

SBCHROs

SOUTHEAST BASED COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS & GOOD GOVERNANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Cordinating Office:
Secretariat of InterSociety
41. Miss Elems Street
430003 Onitsha
Nigeria

E-mail: southeastrightscoalition@gmail.com
info@intersociety.ng.org

Phone: +2348182411462
+2349063400218
+2348174090052

Our ref: Media Briefing & Interaction Your ref: _____ Date: 25-02-2018

Topic: The Best & The Worst In Southeast Nigeria: A Comprehensive Review Of Governance Challenges In The Geopolitical Zone Dating Back To The Second Republic; Among Other Burning National Issues

(Sharom Hall, Onitsha, Southeast Nigeria: 26th February 2018)-This media interaction has become necessary following near total, if not total collapse of quality leadership and good governance in the Southeast Zone in particular and Nigeria in general; and the rise and institutionalization of *transactional governance* and bad leadership. According to the Scripture, *where good leaders are in charge, people and their society rejoice and prosper.*

Qualities Of An Accomplished Leader In Public Office

As embedded in the tradition of modern democracy or limited government and clearly defined in the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership (MIPAAL), *an accomplished leader is (a) that serving executive leader or former executive leader who, under challenging circumstances, develops or developed his or her social clime and strengthens or strengthened democracy, good governance and human rights for the shared benefit of his or her people, paving the way for sustainable and equitable growth, development and prosperity of his or her people and their society.*

Other qualities of an accomplished leader in executive position are (b) *his or her exceptional role models for his or her society and people; and (c) ensuring that his or her society and people continue to benefit from the experience and wisdom of his or her exceptional leadership during his or her term and after he or she had left national or sub-national office; thereby making him or her an irreplaceable role model and public roles player in his or her immediate society and beyond. Such a charismatic leader must at all times during his or her stay in office, use the public funds for public good and ensure the putting of smiles on the faces of majority, if not most of his or her own people.*

Coalition Partners:



12 (Twelve) Core Achievement Parameters Of A Democratic Leader

According to **Intersociety (2017)**, there are twelve (12) core achievement parameters for an accomplished democratic leader especially in developing countries or their sub-national entities. They are (a) *winning of election by popular votes (input legitimacy)*, (b) *ability of the elected to serve the people in the context of service to humanity (as opposed to transactional governance)*, (c) *avoidance of call to squander and heeding of call to serve*, (d) *formation of a sizeable cabinet composed of persons of conscience; with technical expertise in various sectors of public governance*, (e) *a cabinet type devoid of favoritism and nepotism*.

Others are: (f) *financial prudence or fiscal responsibility and maintenance of a moderate monthly wage bill*, (g) *drastic reduction in governance running costs most especially in the areas of security votes and overheads and allowances of the political appointees*, (h) *near zero or zero debts culture and ability to adequately mobilize both statutory and non statutory (non loan funds) within and outside the country for massive capital development of the governing area*.

The rest are (i) *aggressive or multi sectoral and infrastructural development and provision, delivery and sustenance of social services and public utilities*, (j) *provision of enabling environment and social incentives for the FDI inflows, private sector participation and general wellbeing of the citizenry including security and welfare (human security)*, (k) *periodic justice sector reform, promotion and advancement of human rights* and (l) *rendering the account of stewardship at the end of every fiscal year and elected tenure*.

Understanding Concept Of Human Security

By *Human Security*, it is a seven dimensional approach to security and welfare of the citizens and a radical departure from over-reliance on traditional AK-47 or gun culture monopolization of security or security concept. It is also called "Peopling Security". For more details, see the UNDP's Human Dev Report of 1994 via: http://www.thefullwiki.org/Human_security.

Public Governance As Social Contract

In his 1690 famous book called *the Second Treatise of Civil Government*, John Locke saw and called for a situation where ***a free, equal and independent people agreed to be governed in return for certain secure enjoyment for their individual rights, which the courts and police powers of a government can enforce leading to every free individual having a moral right to be protected from arbitrary interference by government or other individuals, of his or her sacred rights***.

The visionary and philosophical work of John Locke led to the enactment of the famous Social Contract, contained in the US Independence Declaration speech of July 6, 1776 and its Constitution as follows:

We hold these truths to be self evident that all men (and women) are created equal and endowed with certain natural and inalienable rights, and most important being of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And to protect these rights, men set up government whose authority rests on their consent.

And whenever a government ceases to do what it has been set up for, its citizens have a right to change it or its order and put in place a new government or a new order that will provide for their safety and happiness.

Social Contract In Nigeria's 1999 Constitution

In the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended, *the Service to Humanity or Social Contract obligations (duties of public governance administrators) of Nigeria's 17, 500 Public Office Holders are clearly provided in the Chapter Two or Fundamental Objectives & Directive Principles of State Policy.*

Specifically, by Section 17 of the Chapter Two, otherwise called *"the Charter of Responsibilities for the Public Office Holders in Nigeria"*; "the State Social Order is founded on ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice"; 17(2) "in furtherance of this social order: (a) every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law"; 17 (2) (b) "the sanctity of human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced"; 17 (2) (c) "government actions shall be humane"

By Section 17 (2) (d) "exploitation of human and natural resources in any form whatsoever for reasons, other than the good of the community, shall be prevented"; and 17 (2) (e) "the independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law, and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained".

Also by Section 14 of the same Constitutional Charter of Responsibilities, "the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State base on Principles of Democracy and Social Justice"; 14 (2) it is hereby declared that sovereignty belongs to the People of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority; 14 (2) (b) the security and welfare of the People (human security) shall be the primary purpose of the Government; and 14 (2) (c) "the participation by the People in their Government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution".

Further, by Section 14 (3) of the referenced Charter of Responsibilities in the Constitution, "the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few States or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or any of its agencies".

By Section 15 (1), "the motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress"; 15 (2) accordingly, "national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited". By Section 10 of the same Constitution, the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion.

Grandly, by Section 13 of the same Constitutional Chapter Two, it shall be the duty and responsibility of all organs of government, and of all authorities and persons, exercising legislative, executive or judicial powers, to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of this Chapter (Two) of this Constitution.

Social Contract As Condition For Indivisibility And Indissolubility Of Nigeria

In summation, therefore, *the oneness, indivisibility and indissolubility* of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as contained in Section 2 of the Constitution can never have any effect or be validated unless they are mandatorily linked and grounded in *Social Contract* clearly entrenched in the sections and their subs highlighted above. In the event of default in same by the public office holders manning executive, legislative and judicial powers of the government in the country or any part thereof, the oneness, indivisibility and indissolubility of Nigeria become totally challenged and unrealizable.

Institutionalization & Codification Of Theft Of Public Funds In Nigeria

In the past, especially during the days of Nuhu Ribadu's EFCC, stealers of public funds used both conventional and unconventional means to siphon their looted funds and stash them abroad and skeletally invest some within through phony names or proxies; but today, they invest substantial part of same locally even while in office. That is to say that in today's Nigeria under Buhari's Presidency; corruption is not only institutionalized but also fully codified and domesticated.

It is a fact that three out of every five major investments in today's Nigerian quoted investments, banking, real estate and other choice properties; oil and gas including petroleum filling stations; private universities and first class colleges; hotels, student hostels, shopping/market plazas, industries including industrial farms; media (print, radio, television and web); and palatial private houses etc are circumstantially linked to a serving or former governor; or a serving or former top federal public office holder including Minister; or a State/Federal legislator; or a serving State Commissioner; or a State/Federal top Judicial Officer; or a serving/retired top Police or Military formation Commander; especially from the rank of Police Superintendent and above; and Lt Col and above or its equivalent in other military or para-military organizations; all gotten through stolen public funds.

These stolen public funds are stolen through codified corrupt policies and practices of *security votes, over-bloated allowances and overheads* as well as *over-bloated severance packages* (for retiring and retired public office holders especially at the State and Federal levels). Through criminal processes such as illicit oil and currency exchange deals; contract kickbacks, borrowing and debt services kickbacks, over-invoicing, inflation of contracts, white elephant contracts; and siphoning, misappropriation and looting of public funds, etc; billions of dollars of public funds statutorily meant for public good are stolen annually from public coffers and criminally cornered, invested and privatized.

It is also a fact that 98% of the country's serving and former public office holders are living far beyond their statutory incomes and legitimate lifestyles. The worse of it all is that billions of dollars and their local currency equivalents are borrowed locally and internationally by National and Sub-National Governments in Nigeria; only for 70% of the budgets substantially financed through the borrowed sums to be squandered in over-bloated recurrent expenditures especially through codified criminal processes of *security votes, overheads and allowances* of the country's 17, 500 top public office holders and national and sub-national senior public/civil servants.

How Public Office Holders Squander Funds Meant For Public Good In Nigeria

For clarity, there are 17, 500 top public office holders in Nigeria including 11,278 supposedly elected Local Government chairpersons, their deputies and councilors; 1, 695 elected public officers at Federal and State levels and 4,500 appointed top public officials at Federal and State levels; excluding their public and civil servants, squandering over N1.2trillion annually in salaries and allowances alone. The N1.2trillion excludes annual overhead costs of the public offices manned by the 17,500 public office holders. For more details, see Salaries & Wages Commission reports.

Specifically, there are around 4000 State elected and appointed public office holders including 1,152 State legislators and about 1500 top Federal elected and appointed public office holders including 469 Federal legislators. These 17, 500 top public office holders in Nigeria exclude tens of thousands of other political appointees below the rank of *special advisers*. Over 1300 of them presently serve under Gov William Obiano of Anambra State majorly as *Special Assistants (SAs) and Senior Special Assistants (SSAs)*. These categories of *privileged Nigerians* found in Nigeria's three tiers of government (federal, states and local governments) are responsible for squandering billions of dollars meant for good governance and public good in the country on annual basis and over the years.

It is terribly shocking that the servicing of Nigeria's 1,500 top federal public office holders and battalions of their aides; in addition to 90,000 federal civil servants as well as less than 700,000 policing and security personnel gulp 70% of Nigeria's federal net annual budget. Yet the meager 30% left to service the remaining population of over 175million is still tempered with through theft of public funds. It is so bad that of the entire remunerations of the named public officials and civil servants, 90% is spent on their allowances excluding overheads, whereas only 10% goes to their statutory salaries.

For instance, according to Nigeria's Salaries and Wages Commission, out of N40.9billion spent on 1,152 State legislators annually, only N5.09billion is spent on their salaries, while a whopping sum of N35.8billion goes to their allowances; out of N550billion spent on 11, 278 elected LGA officials annually, only N49.5billion is spent on their salaries and staggering N500.5billion is spent on their allowances; and out of N90billion spent on 469 federal legislators annually, only N10billion is spent on their salaries. These categories of allowances and their cash values have since been catapulted or reviewed upwards.

Short Statistics On Squander-mania In Nigeria's Public Sector

According to **Intersociety (2017)**, Nigeria, including its three tiers of government (Federal, States and LGAs) had in the past 15 years: 2003 to 2017; budgeted and squandered \$680billion (N238trillion) with little or nothing to show for it in terms of good governance and public good. Intersociety's investigation further disclosed that \$624billion was budgeted and squandered between 2003 and 2016, while over \$56billion including Federal Government's budget of about \$25billion for 2017 was budgeted and squandered by all tiers of Government in 2017.

Substantial part of these national, sub-national and residual budgets since 2003 was financed from local and international borrowings or loans. For more details, see Intersociety's letter to the Attorney General of the Federation, dated 5th February 2016 and titled: *How Nigeria Spent \$624 billion or N124.8 trillion in 14years (2003-2016) and Borrowed \$50 billion in Ten Years (2007-2016)*. The update is calculated using N305 for \$US. The research letter followed the AGF's false public disclosure at a public function in Abuja in 2016 that "EFCC had recovered over \$2trillion from looters since its creation in 2004".

By the end of 2018 Fiscal Year, the Buhari Administration must have borrowed over \$33 billion locally and internationally since June 2015; having borrowed over \$25 billion as at 2017 and must borrow at least \$8 billion loans to fund its heavily deficit federal budget of 2018; amounting to over N8 trillion or \$27 billion. At the end, over 70% of the budget will be squandered on over bloated recurrent expenditures particularly allowances and overheads as well as questionable debt servicing and their conditions.

Linking Governance Failure To Squander-mania & Bad Leadership In Nigeria

Totality of the above; in addition to maddening profligacy and rabid corruption in government quarters is responsible for chronic mass poverty and under-development in Nigeria including the Southeast Zone. Nigeria as a country is not destined to fail or be impoverished, but it is badly afflicted by bad leadership; leading to near total, if not total collapse of good governance and quality and enviable leadership. Lack of charismatic and visionary leaders has also plunged the country into chronic and intractable ethno-religious divisions especially under the present Administration of Muhammadu Buhari.

Apart from over 90% of all important federal security, policing and political appointments occupied by members of Northern Muslims, contrary to Section 14 (3) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution; ethno-religious animosity is promoted or encouraged by the State; to the extent that killing of Nigerian Christians by the Muslim Fulani extremists is encouraged, condoned and protected by the Administration especially through its policy of *Cattle Colony or Cattleocracy*.

The two insurgencies going on in Nigeria are originally targeted at Christians, their properties and holy places of worship with over 14,000 churches and 1500 Christian schools already razed in Northern Nigeria and tens of thousands of Christian lives lost in the past nine years (2009-2017).

The country is so polarized, unstable and unsecure that direly needed huge direct foreign investments (FDIs) and effective participation by indigenous private sector and their output employment opportunities are nowhere to be found. The duo is the largest employer of labor in the world over. Yet few local investors that dare to invest and operate in Nigeria are threatened and persecuted by the State; except those who cover the dirty deals of some leading government appointees or carry their baggage.

The economy particularly the power sector is still in shambles; with only less than 4000 megawatts of electricity generated in the country of over 175million as against that of Iran which has 60,000 megawatts generated for its 80million people. Youth unemployment in Nigeria has reached an all time high of over 50% compared to Iran's 26%.

Just recently, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) startlingly disclosed that 4.7million Nigerians lost their jobs between January and September 2017 and 7.9million lost theirs in the past 21months of 2016-2017. Insecurity has not only risen to an apogee, but further worsened by the State which now turns the State armory against unarmed and defenseless citizens; killing and maiming them with reckless abandon and unabatedly.

Governance & Leadership Failure In Southeast Nigeria

Having effectively highlighted the conventional, international and constitutional parameters of good governance and charismatic leadership above, in addition to statistical breakdown of untamed squander-mania and monumental governance failure in Nigeria's public sector including Southeast Zone, we are particularly deeply saddened over the near total, if not total collapse of good governance and visionary leadership in the Southeast Zone.

This explains why we chose to organize this media briefing and interaction with Gentlemen and Ladies of the Media. The briefing and interaction are in furtherance of the constitutional duties of the media and rights CSOs as contained in Sections 22 (role of the mass media in the promotion of good governance), 24 (duty of the citizenry) and 39 (freedom of expression) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended).

It is therefore no longer news and new that good governance and charismatic leadership have eluded the Southeast Zone. The Zone is now shackled by *transactional governance and chronic bad leadership*. As a matter of fact, corridors of power in the Southeast are now majorly under the grip of *The Anarchists*. Art of governance has become transaction of businesses in the corridors of power and shameless display of political rascality and immorality.

Many, if not most of the legislators in the Geopolitical Zone are no longer legislating and checkmating the executives for good governance and public good, but transacting by cornering public funds into moveable and immoveable investments. Use of public funds for public good is now strange and has become a thing of the past in the Zone. Many, if not most State and Federal House legislators in the Southeast Zone now operate or own private revenue windows and taskforces.

It is so sad, shocking and disappointing that some university professors and their likes in social settings have now become shoe shiners, dusters of files, carriers of bags, personal assistants and private secretaries to *these anarchists and renegades* masquerading as *executive and legislative public office holders in Nigeria particularly in the Southeast Geopolitical Zone*.

We therefore have strongly resolved to revisit and review critically; social, economic, political and security and safety developments in Southeast Zone in the past years including 2017. The events being revisited and reviewed are public interest oriented. The roles played by their key players are evaluated and rated as *the best and the worst in the Southeast (1980s – 2017)*; involving the serving and former executive or public governance, social services and security administrators in the Zone in the past years including 2017.

Identification And Celebration Of Few Best Hands In The Southeast

Those with outstanding performances in ensuring provision and delivery of *human security* (i.e. personal security, food security, health security, environmental security, economic security, community security and political security) as well as public decency and accountability in governance to the People of Southeast in part or in whole; are rated and celebrated as *the best personalities of the Southeast Zone (1980s -2017)*. The public officers so named or recognized are the serving or retired or living or dead (posthumous) public office holders from the Zone; who are serving or had served in executive public offices.

Their recognition and celebration have become compelling following the sorry state of governance and its peripherals in the Zone. In progressive and prospering social climes, achievers and charismatic leaders are celebrated and worshipped as religion and legends; but in Nigeria of today especially under Buhari's Presidency, such leaders are not only rarely found, but also mocked and hated when found especially by members of the political class or political elites. It is so bad that decency and outstanding achievement no longer have a place in Nigeria's political space. Failures are beatified and canonized while achievements and their achievers are demonized and marked for destruction.

It is also no longer hidden that membership of political class in the Zone is now dominated and held by jugulars by *the black sheep* of the society; thereby making good governance and charismatic leadership attainment an act of impossibility. It is so bad that any conscientious political player that operates in the opposite direction while in office (i.e. provides good governance and quality leadership) instantly draws the untamed anger of the immoral members of the political class and marked for total destruction. He or she is further seen and treated as a *leper or a deviant*.

A clear case in point is the attacks and destructive conspiracies against former Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State by members of the political class; just because he insisted on using public funds for public good during his days as the democratically elected Governor of Anambra State (2006-2014). His remarkable transformation of the State has, till date, not gone down well with the political elites who attacked him for "making them hungry" during his tenure; instead of allowing them access to public funds to loot and plunder at the teething expense of the People of the State in particular and the Southeast in general.

Obi's achievements in office are second to none since the days of late Dede Sam Mbakwe in old Imo State (present Imo and Abia State and a part of Ebonyi State) and Chief Jim Nwobodo in old Anambra State (present Enugu and Anambra States and larger part of Ebonyi State).

At the level of Intersociety and SBCHROs, therefore, we must at all times insist on celebrating and immortalizing the achievers of our time especially in the Southeast Zone. To this effect, the trio of late Chief Sam Onunaka Mbakwe (from Avutu-Obowo, Imo State), Chief Jim Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo (Nkanu, Enugu State) and Chief Peter Gregory Onwubuashi Obi (Agulu, Anambra State) must at all times make the hall of fame as the great achievers of our time during their days as democratically elected Governors of old Imo and Anambra and present Anambra States.

If it is to be in other social climes, these great leaders and achievers (noted are minuses in Chief Jim Nwobodo's present reputation and integrity) will eternally be celebrated and immortalized. University faculties, research centers, care or charity foundations and public monuments will be named after them. Their achievements in office would also have been theorized and developed into courses of study in the tertiary institutions.

Those of them still living would have been made *visiting or guest lecturers and professors* in some reputable universities particularly those in their localities. They would also have been invited to chair or sit in the boards of regional and int'l multibillion dollar companies and highly respected and influential foundations and bodies.

Borrowing From Mo Ibrahim Prize For Achievement In African Leadership

This position of ours, therefore, is partly borrowed from the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, created in 2007 by Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) which awards a \$5 million initial payment, and a \$200,000 annual payment for life to African heads of state who deliver security, health, education and economic development to their constituents and democratically transfer power to their successors; especially before or after three years of leaving office. Mr. Mo Ibrahim is a Sudanese-British billionaire and former owner of the Celtel Communications; who sold it in 2005 to set up Mo Ibrahim Foundation and Prize for Achievement in African Leadership.

Chaired by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim-a former Secretary General of OAU (now AU), the Award had produced only six Winners or Laureates since then; namely: President Joaquim Alberto Chisano of Mozambique (2007), President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela of South Africa (honorary-2007), President Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana (2008), President Pedro De Verona Rodrigues Pires of Cape Verde (2011), President Hifikepunge Pohamba of Namibia (2014) and the immediate past first female President of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (2017). In 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016, the MIF Prize Committee chaired by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania, after in-depth review, uncompromisingly, did not find a winner.

As leaders of rights CSOs and unrivalled conscience of our modern society, we must insist on good governance and remarkable leadership in the Southeast Zone. We must at all times identify, recognize, celebrate and immortalize those with accomplished records in leadership especially the holders of executive offices. When men and women of evil-will strive to demonize and destroy the achievers of our time, we must rise with one voice and offer them encouragement, protection, celebration and immortalization.

Remembering Detained & Persecuted Pro Biafra Activists

Noted too, is the need to recognize, celebrate and immortalize the *slain* and *persecuted citizens of the Southeast Zone in 2017*. The *persecuted* include Citizens Benjamin Mmadubugwu (detained since July 2015 over allegation of unlawful possession of un-prohibited firearms or Pump Action or gaming guns as well as conspiracy to commit treasonable felony) and Dave Nwawuisi (detained since October 2015 over allegation of illegal importation of goods and conspiracy to commit treasonable felony).

Citizen Chidiebere Onwudiwe was also arrested and detained since June 2016 over allegation of illegal importation of goods and conspiracy to commit treasonable felony and Bright Chimezie (detained since September 2016 till date by SSS over allegation of conspiracy to commit treasonable felony).

Over 82 others including minors and married women are held at Port Harcourt Maximum Prisons (15 detainees), Ahoada Prisons (20 detainees) and Degema Prisons (10 detainees) all in Rivers State. Others are one detainee with a severe eye injury at Amawbia Prisons in Anambra State; 33 detainees including minors and one Ms Ada Nude (a female detainee) at Aba Prisons in Aba State as well as 4 detainees at Enugu Prisons. We also have it on good authority that scores have disappeared or are held in secret detention facilities particularly manned by secret and plain police formations in Nigeria; with their identities shrouded in secrecy till date.

These persecuted detainees are detained without formal trial or dumped at pre-trial stages by the Buhari Administration since 2015, 2016 and 2017 over offenses that are not more five years prison term on court conviction. The Buhari Administration in a panicky move to truncate and pervert local and int'l justice and shield the perpetrators turned around and retroactively tagged them "terrorists" in September 2017. The detainees are unarmed and defenseless citizens violently arrested for their involvement in nonviolent pro Biafra agitations in Southeast and South-south Nigeria between 2015 and 2017.

Remembering Slain Pro Igbo-Biafra Activists

Remembered are slain unarmed and defenseless citizens of Southeast Zone in their productive age; with their numbers estimated at not less than 100. This is in addition to over 270 others earlier shot and killed between 30th August 2015 and 20th January 2017. The estimated 100 slain Igbo citizens were shot at close range and killed vicariously by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai and directly by men and officers of the Nigerian Army during the bloody or violent military invasion of Abia State, between 12th and 14th September 2017.

Most, if not all the killings took place in Aba, Isi-ala Ngwa and Afara-Ukwu, near Umuahia, all in Abia State. The leadership of IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) said: “the Nigerian Army killed 305 of our members in Abia State in two days on 12th and 14th September 2017”. Scores of others were also shot and maimed. The Nigerian security forces led by the Army had earlier between 30th August 2015 and 20th January 2017 shot at close range and killed not less than 270 unarmed and defenseless citizens of Southeast Zone and terminally wounded over 370 others.

Most of those slain citizens of the Southeast also constitute bulk of the victims of *disappearances* across the country; perpetrated by the Nigerian Army, SSS and SARS operatives. On 1st June 2016, not less than 120 of them were criminally buried inside one of the two military cemeteries located inside Onitsha Military Cantonment under civilian and authority supervision of a serving Commissioner in the present Government of Anambra State.

They were shot and killed on 29th and 30th May 2016 at Nkpor and Onitsha in Anambra State. Their remains were lumped in about 15 shallow graves and possibly decimated with raw acid substances to erase evidential traces. Not less than 30 others were shot and killed at Asaba spillover military shootings and killings on the same 30th May 2016; with many later buried around Asaba Air Port Road on 26th June 2016 after they were removed from the Asaba Federal Medical Center morgue.

Remembering Wounded Victims Of State Violence & Ors

Remembered, too, are the wounded victims of State violence, the physically challenged and the destitute in the Southeast Zone. It must be remembered that the very reason why democracy or limited government was founded was to cater at all times for the welfare of the named three citizen categories and the rest of the downtrodden, but in Nigeria especially in the Southeast Zone, they are totally neglected and abandoned by the Government and its deviant operators especially the Governors.

There are over 400 wounded victims of State violence in Southeast Nigeria. Scores of them have died from their gunshot wounds while several others are crippled or disabled for life. Most of them were shot and terminally wounded by the Nigerian security forces especially the Nigerian Army between 30th August 2015 and 14th September 2017 in different parts of Southeast; and Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers States all in South-south Nigeria. Nigerian Government not only refused to treat them but totally abandoned them without adequate compensations till date.

There are tens of thousands of non-mercantilist Street destitute and physically challenged citizens with hundreds of thousands of their dependants especially children roaming about major streets in the Southeast Zone. According to Intersociety, most of these abandoned children constitute the bulk of *children of the street (under-age beggars and hawkers) and children in the street* (permanently live or wallow in the streets outside or without their families).

Most of these children or the Street under-age population in the Southeast have dropped out of school or not gone to school at all; except roaming about the streets of the Southeast. Striking among these destitute are the *destitute of Uga Junction pedestrian Bridge* at Bridgehead end of the Asaba-Onitsha Expressway in Onitsha. The social welfare of the physically challenged persons and the destitute in the Southeast is nothing to write home about.

Failed Public Utilities Providers In Southeast

Reviewed in the past years including 2017 are criminal and failed roles of some persons and corporate bodies entrusted with the responsibilities of provision, delivery and maintenance of social services including public utilities in the Southeast Zone. One of such bodies is the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC); mandated by the Federal Government via an operating license to provide quality and steady electricity to the people and properties in the Southeast Zone. The EEDC is one of the makers of our hall of shame and has emerged the worst social services or public utilities provider in the Southeast Zone in the periods under review including 2017.

Regime And Regime-Aided Atrocities Beyond Borders Of The Southeast

Beyond the Southeast Zone, we are not unaware of the Federal Government condoned mass killings of thousands of defenseless citizens with full Jihadist coloration and intents. The Buhari Administration is also directly responsible for the death of 1130 Shiite Muslims between December 2015 and November 2017 and shot and wounded over 400 others (Intersociety 2017).

The terrorist Fulani Herdsmen, on their part, who have President Muhammadu Buhari as their lifetime national grand patron (under Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria-MACBAN); have systematically massacred most of not less than 350 defenseless Christians and Christian-Farmers in the months of December 2017 and January 2018 in the States of Benue, Nasarawa, Adamawa and Taraba States and Christian dominated Southern Kaduna in Kaduna State. Several churches and other Christian holy places of worship were also burnt to ashes or razed to rubbles. In January 2018 alone, over 250 mostly Christians were slaughtered by terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram.

For more details, see the reports of local branches of the Christian Association of Nigeria-CAN and indigenous associations over the killing of Christians in the three States including Southern Kaduna, which also lost over 800 Christians in the Christmas period of 2016. The systematic killing of Christians is also extended to Plateau and Nasarawa States and other parts of the North with large Christian populations. This is nothing short of repetition of generational massacre and cleansing of once dominant Christian populations in Turkey, Lebanon and Asyut in Egypt centuries of years ago by Islamic Jihadists backed by the State.

For more details on killing of not less than 350 Christians in the months of December 2017 and January 2018; and killing of over 250 mostly Christians in the month of January 2018 alone all in Northern Nigeria by the duo of terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram, see the text of a press conference addressed by the leadership of CAN in Adamawa State, led by Rev Dr. Stephen Dami Mamza, delivered on Wednesday, 10th January 2018; on *the spate of violence & terror killings unleashed upon Christian/Farming Communities in Adamawa State*.

Also see the text of a world press conference addressed by the national leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria, through its Secretary General, Rev Musa Asake, PhD, on Tuesday, 16th January 2018 at the National Christian Centre, Abuja Nigeria on: *Federal Government's conspiracy in the massacre of Christians in Nigeria*; as well as that addressed on same 16th January 2018 by the leadership of CAN in Taraba State on massacre of Christians in the State by terror Fulani Herdsmen.

The texts showed that at least 70 Christians lost their lives to terror Fulani Jihadists between 25th December 2017 and 10th January 2018 in Adamawa State alone with over 10 churches burnt to ashes. This excludes “not less than 150 Christian lives lost before the last Xmas festivities in the State”, according to the State leadership of CAN.

In Benue State, not less than 73 dead bodies of Christians killed by terror Fulanis on 1st and 2nd January 2018 were recently interred. Several churches were also burnt or razed to rubbles. In Taraba State, according to the State leadership of CAN and Governor Darius Ishaku, not less than 63 Christian lives were lost and buried in January 2018.

As reported by Punch Newspaper of 2nd February 2018, the Governor of Taraba State had during an official visit by the national leadership of his party (PDP) disclosed that “63 people (Christians) killed by Fulani Herdsmen were buried in the State the same day the Benue State Government buried 73 people (Christians) killed by the same Fulani Herdsmen”.

The Benue killings took place on 1st and 2nd January 2018. The Governor further disclosed that police authorities hardly respond to distress calls by the Government of Taraba State; saying police in his State had insisted that police intervention arising from such distress calls must be authorized by the Inspector General of Police.

Specifically, the killings by the duo of Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram in recent weeks clearly indicate that not less than 250 defenseless citizens mostly Christians died in the month of January 2018 alone. Boko Haram Islamist insurgents account for at least 40 deaths, while the terror Fulani Herdsmen account for the rest. Amnesty Int’l also notes that “at least 168 people have died in Herdsmen violence since January 2018”. In 2017, Amnesty Int’l says “Boko Haram insurgents killed at least 411 people in Nigeria in 75 attacks”.

In Adamawa State, according to Amnesty Int’l, 86 Christian farmers including not less than 35 killed by Government jet bombing were killed on 4th December 2017 and later buried in individual graves (58 bodies) and mass graves (28 bodies).

The killing of the Numan Christians was done and coordinated simultaneously by the Nigerian jet fighters and the terror Fulani Herdsmen. While the Nigerian Air Force, according to Amnesty Int’l report was bombing the Christian villages and killing defenseless Christian population including women and children using rockets and bombs; the Fulani Herdsmen simultaneously launched bloody attacks on the same population, shooting and slaughtering women, children, men and the elderly in their dozens.

The lists of 86 dead victims from the simultaneous Air Force and terror Fulani Herdsmen attacks obtained by Amnesty Int’l showed that 51 dead victims had gun shots and machete wounds while 35 others bore wounds of air strike attacks. Amnesty Int’l says 3000 homes were razed in air attacks launched on five Numan villages of Lawaru, Dong, Kodomti, Shafaron and Nzuruwei. In all, Amnesty Int’l says eight villages were heavily damaged or completely destroyed by air strike fire. Credit: Intersociety 2018.

In Nasarawa State, according to the combined reports of *the Open Doors Int'l, the Religion of Peace and the Jihad Watch*, dated 18th February 2018; 15 Christian villages and nine churches were razed or burnt to ashes with dozens of Christians killed by terror Fulani Herdsmen in sustained violence and attacks against Christian communities and their sacred places of worship that started since 15th January 2018.

Estimated 16,000 defenseless citizens, according to Intersociety's findings (2018), have been killed by the trio of Nigerian security forces especially the Army; the terror Fulani Herdsmen and the Boko Haram insurgents since the assumption of office by Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari as the sixth civilian President of Nigeria on 29th May 2015; a period of 32 months or 960 days: on monthly average death of 500 citizens. This is the highest criminal death rate in the shortest period of time (June 2015-January 2018 or in 32 months) in the history of non-civil war Nigeria since 1960.

Intersociety gave the breakdown of the killings as (1) *State Actor Generated Killings 10, 000 Involving: direct State murders: 2,050 citizens; comprising unarmed and defenseless Igbo-Biafra activists and supporters 400 citizens; unarmed and defenseless Shiite Muslims 1,130; civilian detainees at Giwa Army Barracks in Maiduguri including 29 Children with ages between newborn and 5yrs 240 civilians* (see Amnesty Int'l Special Report on Nigeria for 2016/2017).

There was also killing of 236 defenseless Christian IDPs at a Rann Christian IDP in Kala-Balge LGA in Borno State via the Nigerian war jets bombing in the broad day light of 17th Jan 2017; and over 50 Christians killed in another premeditated bombing of Christian villages of Lawaru, Dong and Kodomti in Numan, Adamawa State by an Alpha Jet and an EC 135 attack Helicopter belonging to the Nigerian Air Force. The bombing and killings took place on 4th December 2017. See the text of the CAN's international press conference, dated 16th January 2018 and the latest report by Amnesty Int'l, Nigeria-30th January 2018.

2. *Police custodial and captivity deaths 7,950 (on national monthly average deaths of 250 detained or captivity citizens and seven per State since June 2015). The deaths arose from police racial profiling and unprofessional crime detection and criminal investigation management. See Intersociety's expert report on police custodial killings in Nigeria: the Untold Story of Ezu River Police SARS Killings (July 20, 2017).*

3. *Non State Actor/Government backed ethno-religious killings 5,800 (since June 2015) perpetrated by the duo of terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents; comprising 3, 750 all Christians killed by the terror Fulani Herdsmen and 2, 050 mostly Christians killed by Boko Haram insurgents; with several churches and properties burnt or destroyed.*

4. *Other 200 criminal deaths-represent the dark figures of crime or criminal deaths not captured or recorded by State actor or non State actor crime statistics.*

In all, see Intersociety's 11-page letter to President Muhammadu Buhari, dated 6th February 2018 and titled: ***Christians At Crossroads In Nigeria: How Hundreds Of Churches & Estimated 16,000 Mostly Christian Lives Including 5,800 Victims Of Fulani Herdsmen And Boko Haram Were Lost Since June 2015.***

Till date and since June 2015, not a single member of the Armed Forces particularly the Army and Air Force, or the Police; or an official of MACBAN or culpable Fulani Jihadist has been apprehended by the Federal Government of Nigeria and put on trial over the killings highlighted above. Instead, the Administration keeps setting up one exonerative and lame duck panel or the other especially as it concerns the military atrocities against Shiites and pro Biafra activists. To fully shield itself and its atrocious security officials, the Buhari Administration turned around and declared Shiite Muslims and pro Biafra agitators as “threat to national security” and “terrorists” respectively.

Remembering Slain Shiite Muslims & Sheik Ibrahim Zaky el-Zaky & Ors

Remembered also is the continued solitary confinement in the custody of SSS of the leader of the Shiite Muslims in Nigeria, Sheik Zaky Ibrahim El-Zaky and his wife-Malama Zeenatu by the Buhari Administration. The unarmed and defenseless husband and wife had been held by SSS without trial since 14th December 2015; a period of over 800 days; after being shot severally at close range and inflicted with terminal injuries by Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai (vicariously) and the Nigerian Army during violent crackdown on Shiites on 12th and 14th December 2015 in Zaria, Kaduna State.

Over 1000 unarmed and defenseless Shiite faithful were shot and killed on 12th and 14th December 2015 by the Nigerian Army led by Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai. The IMN leader also lost three of his sons (Hamad, Aliyu and Humaid) as well as his 70yr old elder sister (Fatima) to Buratai’s men on the spot same day. The violent crackdown on Shiites has continued into this 2018 with no end in sight.

Recognizing And Celebrating Best Personalities And Achievers Of Our Time In The Southeast

- *Late Chief Sam Mbakwe (Posthumous Greater Personality of the Southeast Zone)
For his outstanding governance achievements and charismatic leadership as the democratically elected Governor of old Imo State-1979-1983.
His achievements were striking in: education, health, agriculture and poultry, water, environment, tourism, industry and creation of employment opportunities through then direct industrialization policy of the government; public decency, fiscal responsibility, massive infrastructural developments and provision and delivery of social services.*
- *Chief Jim Nwobodo (Great Personality of the Southeast Zone)
For his outstanding governance achievements and charismatic leadership strictly during his days as the democratically elected Governor of old Anambra State-1979-1983.
His achievements were striking in: education, health, agriculture, water, environment, tourism, industry and creation of employment opportunities through then direct industrialization policy of the government; massive infrastructural developments and provision and delivery of social services*
- *Chief Peter Gregory Obi (Greatest Personality of the Southeast Zone & Executive Leadership Man of the Year since the Forth Republic or 1999).For his multi-sectoral approaches to governance and outstanding achievements in office during his days as the democratically elected Governor of Anambra State- 2006-2014.*

His achievements were strikingly anchored on Human Security by way of provision of quality education and health; agriculture, tourism, industry and creation of employment opportunities through PPP and private sector involvement or indirect industrialization policy of the government; FDI inflows and provision of industrial incentives; massive infrastructural development including massive road construction and bridges; social development and provision and delivery of social services.

Included in his achievement list are civil service productivity including liquidation of LGA and State civil service arrears of over N35 billion accumulated since 1992, mobilization of huge non-loan resources for multi-sectoral development of his State of Anambra, fiscal responsibility including minimization of governance costs, security votes, cabinet size and use of public funds for public good; and zero borrowing and low debts overhang of less than N12 billion; savings in government coffers amounting to billions of naira (first of its kind in any public governance in Nigeria).

The rest are future savings through procurement of shares and investments worth billions of naira. The era of former Governor Peter Obi as chairman of the Southeast Governors' Forum served as a strong driving force for the unity and security of the Zone.

Worst Public Office Holders In Southeast Nigeria:

Most Unpopular & Unfriendly Federal Government Among The Southeast People

- *Government of President Muhammadu Buhari*

Worst Past Governors in the Southeast

- *Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju-Anambra State (1999-2003)*
- *Chief Orji Uzor Kalu-Abia State(1999-2007)*
- *Chief Ikedi Ohakim-Imo State(2007-2011)*
- *Chief Theodore Orji-Abia State(2007-2015)*

Worst Serving Governor in the Southeast Zone

- *Governor Rochas Okorocha of Imo State*

Worst Public Utilities Providers of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *The Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC). See Intersociety & SBCHROs' Memo to the Minister of Power & ors, dated 18th December 2017 (www.intersociety-ng.org)*

Most Atrocious Security Organization in the Southeast Zone

- *Nigerian Army and its Enugu 82 Division (shot and killed in two years-2015-2017 over 370 unarmed and defenseless citizens of the Southeast and maimed over 400 others)*

Most Regime Atrocity Perpetrator in the Southeast Zone

- *Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai (vicariously masterminded in two years 2015-2017, as COAS, the massacre of estimated 370 defenseless citizens of the Southeast Zone and maiming of over 400 others)*

Most Atrocious Police Special Squad of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *The Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) formations in Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States as well as the Zone 9 SARS formation in Umuahia; killed average of estimated 35 detained citizens monthly and 420 annually in the Zone. The killings are perpetrated through criminal processes of **extra jus** (beyond the law), **extra legal** (beyond what the written criminal law provides) and **extra judicial** (beyond court or judicial pronouncement or verdict); arising from racial profiling and unprofessional crime detection and criminal investigation management. For more details, see Intersociety's expert report: *The Untold Story of Ezu River Police SARS Killings (July 2017)*.*

Most Lopsidedly Composed Security Organization in the Southeast Zone

- *The Nigerian Army & Navy (most, if not all their key heads in the Zone are members of Hausa-Fulani Muslims). For more details, see Intersociety's statement of 19th October 2017; titled: **The Return Of "Glover Hausas" In The Nigerian Army: Exposing 95% Dominance Of Key Army Formations In Igbo Land By Northern Muslim Officers***

Most Corrupt & Incompetent Policing Organization of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

The Nigeria Police Force and its key formations in the Southeast under IGP Ibrahim Idris (generated, illicitly, over N14 billion or \$45million between September 2017 and January 2018 from Southeast roadblocks using over 2900 police roadblocks raised in early September 2017). See Intersociety's statement of 5th September 2017 on: *Unchecked Police And Army Extortion In Southeast Nigeria: How IGP And His Cohorts Will Pocket (already pocketed) N14.1Billion In Five Months (Sep 2017-Jan 2018) From 2900 Roadblocks Using False Biafra Insecurity, etc.*

Destitute of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *The Destitute of Uga Junction Pedestrian Bridge in Onitsha (represents the plight of the destitute population roaming the streets of the Southeast Zone without government care and welfare). Governors of the Zone are called upon to urgently address the plight of the destitute population especially their children who are out of school. One of the core ways to address this is by enacting the *Destitute & Disability Rights & Welfare Laws by the Executive and Legislative Arms in the Southeast*.*

The Slain & the Disappeared of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *Estimated 100 defenseless citizens of the Zone killed or made to disappear by the Nigerian Army in September 2017; in addition to over 270 others earlier shot and killed; with most of their bodies remained missing till date. Their killers must be fished out and severely punished by the Federal Government or relevant international justice groups no matter how long it takes.*

The Maimed or Wounded of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *Over 400 victims of military shootings in the Zone. They must be adequately compensated with their shooters fished out and punished severely.*

Persecuted Citizens of the Year 2017 in the Southeast Zone

- *Include Citizens Chidiebere Onwudiwe, Dave Nwawuisi, Benjamin Mmadubugwu, Bright Chimezie and over 82 others including minors and married women presently languishing in various prisons across the country without formal trial; in connection with nonviolent pro Biafra agitations. Others are those in the category of “dark figures of crime” or arrested and detained citizens without public notice or records. All pro Igbo-Biafra detainees in Nigeria must be decriminalized, released and have their phantom charges dropped by the Buhari Administration.*

Calling On Government Of Buhari To Free Shiite Leader & Prosecute Perpetrators Of Shiite Genocide

We call for immediate and unconditional release of Mallam Zaky Ibrahim El-Zaky and his beloved wife-Malama Zeenatu as well as an end to persecution of Shiite Muslims in Nigeria. Those who masterminded the massacre of over 1,130 Shiite members in December 2015 and above including COAS, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai (vicarious culpability) must be arrested and punished locally or internationally no matter how long it takes.

Calling On Government Of Buhari To End Government And Herdsmen Killings & Other Crimes Against Humanity

The present Federal Government under Retired Major Gen Muhammadu Buhari must put an end to slaughtering of thousands of defenseless citizens especially Christians on annual basis by terror Fulani Herdsmen in Northern Nigeria and proscribe the Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria as well as fish out their leaders and culpable elements and charge them for manslaughter and culpable homicide, respectively, among other felonies committed against the State of Nigeria and its population.

The Federal Government’s silence, inaction and conspiracy over these ethno-religious carnages are not only an invitation to retaliatory widespread violence and ruination of the country in part or in whole but also a gross breach of Section 10 of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution which forbids the Federal Government or any State Government from adopting any religion including Islam as a State Religion.

The first major step towards addressing the present national and sub-national security challenges in Nigeria is total re-organization of the commanding positions and other top echelons of security forces, the police and other para-military organizations in Nigeria. The present Caliphate structure of Nigerian security and policing is totally rejected. They must be restructured in accordance with Section 14 (3) of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution or federal character or geopolitical spread.

The stark reality today is that continuation of the centrality; oneness, unity and national cohesion of Nigeria; steadily and systematically undermined by the present central Government has become an act of impossibility.

The ethno-religious divisions in the country have continuously thickened with ethno-religious chauvinists taking over and consolidating their grip on power without letting go. In other words, the *Nigeria Project* has collapsed; requiring urgent re-negotiation by all ethnic nationalities through their representatives before the country goes on full brink. The Buhari Administration must hearken to this *wind of change* and urgently steer the ship of the re-negotiation of *the Nigeria Project*.

Calling On Southeast Governors To Wake Up From Their Slumbers

The Governors of the Southeast Zone are collectively and individually called upon to wake up from their slumbers. They must be proactive and efficient in strengthening the internal and external security of the Zone especially with regard to well oiled and coordinated widespread violent attacks against Christian population and their churches by the terror Fulani Herdsmen such as the Nimgbo tragedies of 14th February and 25th April 2016 in Uzo-Uwani area of Enugu State during which terror Fulani Herdsmen killed at least 50 rural Christian dwellers and injured 79 others.

The Southeast Governors must desist henceforth from lending their hands and supports by way of supporting, adopting, aiding, abetting or undermining the present and future collective security of the people of the Southeast Zone and their properties; through the raging, disastrous, unilateral and militarist national policy of “Cattle Colony”; using any guise or instrumentality particularly the Federal Executive Council and the National Council of State.

The Governors must also proactively and courageously engage the Federal Government, the President and heads of major security and policing agencies in the country by insisting on making proactive inputs into the overall security structure and composition in the country as well as the posting of commanders of their formations in the Southeast Zone especially in the Army, Navy, Air Force, SSS, Customs and the Police. The current policy of flooding most, if not the entire military and policing formations in Igbo Land with senior and commanding officers of Hausa-Fulani Muslims must be rejected and reversed.

More concerted efforts are also required from the Southeast Governors at ensuring that the Zone which is the birthplace of the Igbo Nation gets its fair and due share of the Federation resources, appointments, attentions and infrastructural developments. The Governors must ensure that the Southeast is fully factored into the new national railway policy and comprehensive reconstruction of all federal roads in the Zone especially the Onitsha-Enugu and the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressways and other important ones.

The Zone also needs a standard international seaport and construction of a standard bridge linking Ogwu-Ikpere in Ogbaru, Anambra State and Ndoni in Rivers State; which if constructed, will take less than two hours to convey goods and services from Port Harcourt wharfs into the Southeast Zone or any part thereof. The Akanu Ibiam Int’l Airport in Enugu, which is presently a makeshift int’l airport, must totally be upgraded to truly reflect its international status and serve the People of the Southeast Zone and others from major parts of the world particularly Africa, Europe, Americas, Asia and Middle-East.

Condemning Christian Violence Against Traditional Religions In Southeast Nigeria

We stand morally and legally condemned if we turned a blind eye or refused to say anything about the indiscriminate attacks and widespread violence directed at members and institutions of the Traditional Religions and their sacred places of worship by radical elements within the trios of Catholic Church, Anglican Church and Pentecostal churches in Southeast Nigeria.

There have been systematic, well coordinated and unprovoked Christian violence against Traditional Religionists and their sacred places of worship in recent times in Nigeria particularly in the Southeast. These attacks and violence are executed especially during “Christmas and Easter Crusades” and similar activities. They are executed or carried out particularly at late night during the said “crusades”.

During the attacks, sacred places of worship belonging to the Traditional Worshippers and their symbols of worship including sacred altars, artifacts and diviners’ objects are targeted for burning, destruction or confiscation; under stigmatization and false labeling of all traditional religions, their worshippers and sacred places of worship as “Satanism and evil doers”. A clear case in point was the attack and violence directed at the said worshippers and their sacred institutions in Igboukwu, Ekwulobia and other communities in Anambra State during the 2017 Christmas season.

At Igboukwu Community, Aguata, Anambra State, despite an early warning letter written to the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, Rev Fr. Christopher Azolibe by the Otu Odinani Igbo Organization led by Priest Okwudili Ezeife and Chukwudinka Ezeatueyi; alerting him of planned attacks and violence by members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in Igboukwu led by Elder Polycarp Okonkwo and Innocent Okeke using their midnight crusade of 29th December 2017; the said Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement reportedly in conjunction with Rev Fr Chibuzor Emmanuel Obimma (Father Ebube Muonso) reportedly went gone ahead, attacked and destroyed sixteen (16) sacred temples of worship of the Igboukwu Traditional Religionists within the Igboukwu Community.

The attacks which took place between 1am and 4.30am; affected properties, artifacts, walls and roofing belonging to the sixteen traditional sacred places of worship. During the attacks, the National Museum at Igboukwu was also targeted for destruction but for eleventh hour pressures and calls from concerned quarters; forcing the attackers to retreat from torching the National Museum.

The attacking church youths reportedly backed down after much pressure but threatened not to spare the “evil Museum” during their next crusade in 2018. Youths loyal to the Igboukwu Traditional Religionists also regrouped and made their way to burn down some churches but were prevailed upon by some notable leaders of the Igboukwu traditional institutions. The angry youths retreated but vowed not to spare any church if such attacks happened anywhere in Igboukwu again.

Apart from right to freedom of religion and worship clearly provided in Section 38 of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution, Section 10 of the same Constitution also forbids the Federal Government or any State Government from adopting any religion as a State Religion in Nigeria. The Constitution also tasks Federal and State Governments and heads of security agencies to ensure that every citizen is allowed to worship and profess religion of his or her choice within the confines of the law and without threat or molestation from any quarter.

Right to Freedom of Religion and Worship was the first human right proclaimed in the Fourth Century AD by Emperor Constantine De Great (AD306-337) during the *Christian Roman Empire*. See the Edict of Milan of AD313 or decriminalization of Christian worship, which started in April 311 with the enactment of the Edith of Toleration.

Under Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and other body of laws, no religious body or person is allowed to launch an on attack or destruction of any form against another religion or its sacred place of worship or symbol or artifact. The law empowers Government or its security agency (not alternative religious body or person) to visit the wrath or long arm of the law against any violent religionist or a religious practitioner that engages in religious practices that are unknown to God, Man and Law including religious violence and Satanism.

The court death sentence handed down to Rev Chukwuemeka Ezeugo (a.k.a. Rev King); General Overseer of the *Christian Praying Assembly (CPA)* over his intra denominational satanic religious practices is a clear case in point.

Godly religious faith anywhere in the world including Nigeria and its Southeast part is not practiced or professed by violence but through persuasion, good manners, emulative lifestyle and conviction. Christians are therefore be reminded that Christianity in Nigeria particularly in Igbo Land did not start or come with violence. A clear case in point was the first encounter between Rev Father Duhaze of Portuguese Catholic Missionary and Eze Nri Obalike of Nri Kingdom in 1906. As a matter of fact too, traditional religions are the forefathers of Christianity in Igbo Land just as Judaism gave birth or founded Christianity in the Middle East where it originated; as clearly noted in the Holy Scripture.

We hereby call on the national and regional leaderships of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, Christian Association of Nigeria, Anglican Communion in Nigeria and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and leaders of other Christian bodies to call their followers and radical elements within their clergy to order and prevail on them to desist from taking laws into their hands by visiting unprovoked and unwarranted attacks and violence against members and institutions of alternative religions especially the Traditional Religions in Nigeria particularly in the Southeast or any of its part thereof; all in the name of "crusades" or *attack on Satan in his citadel*. There must be an end to religious radicalism and extreme religious practices in the Zone.

The Governors of the Southeast Geopolitical Zone are specifically called upon to rise up to the occasion particularly against this new round of Christian violence and protect the traditional institutions in Igbo Land including freedom of every citizen to practice and worship religion of their choice without fear, threat or molestation.

Signs are obvious that the victim religious bodies and their supporters may most likely resort to self defense and other self help mechanisms including burning of churches and other Christian sacred places of worship in retaliation if nothing was done to stop the attacks and violence against the traditional religionists and their sacred places of worship. The Southeast Governors must not allow this ugly situation to further degenerate in the entire Zone or any of its part thereof.

End

Intellectual Credit: Researched and compiled by Emeka Umeagbalasi (criminologist & graduate of security studies) for **Intersociety & SBCHROs**.

Coalition Partners & Their Reps:

- * **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Emeka Umeagbalasi, Umeh MaryRose N., PhD and Jacinta Ezinwanne)**
- * **Civil Liberties Organization, Southeast Zone (Aloysius Emeka Attah)**
- * **Centre for Human Rights & Peace Advocacy (Peter Onyegiri)**
- * **Human Rights Organization of Nigeria (rep Michael Ifeabunike)**
- * **Society Watch & Advocacy Project (Chike Umeosonwunne)**
- * **Anambra Human Rights Forum (Alex C. Olisa)**
- * **Southeast Good Governance Forum (Barr Obianuju Joy Igboeli)**
- * **Int'l Solidarity for Peace & Human Rights Initiative (Jerry Chidozie Chukwuokoro, PhD)**
- * **Igbo Ekunie Initiative (rep Charles Ogbu)**
- * **Civil Liberties Organization, Anambra State Branch (Vincent Ezekwueme)**
- * **Foundation for Environmental Rights Advocacy & Dev (Nelson Nnana Nwafor)**
- * **Society for Economic Rights & Social Justice (Orji Andy Ndukwe)**
- * **Initiative for Ideal Dev & Emancipatory Leadership in Nigeria (Nwokocha Anozie Innocent)**
- * **Igbo National Council (Chilos A.C. Godsent)**
- * **Forum for Promotion of National Ethos & Values (Okpala-EzeNri Emeka Onyeso)**
- * **Easy Life Initiative for Rural Youths (Emeku Uche)**
- * **Voice of the Voiceless Int'l (Barr Violet Umenwofor-Ezekwike)**