

69thUDHR: Atrocity Perpetrators & Their Agents As Human Rights Voices & Campaigners In Nigeria

.....15, 000 Unarmed Civilians Killed In 31 Months (Since June 2015)

(Intersociety Nigeria: 11th December 2017)-Human rights situation in Nigeria especially under military-democratic Presidency of Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari has not only deteriorated, but also reached an alarming stage where *human rights culture and community is brutally invaded, attacked and taken over by atrocity perpetrators and their agents as the “new face” of human rights voices and campaigns in Nigeria.*

The deplorable situation of human rights in Nigeria has further worsened especially in the past 31 months or since June 2015; leading to killing of not less than 15, 000 unarmed and defenseless civilians by violent agents of the State and non-State violent actors whose violent activities are sanctioned or condoned by the present central Government.

The lopsided composition of the security and policing structures in the country is a major indicator responsible for gross abuses of human rights in Nigeria; likewise the application of torture friendly methodologies and use of untrained personnel in crime detection and investigation. Reckless use of the military in managing civil grievances also heightened abuses of human rights in Nigeria especially since June 2015.

Of the 15, 000 State's direct and indirect killings in Nigeria since June 2015, available statistics clearly indicate that the Nigerian Army and its forces is responsible for not less than 2000 civilian deaths; the Nigeria Police, by way of custodial or captivity deaths, accounts for 7, 750 while Government backed terrorist Fulani Herdsmen and atrocious and Jihadist Boko Haram insurgents account for the remaining 5000 to 5500 deaths; totaling not less than 15, 000 deaths or over 15, 000 deaths in 31 months.

To erase traces of these killings and their perpetrators, Human Rights Community and campaigns in Nigeria have not only been infiltrated but also defaced, distracted, influenced and made to derail gravely. Leading perpetrators of gross rights abuses in Nigeria and their establishments now recruit and fund “human rights groups” and “activists” and commission them to write, protest against and attack those that demand justice for atrocities perpetrated by such regime criminals.

A good number of hitherto leading human rights groups and activists in Nigeria have also been cornered to sing their praises and mount image laundering campaigns at national, regional and international levels. Some have been rewarded with sensitive public positions such as the office of the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission. Such characters are rewarded for heading or prominently participating in several government kangaroo committees “investigating” various army killings in Nigeria; where they influenced or authored watery reports exonerating the army and its heads from culpability. This is in spite of overwhelming evidence and testimonies of the survivors and victims' relatives or associates.

For instance, such characters participated in the first Army Rights Abuse panel on Shiite killings in Zaria which the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) spearheaded and at the end, a watery report was turned in, exonerating the Army and its COAS and “heavily” indicting Shiites. In the second Army Rights Abuse Panel on IPOB and ors killings, same characters were recruited and, again, the Nigerian Army and its COAS was exonerated to the point that “no single IPOB member was killed by Army in Southeast” in 2015 and 2016. The characters were again brought into another kangaroo Army Rights Abuse Panel of Enquiry. As recently as barely two weeks gone by, one of such characters became a presidential nominee for the position of “Executive Secretary, National Human Rights Commission”; thereby signaling the final “rest in pieces” for the NHRC in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Human Rights Community has also since mid 2015 lost some, if not many of its finest brains, movers and shakers to the same atrocity perpetrators and their agents. The referenced have been recruited especially since mid 2015 and now serve as consultants, appointees, supporters, speech writers, and spies, ‘attack dogs’ or ‘defenders of abusers of human rights’ in Nigeria.

Prof Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was absolutely right when she recently cautioned leading international organizations such as WB and IMF to “be extremely careful about groups funded by present Government or its appointees in Nigeria who go about parading themselves as *human rights groups especially anti corruption crusaders*”. The activities of these human rights turncoats have emboldened the referenced atrocity perpetrators and inculcated in them a seeming irreversible culture of impunity and incorrigibility; encouraging and embolden them to perpetrate more atrocities with reckless abandon.

Therefore, the greatest shock received by the leadership of **Int’l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law-Intersociety** in this year’s world human rights day anniversary was over a speech delivered yesterday, 10th December 2017 by Nigeria’s Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai; “marking the World Human Rights Day”. That mocking speech alone; as far as human rights issues are concerned; is a clear indication that *Satan and its agents has gone to holy places of Godly worship in Nigeria and become their General Overseers*; to the extent that arch enemies of human rights with a negative record breaking of over 2000 State murders; have suddenly become human rights voices and celebrants in Nigeria. That is to say that Palm kernel has been allowed to ripe at the tail of a palm frond in Nigeria!

It is freshly recalled that the Nigerian Army under Buratai as its COAS and its mother body-Defense Headquarters is responsible for the death of not less than 2000 civilians between August 2015 and September 2017. By Amnesty Int’l Report of 2016/2017, not less than 240 civilian detainees died in military custody inside Giwa Barracks in 2016 in Maiduguri, Borno State. Amnesty Int’l says: *The military arbitrarily arrested thousands of young men, women and children who fled to the safety of recaptured towns, including Banki and Bama, Borno state. These arrests were largely based on random profiling of men, especially young men, rather than on reasonable suspicion of having committed a recognizably criminal offence.*

In most cases, the arrests were made without adequate investigation. Other people were arbitrarily arrested as they attempted to flee from Boko Haram. Those detained by the military had no access to their families or lawyers and were not brought before a court. More than 1,500 detainees were released throughout the year. The mass arrests by the military of people fleeing Boko Haram led to overcrowding in military detention facilities.

At the military detention facility at Giwa barracks, Maiduguri, cells were overcrowded. Diseases, dehydration and starvation were rife. At least 240 detainees died during the year. Bodies were secretly buried in Maiduguri's cemetery by the Borno state environmental protection agency staff. Among the dead were at least 29 children and babies, aged between newborn and five years. At Giwa barracks, children under five were detained in three overcrowded and insanitary women's cells, alongside at least 250 women and teenage girls per cell. Some children were born in detention.

By the updated Report of Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (2017), the Nigerian Army with an insignificant involvement of others is responsible for the death of over 400 unarmed members and supporters of pro Biafra movement in Nigeria particularly the Indigenous People of Biafra or IPOB. The broad day and associated night vigil and sleeping hour massacres took place between August 2015 and September 2017.

While over 270 were killed between August 2015 and January 2017, over 100 died in two days of Army violent attacks on unarmed and defenseless members, supporters and non members of IPOB or between 12th and 14th September 2017 in three locations of Aba, Isiala-Ngwa and Afara-Ukwu Ibeku, near Umuahia; all in Abia State. The leadership of IPOB says it "lost 305 members including 28 bodies recovered near the house of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu and over 25 dead bodies of its members killed and taken away by soldiers in the evening of 14th September 2017 in the premises of the house of its leader".

Further, by the accounts of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) or Shiites and independently corroborated others, the Nigerian Army also massacred in three days (12th -14th December 2015) over 1000 unarmed members of the Islamic Sect or Shiites. On 30th August 2017 during the world day for "disappeared persons" or for "victims of enforced disappearance", the leadership of the Movement released the pictures and profiles of 784 of its members who went "missing" and never seen since the 12th -14th December 2015 massacre of its members by the Tukur Buratai led Nigerian Army. Over 50 members of the Sect were also shot and killed in October and November 2016; likewise 13 others killed in November 2017 during their annual religious processions. A total of 1,130 Shiites have lost their lives in the past 31 months or since June 2015.

By the graphic account of Mr. Babagana Malarima, Chairman of Kala Balge Local Government Area of Borno State, 236 civilians were bombed and killed by the Nigerian Air Force jet at the Rann IDP Camp in Borno State on 7th January 2017. In total, not less than 2000 unarmed and defenseless civilians were killed or died in the custody of the Nigerian Army headed by Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai. There are also scores of other military caused deaths that went unreported; mostly resulted from "involuntary or enforced disappearances". These are criminologically called "dark figures of crime".

As sad and shocking as the above or killing statistics are, the Chief of Army Staff and his Nigerian Army (NA) still have the audacity to mark, celebrate and speak on “World Human Rights Day” with a fanfare and shameless face. Shocking, too, was his revelation that “the NA has developed strong partnership with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, et al”. Till date, the UN Rights Council or its Commissioner has kept a sealed lip over horrendous human rights abuses by State agents in Nigeria; little did Nigerians and the world know that it works hand in glove with atrocity perpetrators and heinous abusers of human rights in Nigeria.

Apart from the fact that all areas of human rights; namely *civil, political, cultural, economic, social and environmental rights*; otherwise called *Human Security & Its Seven Dimensions (UNDP 1994)*; are observed in gross breach in Nigeria, *civil and justice rights* are the worst violated in the country especially since mid 2015. State violence in Nigeria has steadily or geometrically remained on the increase in the past 31 months or since June 2015; leading to total death of over 9,700; out of which State direct killing of unarmed and defenseless civilians account for 2000, while Police directed custodial killings or deaths account for 7, 750 or average of 250 deaths per month in the past 31 months of Buhari Administration.

By combined reading and analysis of the special reports: *Killing At Will* of Amnesty Int’l (2009); *Criminal Force of NOPRIN & OSIWA* (2010); *Welcome to Hell Fire: torture; other ill-treatment of Amnesty Int’l* (2014); Nigeria: *‘You have signed your death warrant’: Torture and other ill treatment in the Special Anti-Robbery Squad* of Amnesty Int’l (2016); and *Welcome to Bleeding Republic of Nigeria: a land flowing with blood & tears of Int’l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law* (2017); among others, a national monthly average of 250 accused citizens die in police custody or captivity and outside the law in Nigeria; with sub national monthly average of seven persons per State. Recall that there are 36 Police SARS and CID formations for Nigeria’s 36 States and 12 Police Zonal SARS and ZCID formations for Nigeria Police’s 12 Zonal Commands as well as Federal Police SARS and FCID formations at Abuja.

Deaths associated with police custody or captivity in Nigeria arise through criminal or illegal processes of (a) *extra judicial executions*, defined as *unlawful and deliberate killings carried out by policing agents by order of a government or with its complicity or acquiescence*; (b) *unlawful killings*, involving *killings resulting from excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, which violate right to life guaranteed by Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution (S.33), the Int’l Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (Article 6.1) and the African Charter on Human & People’s Rights (Article 4) ratified and domesticated by Nigeria on 17th March 1983.*

Others are: (c) *enforced disappearance(s)*, whereby *a person or persons are arrested, detained, abducted or otherwise deprived of liberty by the authorities or their agents, or people acting with their authorization, support or acquiescence, but the authorities do not acknowledge this or conceal the abducted persons’ fate or whereabouts, placing them outside the protection of the law.* Safeguards against enforced disappearance are provided in the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, signed and ratified by Nigeria on 27th July 2009.

The rest are: (d) *summary or arbitrary executions*; executions in which persons are accused of a crime or crimes and immediately killed without benefit of a full and fair trial; and (e) *torture, involving any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.*

Citizens shot and killed using these criminal or illegal processes are commonly referred to by the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force as “armed robbery suspects killed in gun duels with the police”. The departments of the Nigeria Police largely responsible for these deaths are “Nigeria Police Federal, Zonal and State SARS or Special Anti Robbery Squads; and Federal, Zonal and State Criminal Investigation Departments or Bureaus (CIDs/CIBs). Through greed, corruption, criminal enrichment, victimization, incompetence, Stone Age policing intelligence and awkward crime detection and investigation-and general application of archaic policing tools and methodologies; hundreds of criminally unprocessed and un-convicted Nigerians are sent to their early graves; totalling 7,750 in the past 31 months or since June 2015; on national monthly average of 250 and sub national State monthly average of seven.

In the area of non State actor killing of unarmed and defenceless civilians in Nigeria in the past 31 months or since June 2015, the terrorist Fulani herdsmen account for between 3,000 to 3500 deaths, while Boko Haram terror group accounts for at least 2000 deaths including over 400 killed between January and beginning of December 2017; totalling 5000 to 5500 deaths. Amnesty Int’l had recently disclosed that “Boko Haram killed 375 civilians between January and beginning of November 2017 in over 55 attacks”. Over 30 defenceless civilians have also died or been killed by the terror group between end of November and beginning of December 2017. In all, not less than 15,000 unarmed and defenceless civilians have been killed outside the law in the past 31 months or since June 2015 by Nigerian security forces, Police, Boko Haram and Fulani. Battle fields’ related deaths involving combatants are excluded as a standard practice.

Signed:

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