is either that the candidates including the incumbent are unfit and unprepared to serve the People of Anambra State or where they have attempted to serve, they did that in gross error or default. It is also possible that they never prepared or intended to serve their people by way of governance and service to humanity but to contest for "the Executive Chairmanship or CEO of Anambra State Nig Limited".

We therefore call on the named critical stakeholders to reverse and go back to their drawing boards. Anambra State as the gateway into the Southeast and South-south is too important to be left in the hands of merchants in the corridors of power and mindless pillagers of the public treasures. No ambitious and futuristic State or society has ever progressed under *flamboyant and kingly governance*. Modern Civil Government and its Governance is a call to serve so as to render an immortal service to humanity, society and God and not a call to squander, pillage, loot and plunder.

We shall in the coming 30 days provide Anambra electorates with fundamental yardsticks and modern governance benchmarks for them to be fundamentally used or applied in assessing, rejecting or accepting the campaigns of their governorship candidates especially those of the incumbent, or PDP or APC. Such electioneering governance campaigns yardsticks are strongly rooted in the existing "Charter of Responsibilities for Public Office Holders in Nigeria" contain in the Chapter Two of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution under *Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy* as well as the UNDP's *Human Security and its Seven Dimensions* of 1992.

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