

Political Opposition Sponsorship Of Killings In Nigeria: Questions Buhari Government Must Answer

(Intersociety, Nigeria: 7th July 2018)-The central Government of Nigeria headed by Mr. Muhammadu Buhari-a retired major general; has continued to make inflammatory, diversionary, deceitful, threatening and other injurious statements over the orgy of ethno-religious and state killings in Nigeria. These are followed by complicit government policies and conducts, which see the killings escalating and worsening in the country day in day out.

Despite several expert recommendations and pieces of advice given or offered to the central Government of Nigeria arising from research findings of various local and international research and investigative groups on how to end the ongoing killings by Government and non state actor Jihadist armed groups in Middle Belt and old Eastern Nigeria and fish out the perpetrators and bring them to justice; the Buhari Administration has not only failed woefully to heed or act on such independent expert recommendations, but also clannishly chosen to remain inescapable complicit in same.

Till date, no single executive of MACBAN or member of its killer-brigades is under prosecution or has been convicted or sentenced with maximum punishment over sundry killing of defenseless Christians and destruction of churches in Nigeria. The Federal Government has also come out in strong defense of Fulani Jihadist violence and refused to proscribe the mother body of the jihadist brigades contrary to provisions of extant laws of the land.

Since 2016 when killings by armed Jihadist elements under the color of “Fulani Herdsmen” started escalating with government’s inescapable complicity; over ten false defences have been used by the Buhari Administration in defense of the Jihadist violent group. For the first time in the history of Nigeria and global terrorism patterns and trends, the killers are allowed and protected by the central Government to address fully funded press conferences-claiming responsibility for killing other Nigerians; with the central Government not only looking the other way, but with suspicion of involvement of some of its appointees in the sponsorship of such press conferences.

The frontiers of MACBAN-a nationally registered mother body of the killing brigades have also rapidly expanded across the country and provided with suspected government funding and lettered elements to coercively function socially, culturally, economically, politically, religiously and militantly including issuance and addressing of press conferences and participation in the electronic media personality programs- during which more threats of violence are openly made as well open defense and claims of responsibility for killing innocent and defenseless Nigerians particularly members of the Nigerian Christian faith.

Among more than ten false defences used by the central Government of Muhammadu Buhari in defense and support of killing of Christians, destruction of their churches and seizure and occupation of their ancestral lands by Fulani murderous brigades are: (1) *those killing in the name of Fulani Herdsmen are Gaddafi trained mercenaries from Libya*, (2) *Fulani Herdsmen do not carry guns except cutlasses to clear bush paths and foliage for their cattle*, and (3) *Fulani Herdsmen are Nigerians and they must be accommodated and not provoked to kill*.

Others are: (4) *give your lands to Fulani Herdsmen for ranching and grazing and avoid being killed, for it is better to stay alive landless than being a land owner in dead*, (5) *killings associated with Fulani Herdsmen are purely herders-farmers clashes over grazing*, (6) *killings in Nigeria blamed on Fulani Herdsmen are merely communal clashes*, (7) *killings in Nigeria are not anti Christian killings, after all more Muslims are killed in Zamfara State than in Plateau, Kogi, Taraba, Benue, Southern Kaduna and Adamawa States put together*, (8) *more people are killed under Jonathan and Obasanjo in 16 years than those killed under Buhari in three years*, (9) *politicians used thugs to kill Nigerians and blame it on Fulani Herdsmen and (10) Government will fish out and deal with politicians responsible for killing Nigerians in some States and we have signed an executive order to that effect, etc.*

This statement of ours, therefore, follows President Buhari's yesterday's public threat and vow in Borno State to "deal with (opposition) politicians sponsoring killings in some States in Nigeria". Mr. President made the open threat during the Armed Forces Anniversary in Monguno, Borno State, Northeast, Nigeria. The presidential threat, publicly disclosed by the President's Senior Special Assistant on Media & Publicity, Malam Garba Shehu, came days after his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity (Mr. Femi Adesina), called on indigenous Nigerian Christians and ors across Nigeria particularly in old Middle Belt and old Eastern Nigeria to "give up their lands for Fulani cattle ranching and grazing and stay alive than to be land owners in dead". Mr. Adesina, till date, has not publicly clarified the statement or denied same.

Questions Buhari Government Must Answer

Are the opposition politicians also responsible for ordering and supervising: (a) *killing of over 450 unarmed and defenseless pro Biafra activists in Southeast and South-south Nigeria between August 2015 and September 2017?*, (b) *ordering and supervising the killing of 1,130 members of Shiite Muslim sect in Zaria, Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria in December 2015?*, (c) *supervising and killing through jet bombing of 236 Christian IDPs in Kale-Balge, Borno State, Northeast, Nigeria in January 2017?*

Others are: (d) *supervising and killing through jet bombing of over 50 rural Christians in Numan, Adamawa State, Northeast, Nigeria on 4th December 2017 where they were bombed to death while trying to escape from Fulani Herdsmen invasion and attacks on their ancestral communities?*, (e) *ordering and supervising the killing through jet bombing of 159 children and wounding of 102 others in Northeast in 2017 as reported in the UN Sec General's report: Children & Conflict (2018)?*, (f) *supervision and death through starvation of 240 civilian detainees including 29 kids between newborn and five years inside Giwa Barracks' detention facilities of the Nigerian Army in Borno State, Northeast, Nigeria in 2016, which is contained in the Amnesty Int'l report of 2016/2017?*

The rest are: (g) killing in 2016 of over 2500 indigenous Christians and other non Muslims and destruction of hundreds of churches by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in 2016 as reported by the Int'l Crisis Group (2017), (h) killing of over 1,700 indigenous Christians and other non Muslims and destruction of hundreds of churches by Fulani Herdsmen in 2017 as reported by various research, investigative and victims' groups including Open Doors Int'l, Intersociety, CAN, media, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, etc?, (i) killing of over 1,750 indigenous Christians and other non Muslims and destruction of dozens of churches by Fulani Herdsmen in the first six months of 2018?, (j) killing by so called "Zamfara Bandits" of over 160 mainly Muslims in Birnin Gwari and Gwaska areas of Kaduna State as well as over 200 mostly Muslims in Zamfara State in the first six months of 2018?, (k) killing by "Zamfara Bandits" of over 1,500 mostly Muslims in Zamfara State since June 2015 originally in connection with cattle rustling?

Are the killings in Zamfara State and Gwaska and Birnin Gwari areas of Kaduna State since June 2015 and January 2018 respectively; also sponsored by Christian politicians in the opposition camp?, (m) since several research reports have found that over 16,000 churches and 1,700 Christian schools have been lost to killing and destruction in the name of Islam in Northern Nigeria since 2009 including over 1,000 churches and 200 Christian schools lost to Jihadist Fulani violence since June 2015-with over 500 lost in Benue State alone; how many Mosques and Islamic schools have been lost to or destroyed in Southern Nigeria or old Middle Belt Nigeria by "Christian violent crusaders" since 2009 or June 2015 or January 2018?

Lastly, (n) if "politicians using thugs" are responsible for ongoing religious killing and destruction of Christian sacred places of worship in Nigeria since January 2018; are they also responsible for the killings and destruction of Christian sacred places of worship from June to December 2015, January to December 2016 and January to December 2017; or is it not correct to say that the presidential allegation and accompanied threat of state violence against members of political opposition and dissent others is deliberately falsified and designed with diversionary and misleading undertones so as to clamp down on them for purpose of intimidating and silencing them ahead of coming 2019 general elections?

What Buhari Government Must Do

- (1) Remove all the Service Chiefs and their ministerial counterparts including AGF, National Security Adviser, Minister of Interior, Defense Minister, IGP, etc, (2) issue executive order reverting all top political, security and policing appointments so far made or to be made by Federal Government to Section 14 (3) (sectional spread and balance) of the existing Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 including headship, appointment and posting into Police CSP, ACP, DCP, CP and AIG ranking and their equivalent in Air Force, Navy, Army, SSS, NIA, Custom, Immigration, etc as well as Police Zonal and State Command, Federal SARS, Highway, Border, Railway, Marine, Anti Bunkering, Anti Terrorism and Operations and Criminal Investigations.

Others are: (3) *proscribe the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria and resign(Buhari) as its grand patron (to avert further conflict of interest), (4) disarm armed Jihadist brigades widely suspected to be existing and mixed with Fulani Herdsmen and arrest and prosecute them for sundry killings in the country, (5) invite the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as well as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or Secretary General of UN to commence formal investigations into the killings in Middle Belt (anti Christian butchery) and Zamfara State (cow rustling and economic violence).*

The rest are: *killing of 450 pro Biafra activists, 1,130 Shiite Muslims and Northeast insurgency related civilian killings by armed forces of Nigeria and Boko Haram insurgents including jet-bombing of 236 Christian IDPs and 50 rural Numan Christians in Borno and Adamawa as well as jet-bombing and killing of 159 children and custodial starvation to death of 240 civilian detainees including women and 29 children between newborn and five years in Borno; and (6) suspension or outright abolition and discontinuation of Federal Government Fulani cow ranching and pastoralist grazing policy and violent acquisition of lands belonging to indigenous Nigerians.*

Livestock husbandry including cattle grazing in Nigeria must permanently be changed to “sedentary grazing”; involving the use of livestock producer vicinity or terrain modern grazing technology as industrial replacement for primitive, subsistent, primordial, violent pastoralist and agro-jihadist grazing, under which cover thousands of defenseless indigenous Christians and other non Muslims are killed every year with their ancestral lands and sacred places and symbols of worship and living forcefully seized or annexed, occupied and permanently possessed by the present central Government and its protected and untouchable agro-jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and their lord-cattle owners.

Signed:

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