

## **Disarming The Innocent & Arming The Violent: Nigeria Police As A Failed Internal Security Agency Despite Squandering N1.2trillion Public Funds Since 2015**

**(Intersociety, Nigeria: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018)**-The recent directive issued by Nigeria's Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Kpotum Idris to 37 State and FCT Police Commands to immediately retrieve and recover arms (un-prohibited firearms or gaming/hunters guns) legitimately borne by various State, rural and urban communities' vigilantes in Nigeria particularly in the country's insurgency ravaged Northeast Zone and agro-Jihad-threatening Southeast, South-south, North-central and parts of Northwest (i.e. Southern Kaduna and other areas with dominant Christian populations) is totally condemned.

The IGP's directive is not only incoherent, illogical, unprofessional, biased and tantamount to issuance of license to untamed and untouchable violent groups like terror Fulani Herdsmen to intensify their killing of innocent and defenceless Nigerians; but also fall short of global and regional best practices in gun control, internal policing and securitization. The IGP's directive is further seen as a direct usurpation of the constitutional duties of the State Governors as chief security officers of their States and impeachment of the rights of various communities and their communal heads to *community security or community policing and self defense*. It amounts, too, to ***disarming the innocent and arming the violent***.

Despite estimated 350 defenceless Nigerians hacked to death in the months of December 2017 and January 2018 by the duo of terror Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents particularly in the Northeast and North-central, the Nigeria Police Force, constitutionally entrusted with the country's internal security operations and management have continued sitting by watching the killings and maiming to escalate or degenerate. The killing of defenceless Nigerians has gone berserk and continued with intensity and alarming casualty figures in the out-gone month of February and subsisting month of March 2018. In all these, the IGP Ibrahim Idris and Nigeria Police Force have remained grossly incompetent and incapable; engaging in shadow chasing and beating about the bush.

It saddens our heart that the appointment of persons into the office of the Inspector General of Police and other top hierarchies of the Force in Nigeria such as offices of DIG, AIG and CP had for long and in recent times particularly under the present central Government in Nigeria been afflicted with virus of favouritism, nepotism and sectional or ethno-religious sentiments; leading to the headship of the Force dominated by dullest brains in the policing circles.

Totality of the above, in addition to gross immorality, corruption and corrupt practices; has led to grievous failure in the internal security and policing of Nigeria. Despite being the most populated legally armed and supposedly most powerful security arm of the Federation of Nigeria under the country's present democratic setting; the Nigeria Police Force have failed woefully.

The Force, according to its official updates made public in December 2017, is presently populated by 300,892 officers (as defined by the Police Act, "a police officer is any serving or sworn police officer from the rank of police recruit to Inspector General of Police"). The Force also presently maintains 6,900 field operational formations. These formations do not include police special formations such as SARS or police anti cult offices scattered in the country's 774 Local Government Councils.

The 6,900 police formations in Nigeria include 12 Zonal and 37 State and FCT (Abuja) Commands, 128 Area Commands, 1,388 Divisional Commands, 1,579 Police Stations and 3,756 Police Posts. The Force says it presently has a total of 14,306 vehicles in its car fleet. The failures recorded by the Nigeria Police Force particularly since 2015 despite hundreds of billions of naira worth of tax payers and collective revenues being wasted on its personnel and management on annual basis; are not only saddening and alarming but also comparable only to police organizations of the failed States.

The Force forensic department and its lab (heart of police intelligence and ICT driven crime detection and investigation) is irremediably moribund; likewise its central crime registry (for gathering of crime data and statistics); general intelligence, crime detection and investigation. The Police crime statistics in the country are not only grossly inaccurate and unreliable but also cannot compete with official police crime statistics around the world. The Force is also thousands of miles away from confronting challenges of ICT including controlling and managing cyber crimes and cyber terrorism.

The ineffectual and unilateral directive of Mr. IGP under reference clearly shows that the Force is totally aloof in matters of influx, proliferation, possession and uses of firearms particularly those classified by the Firearms Act of 2004 of the Federation of Nigeria as “prohibited firearms”.

That is to say that the Force does not have any credible database or interrogated statistics or records on: *the number of licit and illicit small arms and light weapons being brought into Nigeria by legitimate State and illegitimate non State actors as well as types of such SALWs; destinations through which they are brought into the country; those responsible for their legitimate and illegitimate procurement; quantities of same bought or procured on daily, monthly and annual basis in Nigeria; those possessing them and their percentage per population as well as how or purposes for which they are used.*

If these *gun control statistics* were credibly at the disposal of the Nigeria Police Force, in the context of professional and superbly intelligence policing, the IGP should not have made such mockery of his office and the NPF by issuing the unpopular and unilateral directive. By research and law, the vigilantes bearing *un-prohibited firearms or gaming (hunters) guns* such as pump action, double and single barrel and Dane guns are not responsible for the State aided mass slaughters ravaging Nigeria. Those under the above category are dutifully and constitutionally supplementing the community policing duties of the Nigeria Police Force. The *gaming guns* borne by such vigilantes are inferior to modern art of violent crimes and internal armed conflicts.

That is not to say that communal and urban vigilantes bearing arms will not be roundly checkmated to tame them in the event of abuse, recklessness and overzealousness particularly in the areas of sources of such hunters' guns in their possession; but such steps must be comprehensive and well planned; and captured into national security policy.

The Nigeria Police Force must leave community and urban vigilantes bearing hunters' guns alone for now and go after violent and terror groups like Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram as well as others who are in possession of illicit prohibited firearms such as AK-47 assault rifles and their likes; machine guns, IEDs, rockets, mortars and anti personnel and anti tank landmines, etc. Channels through which they are illicitly procured as well as their sponsors including violent politicians, couriers and profiteers must also be tracked down, fished out and punished in accordance with the law of the land.

**Nigeria Wastes N300B Annually In Keeping Its Failed Police Force:** Investigations have clearly shown that to keep the woefully failed Nigeria Police Force running, Nigeria and Nigerians through their taxes and collective revenues squander N300B (approximately \$1B) annually to maintain their failed Police Force of 300, 892 officers. That is to say that N1.2trillion (\$4B) had been wasted by Nigeria and Nigerians in the past three budget seasons (2015-2017) and under the present budget season of 2018 without anything meaningful or tangible to show for it.

Available records show that the Nigeria Police Force received N321.3B as its 2015 budget allocation out of which N303B went to its recurrent expenditures while N17.5 went to its capital expenditures. In 2016, N283B was allocated to the Force excluding its capital expenditures. In 2017, out of N482.3B budgeted and allocated for the recurrent expenditures of the Federal Ministry of Interior, the Police got about N300B and in the present 2018 fiscal year, the Nigeria Police Force is expected to receive N322B mostly made up of recurrent expenditures.

Despite the huge sums wasted yearly to keep the Force running, the Force through its grossly immoral and corrupt personnel still corruptly and violently rake in estimated N107Billion annually from various roadblocks mounted on roads spread across the Southeast (about N32.4B), South-south (about N25B), Southwest (about N25B), North-central (about N15B), Northwest (N8B) and Northeast (about N5B).

The calculation above is done using Southeast as a study base in addition to other social factors put into consideration including *blue collar and white collar settings* and poverty level in the areas investigated. In Southeast Nigeria, for instance, there are estimated 3000 police roadblocks and extortion joints fuelled by high volume of blue collar setting or high concentration of commercial activities as well as *racial profiling or discrimination*; leading to each police roadblock illicitly smiling to the bank on daily basis with average of N30, 000; translating to N90M daily, N2.7B monthly and N32.4B annually.

The second juiciest areas for police roadblock extortion in Nigeria are South-south and Southwest yielding police extortionists estimated N25B each on annual basis. The two Zones are closely followed by North-central which yields the police extortionists about N15B yearly. The Northwest and Northeast Zones are estimated to be yielding the Nigeria Police Force and its extortionist squads about N8B and N5B yearly. The huge disparity in the sums being raked in annually between Southern and Northern Nigeria particularly Northwest and Northeast is attributed to high poverty level, *racial esprit de corps* and dominant white collar setting; bringing the grand total of sums robbed Nigerians from their roads annually by the officially sanctioned police roadblock extortion syndicates to about N107B.

In Southeast, most of the criminal proceeds of the estimated N32.4B annual police roadblock extortion come from Anambra and Abia States which have dominant blue collar settings in the Zone; followed by Imo State owing to its common boundary with the two States. Average of N40,000 is illicitly pocketed by each police extortion squad on daily basis in Anambra and Abia States; N30,000 in Imo State and N20,000 in Enugu and Ebonyi States owing to their relatively white collar settings; translating to zonal average of N30,000 on daily basis per police extortion squad.

In South-south, the police roadblock extortion is fuelled by large concentration of black gold or crude oil and gas exploration and servicing activities with major focus being Rivers, Delta and Akwa Ibom States. In Southwest, Lagos as the country's largest commercial hub with spill-over effects in Ogun State fuels police roadblock extortion in the Zone. In North-central, Abuja as the Federal Capital Territory of the country fuels police roadblock extortion in the area; likewise in Northwest where Kaduna and Kano fuel the extortion as the commercial hub of Northern Nigeria. These blue collar settings attract high road usage or patronage and accompanied commercial activities.

The calculations and estimates above generally exclude criminal sums amounting to billions of naira raked annually from police custodial "bail fees" by corrupt personnel of the Nigeria Police Force as well as proceeds and assets recovered from criminal suspects such as kidnap and armed robbery suspects. Others are properties and cash sums violently possessed from victims of frame-ups and property squabbles by corrupt police law enforcement and investigation operatives such as SCID/CIB and SARS operatives.

Billions of naira raked from outside conventional policing budgetary processes such as "special security assignments or services" (i.e. presidential, governorship and legislative election security), "protection of VIPs and fat brown envelopes" and "assets and other facilities of local and multinational companies" including banks are also not included. Those illicitly raked-in annually from "protection" of facilities and products of some natural resources through "police anti bunkering operations", etc as well as those illicitly made from seaports (by some corrupt Marine Police personnel), border extortion by corrupt Police Border patrols and air ports (by some corrupt Air Port Police personnel) are also not included in the estimates above.

In summation, it may be correct to say that Nigeria and Nigerians lose as much as N500B or \$1.7B annually to police open corruption and other codified corrupt practices. Such police open corruption and other codified corrupt practices appear to have largely concentrated on *police roadblock extortion, anti bunkering, seaport and air port extortion, election security, protection of VIPs and fat brown envelopes; and security protection of companies such as banks, industries and multinational companies*. Totality of these criminal and codified criminal proceeds has never been reflected in the annual budgets of the Force or Police IGRs but shared by their collectors, instructors and promoters.

A clear case in point is the grave and yet-to-be investigated allegation levelled against the present IGP by Senator Hamman Misau of Bauchi Central Senatorial District in August 2017 in which he accused the IGP thus: *Specifically, the IGP, on good authority from within the force, collects over N10billion on monthly basis as money for special security provided by men of the Force to corporate bodies and highly placed individuals, including criminals, running to N120billion on year basis without any reflection in Police annual budgets or internally generated revenue*".

**Signed:**

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