

Special Statement

Killing Of Three Policemen & Ors: Quackery, Karma & Commercial Soldiering Are Running Riot On Nigerian Army

...Intersociety

Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria: Friday, 9th August 2019: The recent killing by soldiers of the Nigerian Army of three gallant intelligence police officers and a civilian and injuring of scores of others in the line of their special duties in Taraba State; and the premeditated murder of an innocent commercial cyclist in Aba are all clear indication that the trio of quackery, karma and commercial soldiering are chronically running riot on Nigerian Army presently headed by Lt Gen Turkur Buratai. Professionally speaking, the killings particularly those perpetrated in Taraba State are punishably premeditated and have nothing to do with 'collateral fatalities' and 'mistaken identity'.

The above was the position of **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & Rule of Law, Intersociety**, as contained in a statement issued today, 9th August 2019 and signed by Lawyers Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Head of Civil Liberties & Rule of Law, Evangeline Chidinma Udegbonam, Head of Campaign & Publicity Dept and Emeka Umeagbalasi, a Criminologist & Graduate of Security Studies and Board Chair of **Intersociety**.

Facts Of The Matter: Soldiers of the 93 Battalion of the Nigerian Army, Takum in Taraba State, had on Tuesday, 6th August 2019, opened fire in a bizarre, brazen and murderous manner at a group of crime detective and intelligence personnel of the Taraba State Police Command, joined by some personnel of the IGP's Intelligence Response Team (IRT). The said detective and intelligence officers were attacked along Ibi-Jalingo Road in Taraba State. Led by ASP Felix Adolije, the police crack squad members were escorting the just arrested notorious kidnap and possibly jihadist kingpin, Alhaji Hamisu Bala Wadume, when the soldiers opened fire, killing three police officers and a civilian and injuring scores of other police personnel in their convoy. The soldiers after the shooting and killing were reported to have facilitated the escape of the arrested terror/kidnap kingpin. The Army later issued a statement claiming that 'the shooting and killing was done in error; by mistaking the victims to be kidnappers'.

Similarly in Aba, Abia State, Southeast Nigeria, another killing by a soldier of a commercial motorcyclist along Ikot-Ekpene Road on 7th August 2019 was reported. Citizen Chimaobi Nwaogu Uzoukwa, a native of Amaise, Umuokereke-Ngwa in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State was chased after by a soldier and shot dead in his father's compound. The killing was in connection with a N100 army roadblock extortion or gunpoint bribery, which is now deeply entrenched in the roadblock modus operandi of the military and police personnel deployed in the Southeast and South-south regions of Nigeria.

The killer-soldier was attached to the Ohanze Army Post in Obingwa Local Government Area in the commercial city of Aba. The militarization of Aba and its environs is coordinated by the 144 Battalion of the Nigerian Army located at Asa Community, near Aba, which is under the 14 Brigade, Ohafia in Abia State. Citizen Chimaobi was killed by the soldier for refusing to part with N100 note at a nearby Army roadblock. The killer-soldier had flagged down another commercial motorcycle and ordered him to go after the slain cyclist following his refusal to part with N100 at a nearby Army roadblock. When the slain ran for his dear life and made it to his father's compound, the armed soldier alighted, shot him dead and jumped back to the commercial that brought him and fled.

The incident was also confirmed by a family member of the deceased, who is the immediate past Chief Press Secretary to former Gov Rochas Okorochoa of Imo State, Mr. Ebere Uzoukwa, who further complained of 'unwholesome and criminal extortion of soldiers mounting roadblocks at Afo Di Mkpa Ohanze and Ukpakiri', all in Aba and environs. Till date, the authorities of the 144 Battalion at Asa and their superiors at 14 Brigade, Ohafia as well as the Enugu 82 Division have all gone deaf and dumb; possibly looking for lies to tell the Nigerian public.

Karma, Quackery & Commercial Soldiering On Rampage

Karma: *Karma* is at work because the Nigerian Army under Lt Gen Turkur Buratai has so much killed, massacred and maimed the innocent, unarmed and defenseless Nigerians now in their thousands since August 2015 with impunity and reckless abandon that the spirits of the slain have become restive and restless with a possible heavy curse placed on the Army to 'never cease to kill and maim unprofessionally'. It is also likely that the bloods of the slain and the maimed are ceaselessly on rampage, seeking justice.

The restlessness, anger and vengeance of the slain from their cosmic abodes exemplified by the recent premeditated killing of police officers in the line of duty in Taraba State is also a way of reminding all Nigerians that this month, August 2019, makes it four years since the Lt Gen Buratai led Nigerian Army launched its atrocious and murderous campaigns against the innocent, unarmed and defenseless Nigerian populations; leading to massacre of thousands and maiming of thousands too. It is particularly reminded that August 2015 was the official commencement month of the military atrocities in Nigeria; which started with mass murder of dozens of unarmed and defenseless citizens of Igbo Ethnic Nationality in Eastern Nigeria; followed by killing of not less than 1000 annual faith-procession Shiite Muslims and maiming of over seven hundred others in Zaria, Northern Nigeria.

As at the time of commencement of the massacre and maiming; till date, the victims had never used or advocated for violence such as resorting to armed resistance or taking up arms against Nigeria or any part thereof. Many of them were killed or maimed while engaging in annual religious procession, per Shiites or protests of peaceful nature including picketing, sedentary rallies and prayers, night vigils and street protests. Others were killed or maimed while going about their legitimate businesses. Till date, all those who perpetrated the atrocities are still left intact with impunity in their service uniforms in the Nigerian Military and Police.

In modern military tradition across the world, *it is better for ten soldiers to die so as to save an innocent soul. It is also a taboo and height of professional quackery to kill an innocent or engage in the massacre of persons or property destructions not classified as 'military necessity'*; but in the case of Nigerian Army under Lt Gen Buratai, a major parameter to determine 'professional soldiering' is expressly rested on number of unarmed, defenseless and innocent civilians soldiery killed or massacred and maimed as well as number of criminal persons and entities shielded from crimes or aided to commit same; such as Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and their registered mother bodies.

Past Atrocities Of The Nigerian Army & Ors: Corroboratively, the killings include killing of: *(a) 480 unarmed, defenseless and innocent citizens of the Igbo Ethnic Nationality and maiming of over 500 others in Southeast and South-south (August 2015-September 2017), (b) killing of 236 Christian IDPs and injuring of scores of others in Kale-Balge in Borno State (Jan 2017), (c) killing in conjunction with the Nigerian Air Force of 50 rural Christians and injuring of others in Numan, Adamawa State (December 2017), (d) mass suffocation and proxy killing of 240 civilian detainees including 29 infants at Giwa Military Barracks in Borno State (AI Report 2016).*

Others are: (e) massacre of not less than 1,000 members of Shiite Muslims and injuring of over 700 others in Zaria, Kaduna State (December 2015), (f) bullet-killing of no fewer than 250 Shiite Muslims and injuring of others in their hundreds between Oct 2016 and July 2019 majorly in Kaduna and FCT, (g) rifle-killing of 159 children and injuring of hundreds of others in Northeast Nigeria (UN Report 2017) and (h) scores among over 40 unarmed citizens including voters and party agents killed in the Feb 23 Presidential and the March 2019 Governorship Polls particularly in Rivers and Bayelsa States (i.e. killing of Dr. Ferry Gberegbe and Mrs. Ibisaki Amachreee in Rivers State). These are just to cite a few of the military atrocities in Nigeria since August 2015.

Quackery: *Quackery* also played a major role in the referenced Taraba killings by soldiers of the Nigerian Army. From every parameter of measurement of modern intelligence and ICT driven soldiering or *man-mental-machine soldiering*, the present Nigerian Army is the crudest, and most unintelligent, anachronistic, democratically incompatible and ethno-religiously divided branch of the Nigerian 'military since 1863 when it was colonially formed.

The Nigerian Army is so politicized that it now supervises the writing of poll results, snatching and stuffing of ballot boxes and killing and maiming of voters and INEC and party agents (i.e. killing of Dr. Ferry Gberegbe and Mrs. Ibisaki Amachreee in Rivers State). It is also tribally and religiously lopsided in composition, ranking and posting. Professional ethics including moral conscience and corporate integrity are speedily departing the Army; to the extent that *spinning* and lies have become its major policy. The Nigerian Army under Buratai hardly accepts responsibilities for its personnel misconducts and blunders. The public position taken by the NA in the case of recent killing of policemen in Taraba State is a clear case in point.

Apart from being chronically guilty of inter-agency *professional trespassing*, the Nigerian Army is dangerously overstepping its bounds particularly in matters of internal policing, which the Army professionally knows nothing about except exercise of *power of arrest and peripheral crime scene gathering of raw facts* and their subsequent transfer to the Police. Specifically, the Nigerian Army is not properly trained to 'catch kidnappers' or 'armed robbers' and other *domestic violent criminals* as well as electronic and victimless criminals such as cyber criminals and student cultists or drug addicts or prostitutes.

The quackery exhibited in the instant case (Taraba killings) is a clear case in point where elements of *commercial soldiering* are also likely to have played out. Part of the Army's quackery in the instant case was total disregard to common operational intelligence. It must be pointed that professional security operatives imbued with sufficient intelligence and operational expertise; are those who 'catch armed robbers or kidnappers in their hideouts than when they are on rampage'.

Apart from acting professionally and minimizing collateral fatalities in the line of operation, which the above offers, the 'kidnappers' or 'armed robbers' as human beings and natural beneficiaries of the fundamental human needs have time to defecate, shower, sleep or rest, womanize, eat and drink, visit friends, buy personal needs, move innocently or harmlessly in their neighborhoods and watch sporting events. And by so doing, they are not usually armed doing them. It takes effective mental and electronic intelligence to demystify them especially when not on rampage. It is also obvious from available facts that the Police professionally arrested the terror kingpin in his hideout, only for the soldiers to infect the successful operation with their quackery and conspiratorial intents.

We are therefore compelled to ask the Nigerian Army the following questions in connection with the said Taraba killings: *how come the soldiers opened fire, killing three policemen and a civilian and injuring scores of other officers, but left the culprit who was in handcuff unhurt and facilitated his escape? On whose agency or inter-agency intelligence did the soldiers rely on before embarking on such shooting mission? Is it not correct to say that by 'rescue' in the instant case and going by what played out, the Army meant 'rescuing the kidnap suspect and shielding him from crime at the expense of lives of three gallant policemen and a civilian'?*

Others are: *Is there something the Nigerian Army is not telling Nigerians in the instant case? Is there not likelihood of 'commercial soldiering or ethno-religious esprit de corps in the entire saga (i.e. rescue of the kidnap/terror kingpin)? What are the ethno-religious identities of the soldiers involved including their leader(s)? What are their antecedents in the line of their entire operations in Taraba State now and before? What is the ethno-religious identity or background of the said kidnap kingpin, a Fulani, an Hausa, a Kaunuri; a Jihadist or a Kidnapper or both? As disclosed by the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters, 'one of the 'customers' of the kidnap kingpin was an oil magnet who was kidnapped and released after a ransom of N100m was paid; is it correct to say that the soldiers and their leaders in the State know something about such 'juicy jungle deals'?*

Commercial Soldiering: While elements of *commercial soldiering* are likely not to be ruled out in the case of the Taraba killings by soldiers of the Nigerian Army, it fully played out in the killing by a soldier of a commercial cyclist in Aba, along Ikot-Ekpene Road on 7th August 2019. **Intersociety** had severally documented and still documents cases of roadblock extortion by personnel of the Nigerian Military and Police Force stationed on most of the roads in the Southeast. The documentation had found that there are over one hundred military (army and navy) roadblocks in the Southeast with each going home daily with N50, 000-N100, 000 or N5m-N10m. The Navy Checkpoint at the Atani-Ogwuikpere Federal Road, near Onitsha Uga Junction is the most 'lucrative'; as its personnel go home daily with not less than N200, 000. Another review and updates (from August 2015-August 2019) are already in the making.

In Solidarity With Nigeria Police Force Over Taraba Killings: In keeping with our firm resolve to continuously and tirelessly advocate for the betterment of the Society and its social forces including the military and the police; and our insistence that 'the right things must be done and at the right time', we deeply and sincerely condole the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force over the loss of their three gallant personnel and a civilian in the hands of the said 'commercial and quack soldiers'. We also sympathize with others that were injured.

It has been our firm position that the Nigerian security forces and policing agencies must go for *man-mental-machine (electronic) intelligence and securitization approaches* in matters of public security and policing in Nigeria. A knowledge and acculturation of same drastically reduces human rights abuses which have now risen to industrial scale in the country. On the other hand, lack of technical know-how in same aggravates human rights abuses in a large or industrial scale. It is exceptionally commendable, for instance, that the said kidnap kingpin was professionally arrested alive and unhurt before the murderous soldiers messed up the successful operation. This was possible because of the use of professional intelligence and crime scene compatible personnel.

Condemning The Death Of Shiite Muslims In Police Custody: We strongly condemn the Nigeria Police Force particularly its FCID/SARS over the recent death in its custody of not less than three injured Shiite Muslims, who were shot and injured on July 22 during a protest; before being dumped to bleed to death in their custody. They are also 15 others including two minors languishing in the custody without adequate treatments. The reports of invasion of hospitals where the injured Shiite members were admitted for treatment and their abduction by Police SARS and soldiers are also totally condemned. These are clear breaches of the Chapters Two and Four of the Constitution and the Nigeria's international or Treaty Rights Laws.

Same strong condemnation goes for the use of live bullets by Police and Army in the policing of public assemblies in Nigeria as well as reckless use of out-station and custodial torture and other inhuman and degrading treatments or punishments. It is saddening and disheartening that despite the recent enactment of the *Gunshot Wound Victims Act and Anti Torture Act of 2017*, the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force still allow the use of same. We therefore join Amnesty Int'l in calling for thorough investigation of the said custodial deaths including dismissal of senior and junior officers involved and total adherence to the provisions of the two Acts and their mother provisions in the country's Constitution.

Saying No To Joint Army-Police Investigation Board: By creation and law, the Nigerian Army's growing long tails must be cut to its statutory sizes. The Army and the Police do not compete under democratic setting. Professionally, Army is a quack in matters of management of democratic dispensation including social deviances and crime controls; except in internal or external armed conflicts.

As a matter of fact, Nigerian Army is an interloper in matters of substantive criminal investigations. The Army is totally subject to the civil authority and its policing; exclusively managed by the Nigeria Police Force. That is to say that the Army cannot arrogate unless it is democratically arrogated by the country's *democracy policing general overseer (the NPF)*. Under civil authority arrangement in a democratic setting, the Nigerian Army must civilianize or democratize its policies and conducts or be permanently cocooned to the Barracks.

Therefore arrogating to itself the powers of a *general overseer in* substantive criminal investigations under democratic dispensation is a height of inter-agency intimidation and brandishing of professional quackery. In the instant case, therefore, the call by the Army to set up and conduct a joint investigation with the Police into the instant case is unknown to the tenets of democracy and modern policing criminal investigations.

In law and criminology, it is settled that when a crime is forensically mirrored and found to have sufficient elements of circumstantial evidence, further investigation needed becomes very infinitesimal. That is to say that the Nigerian Army must fish out the killer-soldiers involved, vicariously and directly, and have them court-marshaled and dismissed; after or before which they shall be handed over to the authorities of the Nigeria Police Force for substantive prosecution in a democratic court.

The Army authorities including the COAS, the GOC and Brigade and Cantonment commanders in charge of the Area (Northeast and its State of Taraba) must be summoned bodily by the Police High Command Headquarters investigating the matter and they must cooperate fully throughout the investigations. Same are demanded in the case of killing in Aba of late Citizen Chimaobi Nwaogu Uzoukwa (a defenseless commercial cyclist) by a soldier attached to the 144 Battalion of the Nigerian Army at Aba and Asa, under 14 Brigade, Ohafia; generally commanded by the GOC, 82 Division, Enugu, Southeast Nigeria.

Contacts: www.intersociety-ng.org, info@intersociety-ng.org, +2348174090052