



International Society For Civil Liberties & The Rule Of Law



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Circulation Of 100M Illicit Small Arms In Africa

Nigerian-Born UN Figure Brandishers Should Bury Their Faces In Shame & Return To Classroom

(Intersociety Nigeria: 20th September 2018)-The war of statistics between non Nigerian-born UN and ECOWAS/AU research statisticians and Nigerian-born UN figure brandishers over the actual number of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in circulation in Africa, ECOWAS and Nigeria is a clear attestation of the fact that Nigerian intellectual industry is terminally sick. This is compounded by the emergence in the country of the central Government of mediocrity in June 2015.

Contrary to the irritatingly bogus figure of “350million SALWs in Nigeria” being bandied or brandished by the trio of Mrs. Olatokunbo Ige (country director of UNREC), Mr. Anselme Yabouri (another director in the Nigerian office of UNREC) and retired Lt Gen Abdulrahman Dambazau (Doctor of Criminology and Nigeria’s current Minister of Interior) as “the total number of illicit Small Arms & Light Weapons circulating in the country, out of 500million in West Africa”; the duo of the ECOWAS Commission President (Mr. Jean-Claude Brou) and UN Chief de Cabinet (Maria Viotti) have released research statistics that not only rubbished and shamed the trio but also affirmed the recent position of our Organization to the effect that “10million illicit SALWs are likely in wrong hands in West Africa, out of which 4.5million are approximately in circulation in Nigeria.

It is so shameful that the intellectual and diplomatic image of the country is being rubbished with reckless abandon on daily basis or dragged through the mud by the Nigerian-born and based chiefs of missions of the ECOWAS, AU and UN especially those in charge of disarmament, arms control, demilitarization and demobilization. Those manning different strategic public offices in the country are also not left out of such intellectual stagnancy, crudity and anachronism.

The country’s intellectual industry has been so knuckled or crashed that the Nigeria’s current Attorney Gen and Chief Law Officer of the Federation (Abubakar Malami, SAN) had in early February 2016 unpardonably lied to all Nigerians and the entire world in his written address in a public function in Abuja that “the Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) had since its inception in 2003 recovered over \$2trillion cash and properties from treasury looters”; which prompted our national investigation on the net budgets and expenditures of all the 774 LGAs, 36 States/FCT and the Federal Government put together from 2003 to 2016.

Our findings found only \$624billion budgeted and spent in all including borrowed loans, shared federal allocations, received grants, proceeds from oil and gas and non oil revenues including import duties and States’ internally generated revenues. The statistics contained in our findings was later sent to the AGF for retraction of his public false information and he ran to cover and never responded till date.

It is recalled that the Nigerian-born Country Director of the United Nations Regional Center for Peace & Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), Ms Olatokunbo Ige had in Abuja in early August 2016 during a workshop on National Consultation on Physical Security & Stockpile Management (PSSM) organized by the Presidential Committee on Small Arms & Light Weapons (PRESCOM); falsely and bogusly disclosed that “out of 500million illicit small arms and light weapons in circulation in West Africa, 350million of them or 70% are in wrong hands in Nigeria”.

The bogus claims and brandishing of outrageous figures by the Nigerian-born UN Agency chief immediately drew our attention and issuance of a disclaimer statement of 5th August 2016, titled: ***questions the Nigerian-born UN Agency chief must answer over bogus claims of circulation of 350million small arms and light weapons in wrong hands in Nigeria***. The UN Agency chief ran to cover and never responded to the questions or corrected her blunder till date.

As if that was not enough, the armada of statistical falsehood and lies was shamelessly repeated fourteen months later in Abuja, Nigeria on 12th December 2017 by another Director in the Nigerian office of the same UN Peace and Disarmament body (UNREC), Mr. Anselme Yabouri at the workshop on Physical Security & Stockpile Management Standard Operating & Administrative Procedures Validation; to the effect that “out of 500million illicit small arms and light weapons in West Africa in 2010, 350million of them or 70% are in circulation or in wrong hands in Nigeria”.

This rabid or extreme falsehood was shockingly reechoed by the Minister of Interior, retired Lt Gen Abdulrahman Dambazau, who is also a foremost doctor of criminology and one of the few finest brains in the current mediocrity ridden central Government of Muhammadu Buhari. The retired Nigerian Army chief made fool of himself and his hard earned career and intellectual height on Tuesday, 22nd January 2018 in Abuja at a meeting on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria; where he was quoted by the Daily Trust Newspaper of 23rd January 2018 as saying “from records by the United Nations Center for Peace & Disarmament, I understand that there are approximately 500million assorted arms in West Africa and out of these 500million, 70% or approximately 350million of them are in Nigeria”.

Of all the four figure brandishers above mentioned, that of Doctor Abdulrahman Dambazau is the most shocking, inexcusable, disappointing and unforgiving. Before joining the present central Government of Nigeria in 2015, Criminology Prof Abdulrahman Dambazau was a highly respected, seminal and scholarly criminologist with numerous internationally rated books and other writings in his name.

Both in the Cesare Lombroso’s Italian and Edwin Sutherland’s Chicago Schools of Criminology and acclaimed others, it amounts to criminological hara-kiri or disembowelment for social statistics or research findings of a criminologist to be credibly disputed, discredited and rubbished by a lawyer, not to talk of a member of the educated others. Field of criminology starts and ends with *questioning and finding answers to social phenomena* including human behaviors involving deviances, crimes and social data or statistics.

It is also a criminological taboo for a criminologist of Dambazau’s doctoral/professorial standing to subscribe by hook, line and sinker to contaminated and concocted figures brandished by a mere country director and domestic kitchen statistician without re-criminological analysis or questioning of same through available criminological data mining and analytical processes. It is so sad that the highly respected and celebrated doctoral/professorial criminologist has allowed himself to be made a victim of the central Government of mediocrity in Nigeria.

Contradictorily, the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS Commission) has recently put the number of illicitly circulated small arms & light weapons (SALWs) in West Africa and Africa including Nigeria to 100million in Africa and 10million in West Africa. The ECOWAS Commission’s position was made known on Tuesday, 18th September 2018 in the meeting of the organizations in the Sahel region held at the ECOWAS parliament in Abuja.

The correct and believable research statistics was given by the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace & Security, Francis Behanzin while fielding questions to journalists. Mr. Behanzin stood in at the event for the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude Brou. It was specifically disclosed by the ECOWAS Commission that out of 100million illegal small arms and light weapons circulating in Africa, about 10million of such illegal arms are found in West Africa and over 800million around the world.

In tandem with the ECOWAS Commission's position, **Intersociety** had maintained and still maintains that **over 800million illicit small arms and light weapons are in circulation around the world with 10million in West Africa and about 4.5million in Nigeria. It is also our position that the battered Republic of Afghanistan is the global worst hit with 10million SALWs while Egypt has the highest number of anti personnel landmines hitting 6million and dating as far back as 1948 during the Israeli war of independence with her Arab neighbors.**

We had also disclosed that these illicit small arms and light weapons are manufactured mostly by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including USA (majority), Russia, China, France and UK; followed by non permanent members of UN such as Germany, Italy, Brazil, Ukraine, Japan, North Korea and a number of defunct Eastern European countries, among others. There are also a total of over 1000 small arms and light weapons manufacturing companies in 98 countries with large number of them coming from USA and other four UNSC permanent members. These SALWs also kill not less than 500,000 civilians or non combatants every year with 80% of the victims being women and children.

Intersociety's statistics was further corroborated on 19th June 2018 by the United Nations' Small Arms Survey, which, as reported by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), found that "over 500,000 civilians or non combatants are killed every year by small arms and light weapons involving revolvers, pistols, assault rifles, machine guns and other similar weapons". This was disclosed by UN Chief de Cabinet, Maria Viotti, quoted as saying that "there are over one billion legal and illicit firearms in the world as at December 2017 including 857million in wrong hands". The report estimated that 133million SALWs are held by government militaries around the world and 22.7million in the hands of law enforcement agencies while 857million of them are in civilian hands including over 390million held legally in civilian hands in USA.

For purpose of clarity and records, **Disarmament** is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and violent civilian population. **Demobilization**, on its part, is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups usually for purpose of ending violent or armed conflict. **Arms Control** are efforts through interstate or sub regional or regional or international agreements or arrangements to limit or reduce the war making capabilities by restricting the quantity or quality of weapons and making forces or the zone of their deployment in an attempt to avoid arm race or conflict escalation.

By **Small Arms**, they are weapons that can be carried by a single person either for military or civilian use. They are relatively cheap, available in abundance, highly portable, long lasting and easy to carry or operate. **Light Weapons**, on their part, are weapons that are man-portable or transportable by light vehicles and do not require much in terms of service or logistical backup training; and they include small caliber cannons, light support weapons, combat grenades, anti personnel landmines, mortars, anti-tank weapons, anti-tank mines, etc. **Complex Humanitarian Emergencies** caused by proliferation and misuse of SALWs are *profound social crises in which a large number of civilians die or suffer from war, hunger, disease and displacement owing to man-made and natural disaster including devastating violent or armed conflicts.*

Intersociety hereby calls for concrete steps, not bandying or brandishing of unscientific, unverifiable and unsubstantiated figures, to curb the raging menace of illicit SALWs proliferation scourge in Nigeria in particular and ECOWAS region and the entire Africa in general. Such efforts must include proactive and diligent enforcement of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition thereto (2006), ratified by Nigeria in 2009.

There shall also be speedy passage by the National Assembly and presidential assent of the National Commission against the Proliferation of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Act. The Buhari Administration which is complicit in flooding the country with SALWs through its *militarism and militarization policies* must review and reverse such arms flooding policy and return the country to full and credible democracy, rule of law and human rights observance and compliance processes and governance style.

Attached Photo showing Mrs. Olatokunbo Ige, LLM, head of the Nigerian office of the United Nations Regional Center for Peace & Disarmament (UNREC) at a public security function in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Signed:

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