

## A Joint Statement

### Southeast Govs Must Adopt Wike Model & Dump Their Fire Brigade Approach To Insecurity In Igbo Land

#### ...SBCHROs & Intersociety

**Awka, Eastern Nigeria: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2019:** The Govs of the Southeast Region in Nigeria must dump their fire brigade approach to insecurity in Igbo Land and adopt Wike model; a proactive, defensive and preventive security approach, the **Southeast Based Coalition of Human Rights & Democracy Organizations** and the **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & Rule of Law, INTERSOCIETY**, said today in a joint statement issued at Awka, Eastern Nigeria.

**Wike Committed No Crime & Did No Wrong Over Mosque Controversy:** SBCHROs and Intersociety further see the state actor coordinated verbal attacks on Gov Ezeunwo Onyesomu Nwaike (Nyesom Wike) of Rivers State by extremist Muslim groups and individuals in Nigeria as not only condemnably unnecessary but also a clear indication of the fact that Nigeria is now put on fully fledged path to radical Islamism. The attacks are also a calculated attempt or effort to place religion, particularly practice of Islam far above the State of Nigeria, her people and institutions including the guiding Constitution of 1999.

From our vast knowledge of the Constitution and constitutionalism as well as principles of rule of law, international rights treaty laws and general human rights including religious freedoms and tolerance; Gov Wike did no wrong and committed no crime. By Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution, 'Nigeria is not a theocratic or Islamic religious State'. And by the same provision, 'no religion is above State control or sanctions under democratic setting. As a matter of fact, the State (Government of the Federation or of a State) is forbidden by the same Constitutional Section 10 from adopting or recognizing or treating any Religion as a State religion.

By Section 38 of the Constitution, every person has right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; subject to legitimate state control or in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution. By Section 44 (2) (f) of the Constitution, an immovable property under construction (i.e. as in the case of Wike stopping construction of a Mosque at an officially unapproved or dangerous site) or already constructed property; can be stopped or sealed or possessed by the State if found to be 'in a dangerous state or injurious to the health and conveniences of human beings, animals or plants, etc; provided adequate compensation is paid on the land or constructed property if legitimately acquired. The state loses such constitutional power if the land or property is maliciously seized for purpose of converting same into private use by the seizing authorities.

It is also on record that no fewer than 16,000 Churches and 2000 Christian schools were razed or burnt down across the Northern Nigeria between 2009 and 2019 and yet there were no verifiable records of reconstruction of not even 10% by the Government of Nigeria both the present and past. Several permissions have also been denied by various State Govs in the North to Christians to build churches and Christian schools. State actor threats of pulling down erected church and Christian school buildings are also in torrents. In some, if not in many cases, political office holders are fingered as brains behind such razing or burning down of churches and Christian schools; citing public safety, decency and interest. In all these, we urge Gov Wike not to be distracted but meticulously govern his State and the People of same historically, such that good history will never forget him.

**Proactive, Defensive & Preventive Approaches To Insecurity In Igbo Land:** For too long, the Southeast Govs have continuously rigmorled on matters of insecurity in Igbo Land. Despite enormous constitutional powers at their disposals, the Govs still wobbly adopt very weak, reactive, puppet and fire brigade security approaches which have seriously undermined the general security of the People of the Igbo Nation. By being proactive in matters of insecurity in Igbo Land or Southeast Region, it involves the action of creating or controlling an insecurity situation rather than just responding to it after it has happened.

This sort of slave-master security approach or policy by the Southeast Govs has dangerously continued till date, putting the Region at the brink. *Second term gubernatorial and her sister office succession bids* are chiefly responsible for the rising insecurity in the Region. Having grossly compromised their Regional security for purpose of being presidentially returned or allowed to return to their offices for second term or their political puppets being planted as their successors; the Govs have belatedly returned to the drawing board; offering their people a fire brigade approach so as to escape the boiling resentments of their abandoned people. By 'the Southeast Govs', we mean, for now, those other than the new Gov of Imo State.

It must be pointed out that despite the deformities inherent in the 1999 Constitution, yet an elected Gov of a State is still vested with enough (up to 66 constitutional powers) powers to govern his or her State independently well without needing to become a cabalistic presidential puppet at the expense of the general security and welfare of his or her people. A Gov can maintain constitutional loyalty to the President or have a cordial relationship with same and still govern his or her State and People securely, independently and developmentally. A typical example was the Obi Govt. in Anambra State under the later part of the Obasanjo Administration as well as under the Yar'Adua and Jonathan Administrations.

Other examples are the Wike Administration in Rivers State and the former Administration of Peter Ayodele Fayose in Ekiti State. Gov Wike was so attached to his People that despite being presidentially seen as 'a state enemy number one and a recalcitrant Gov', with all the state coercive instruments amassed to oust him in the last general elections, he was not only returned, but also won more votes than in 2015. Political civil space as a retiring ground for everybody requires sanely political actors to always be with their own people while in office than abandoning and endangering them for political puppetry spearheaded by a political cabal with numbered years in office.

Therefore, the recent 'expanded security meeting of the Southeast Govs' calls for serious concerns. The meeting was a height of fire brigade approach to issues of insecurity in Igbo Land. The first realistic approach to issues of insecurity in Igbo Land by the Southeast Govs should have been to ascertain who and who is manning or in charge of top security (army, navy, air force, police, SSS, NIS, NCS, NSCDC, etc) formations in Igbo Land. This is more so when the patterns and trends of the newest security threats in Igbo Land are imported, state sanctioned and jihad inspired.

By **Intersociety's** account, the referenced formations involve the 82 Army Division, Enugu and its subsidiaries including 44 Engineering, 82 Div, Army Supply, 82 Div, Army Transport, 82 Div, 54 Signals, 82 Div, Garrison Command, 82 Div, Provost Group, 82 Div and Army Information or Public Relations, 82 Div. Other formations are the 14 Brigade, Ohafia, 34 Brigade, Owerri, the Onitsha 302 Army Cantonment, the Air Force Ground Training Command, Enugu, 63 Brigade, Asaba, 144 Battalion, Asa, 103 Battalion, Akwunanwu (Akwunanaw), Enugu, 24 Engineering Regiment, Abakiliki, Navy School of Finance & Logistics, Owerre-Nta in Abia State and Navy Outpost Base, Ogbaru in Anambra State. Also included are five Southeast Directorates of SSS and five State Police Commands and the Zone 9 Command of the Nigeria Police Force at Umuahia. **Intersociety** had in late Dec 2018 found 95% of those manning these formations to be Muslim officers of Fulani-Hausa extraction.

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case, for instance, in the said 'expanded security meeting in Igbo Land' conveyed by the Southeast Govs to discuss insecurity in the Southeast, the following non Igbo and Fulani-Hausa Muslim dominated security chiefs attended: AIG Zone, Baba Tijani, GOC, 82 Division, Major Gen Abubakar Maikobi, Air Officer Commanding Ground Training Command, Enugu, Air Vice Marshall Idi Amin, Directors of SSS for Anambra, Yusuf Ishaku; Imo, Abdullahi Denja, Abia, A.J. Ibrahim, Ebonyi, H.E. Abdullahi and Enugu, Bimbo Likinyo (Mrs.). Others in attendance were the CPs of Anambra, John Abang (preceded by Mustapha Danduara), Enugu, Ahmad Abdulrahman, Ebonyi, Awosola Awotinde, Imo, Rabiu Ladodo and Abia, Ene Okon.

From the above, therefore, none of the top security chiefs that attended the 'expanded Southeast security meeting' is from the Southeast and of the 13 of them in all that attended, nine are Northern Muslims, two from the Southwest (Yoruba), one from South-south and none from the Southeast-the Region where the insecurity affecting same was discussed. Is it not correct to describe the meeting as 'expanded meeting for escalation of insecurity in Igbo Land or Southeast Nigeria?'

The decision of the Southeast Govs to meet with the person of President Buhari is not condemnable provided it is not a meeting 'to thank him for *northernizing*, *fulanizing* and Islamizing the security formations in the Southeast. As contained in the Southeast Govs' communiqué, acknowledging public knowledge of '(jihadist) Fulani Herdsmen operating and moving freely in the Southeast with AK-47 and other military rifles is not enough until it critically forms part of the meeting with the person of the President-whereby he must be made through a communiqué to explain the source or sources of such military and prohibited weapons in the hands of the jihadist Herdsmen.

This is because by the provisions of the Firearms Act of 2004, it is only the President that can give licenses to those bearing such weapons classified by the same law as 'prohibited firearms'. As found by **Intersociety**, too, no Igbo person or senior police officer from the Southeast is presently among the country's seven DIGs and 22 AIGs or the 12 Zonal Command Police AIGs. Also, out of the country's serving 95 Commissioners of Police, only seven are from the Southeast with one in acting capacity and another retiring in less than four months; and out of the 36 State CPs and that of FCT, only one is from the Southeast.

**SBCHROs** and **Intersociety** therefore find the above anomaly or lopsidedness as the **entry gate** of insecurity in Igbo Land. Based on ethno-religious dimension to the referenced insecurity in Igbo Land, it will be an uphill task trusting the security of the Region in the hands of circumstantially ethno-religiously compromised security top shots or in the hands of a security architecture that is brutally lopsidedly composed. This is more so when it is the same un-trusted security hands that will ‘man the air surveillances including bush, forest and farmland mappings to track down the “bandits”, “kidnappers” and “Fulani Herdsmen”.

There have been serious allegations of dropping inside bushes and forests in the dead of the night of military guns to the jihadists and “bandits” using classified or discreet military helicopters and planes. A case in point was the reported recent confession of the arrested “bandit” in Zamfara State. Corroboratively, too, as recently as 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017, the Nigerian Air Force in a jihad like operation rained live bombs on rural indigenous Christians in Numan area of Adamawa State, killing not less than 80. It was further reported that as “the bombs were being rained and the survivors scampering for safety, jihadist Fulani Herdsmen barricaded them and slaughtered dozens more”. The authorities of the Nigerian Air Force, having been caught in the act, flimsily and wobbly claimed that “the victims were mistaken to be Boko Haram terrorists”.

Earlier on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017, the same Nigerian Air Force deliberately spotted the Christian IDP Camp at Kala-Balge Local Government Area of Borno State and rained live bombs on them, killing not less than 236 IDPs. The authorities of the Nigerian Air Force initially denied knowledge of same, but later somersaulted only after the then Chairman of the Local Government publicly disclosed that “not less than 236 (Christian) IDPs were buried in mass graves”. The authorities of the Nigerian Air Force wobbly claimed that the “camp was mistaken to be a Boko Haram camp”; yet, none, till date, has been held accountable. These are just to mention but a few.

**Southeast Govs Must Stop Murder & Abduction Of Igbo-Christians In Benue:** The reported incessant attacks of both resident and ‘indigenized’ Igbo-Christians in Benue State by the jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and the so called ‘bandits’ are strongly condemned. Apart from attacks leading to murder and abduction of over 50 Igbo-Christians in the State, the ‘indigenized’ Igbo population in the State numbering over 1m have severally cried out over age-long neglects by the State Government as well as coordinated and systematic violence routinely visited against them by Islamic jihadists such as violent Fulani Herdsmen.

These ‘indigenized’ Igbo Communities in Benue include Igbo People of Umuezeakaoha, Umuezeoka and Oriuzo Clans (offshoots of Nri) and others such as Umuoghara, Amaekka and Amaezekwe excised from Ezza, Izzi, Ezzamgbo and Effium Communities in Ebonyi State, numbering over one million; with over 600 villages, but presently located and scattered in Ado, Oju, Obi and Okpoku Local Government Areas of Benue State, North-central Nigeria with over 1million people and large landmass. There are also Eke Avurugo, Umuoye, Ubulie, Ozara and Nwajara Igbo Communities in Igalamela, Ibaji and Odudu Local Government Areas of Kogi State, North-central Nigeria. It is our call and insistence that the Southeast Govs liaise with the present Government of Benue State stop the violence and ensure their security and safety.

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