

Exposing Nigerian Army's Shameless Falsehood And Remorselessness Over Amnesty Int'l Report On Massacre Of Unarmed And Defenceless Pro Biafra Campaigners In Nigeria

(Intersociety, Onitsha Nigeria, 26th of November 2016)-In the late evening of November 23rd, 2016, the long awaited **Special Report** of Amnesty International; the world's largest and most respected rights body, was released from its London Headquarters, and almost immediately after the release of the Report; the Nigerian Army hurriedly, *cheapishly* and shamelessly released a statement of denial and falsehood, reproduced below; bolded and italicized:

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S PLANNED CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY AGAINST THE NIGERIAN ARMY ON MASSOB/IPOB VIOLENT PROTESTS IN THE SOUTH EAST NIGERIA BETWEEN AUGUST 2015 AND AUGUST 2016

The attention of the Nigerian Army has been drawn to a planned release of a report by Amnesty International on an unfounded storyline of mass killings of MASSOB/IPOB protesters by the military between August 2015 and August 2016. We wish to debunk the insinuation that our troops perpetrated the killing of defenceless agitators. This is an outright attempt to tarnish the reputation of the security forces in general and the Nigerian Army in particular, for whatever inexplicable parochial reasons. For umpteenth times, the Nigerian Army has informed the public about the heinous intent of this Non-Governmental Organisation which is never relenting in dabbling into our national security in manners that obliterate objectivity, fairness and simple logic.

The evidence of MASSOB/IPOB violent secessionist agitations is widely known across the national and international domains. Their modus operandi has continued to relish violence that threatens national security. Indeed between August 2015 and August 2016, the groups' violent protests have manifested unimaginable atrocities to unhinge the reign of peace, security and stability in several parts of the South East Nigeria.

A number of persons from the settler communities that hailed from other parts of the Country were selected for attack, killed and burnt. Such reign of hate, terror and ethno-religious controversies that portend grave consequences for national security have been averted severally through the responsiveness of the Nigerian Army and members of the security agencies.

These security agencies are always targeted for attack by the MASSOB/IPOB instruments of barbarism and cruelty. For instance, in the protests of 30 – 31 May 2016, more than 5 personnel of the Nigeria Police were killed, while several soldiers were wounded, Nigeria Police vehicles were burnt down same as several others of the Nigerian Army that were vandalized.

The strategic Niger Bridge at Onitsha came under threat thus leading to disruption of socio-economic activities. In the aftermath of the encounter that ensued between security agencies and MASSOB/IPOB militants many of own troops sustained varying degrees of injury. In addition, the MASSOB/IPOB recurrent use of firearms, crude weapons as well as other cocktails such as acid and dynamites to cause mayhem remain a huge security threat across the Region.

In these circumstances, the Nigerian Army under its constitutional mandates for Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA) and Military Aid to Civil Powers (MACP) has continued to act responsively in synergy with other security agencies to de-escalate the series of MASSOB/IPOB violent protests.

Instructively, the military and other security agencies exercised maximum restraints despite the flurry of provocative and unjustifiable violence, which MASSOB/IPOB perpetrated. The adherence to Rules of Engagement by the military has been sacrosanct in all of these incidents.

Therefore, it is rather unfortunate for the Amnesty International to allow itself to be lured into this cheap and unpopular venture that aims to discredit the undeniable professionalism as well as responsiveness of the Nigerian Army in the discharge of its constitutional roles.

Thank you for your usual cooperation.

*Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman
Acting Director Army Public Relations*

While we gladly and unreservedly commend the authorities of the Amnesty International-UK for their courage, in depth investigation and analysis and apt findings concerning the Report; we wish to expressly state and hold that the statement of the Nigerian Army, in which it shamelessly attempted to deny culpability and grossly misrepresented facts of the matter; is totally provocative, false, watery, unprofessional, crude, culpably homicidal, atrocious, shameful, Jihadist and remorseless.

The Army statement also falls far below or acutely short of the doctrines of modern soldiering or military science; the international best practices in civilian affairs handling styles as well as the Principles and Purposes of the United Nations particularly protection and promotion of human rights and international peace and security.

The contents of the Army statement further depict unprofessionalism and grossly run contrary to the Fundamental Rules of the International Law particularly the “Ten Basic Standards of the International Law and Humanitarian Principles”; containing strict guidelines for State actors in managing nonviolent (and even riotous) assemblies; other than active armed rebellion against an independent political territory recognized under the UN System.

Therefore, having critically and expertly studied the Nigerian Army statement, the leadership of **International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law**; firmly finds contradictorily and boldly states as follows:

1. **That the Nigerian Army of present composition is Jihadist and ethnically biased in its operations and exercise of its auxiliary securitization roles particularly as it concerns its genocidal response to the peaceful and nonviolent processions and protests by members of the Indigenous People of Biafra and other Pro Biafra campaigners as well as those of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN).**
2. **That the Nigerian Army is a military assemble dominated by promoters and perpetrators of *ethnocide, religocide and genocide*.**
3. **That the Nigerian Army’s operational modes are utterly vindictive, Yorean, hegemonic, crude, barbaric, murderous and atrocious.**
4. **That the Nigerian Army grossly and recklessly adopts and uses via Presidential backing; operational death code of “treat (including waste or kill) any Pro Biafra Campaigner as a terrorist, failed coupist or insurrectionist with associated torturous and murderous sanctions outside the law.**
5. **That the Nigerian Army is engrossed in falsehood and criminal spinning of alarming proportions.**
6. **That the Nigerian Army brazenly and wickedly corrupts and bastardizes the UN Principles of Rules of Engagement; which are fundamentally embedded in the Geneva Conventions or Laws of War of 1949; which, in turn, originated from the three war (bellum) principles of Jus Ad Bellum, Jus In Bellum and Jus Post Bellum.**
7. **That the Nigerian Army’s constant reference to use of “Rules of Engagement” in massacring unarmed and defenceless members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and unarmed and defenceless citizens exercising their regional and international rights to Self Determination such as members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a total corruption and bastardization of the UN System’s Rules of Engagement;**

strictly designed for internal and international armed conflicts as well as a fundamental breach of the Fundamental Rules of the International Law under the UN System.

8. That under the UN System, no armed forces of any member-State of the UN including the Nigerian Army are allowed to use war-like weaponry and force to control or manage citizens' street march grievances; and where force is allowed at all, principles of Use of Force and its Proportionality must be strictly applied at all times (i.e. firearms or automatic weapons must not be used to disarm protesting citizens holding catapults).
9. That till date, there are no traces of members of the IPOB taking up arms against the Federal Republic of Nigeria or any part thereof.
10. That till date, no concrete evidence has been produced by the Federal Government empirically showing that members of IPOB have engaged in bombing of any government or public facility or killing of soldiers and other members of the security forces in battle fields.
11. That till date, no battle fields whether active or passive have been identified and linked to members of the IPOB.
12. That till date, no member of IPOB dead or alive has been linked by any branch of the Nigerian security forces; with provable evidence; to culpable homicide or murder of any innocent Nigerian citizen.
13. That almost all the street protests embarked upon by members of IPOB since July/August 2015 have been devoid of violence; particularly at the beginning of the protests and where any violent rarely erupted; it most likely occurred on account of rare expression of angers and frustrations by the surviving peaceful protesters over the unprovoked shooting and killing of their unarmed and defenceless colleagues by soldiers and other members of the security forces.
14. That the host State Governments in the protesting areas, in conjunction with killer-security agents have on several occasions, attempted to plant violence into the peaceful protests so as to find grounds to unleash deadly State violence on the Pro Biafra peaceful protesters; and in some cases; some police personnel were found to have been used as sacrificial lambs by their operational commanders during the peaceful protests by being collaterally shot so as to portray IPOB as a violent or militant group.
15. That where such unfortunate police officers rarely met the wrath of provoked and retreating peaceful protesters by way of clubbing or fist cuff wounds, they most likely got shot under in-service circumstances so as to blame it on IPOB and its leadership and portray same as "Armed Independent People of Biafra" (Retired IGP Solomon Arase, June 2016).
16. That the use of Biafra Flags, Chaplets and Holy Bibles during IPOB street protests or Church Vigils or School Compound Singing and Praying can never be translated or interpreted to mean "use of firearms", "dynamites" or "raw acids".
17. That conversely, there were provable evidence that it was soldiers that used raw acids and machetes against the unarmed and defenceless Pro Biafra Campaigners particularly during the 9th of February 2016 IPOB singing and prayer procession inside the National High School in Aba as well as the 29th and 30th of May 2016 World Igbo/Biafra Heroes Day at Nkpor and its environs.
18. That further attestation to the fact that Pro Biafra Campaigners particularly members of IPOB have remained nonviolent and a non-armed opposition group could be seen in the nine-count criminal charges preferred by the Federal Government against Citizen Nnamdi Kanu and three others before a Federal High Court in Abuja.
19. That in the whole charges none of them is charged with evidence generated murder or manslaughter, or rape, or armed uprising or active terrorism; and that in the case of Engineer Chidiebere Onwudiwe who was charged with "terrorism"; the accusation to the effect that he was "caught in Enugu researching on how to make Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)", will legally take the second coming of Jesus Christ for it to convictably proved.

20. That in the case of Mr. Benjamin Madubugwu, who was charged with “unlawful possession of firearms (Pump Action Gun)”; the “Pump Action Gun(s)” is categorized under the Firearms Act of 2004 as “non prohibited firearms” (i.e. it can be possessed by any citizen with a valid license).
21. That the Nigerian Army and other culpable security agencies in the butchery of at least 250 Pro Biafra Campaigners have no iota of defense or justification for heinously perpetrating the mass-murder with reckless abandon in about eight different locations between July/August 2015 and May 2016.
22. That their attempts to “manufacture or plant group violence” to escape their deadly culpabilities have failed woefully; locally, regionally and internationally.
23. That these explain desperation of the Buhari Administration and its killer-security forces, leading to seemed unleashing of both physical and psychological threats on the authorities of the Amnesty International in Nigeria so as to scare them from releasing the Special Report in Nigeria; forcing them to change its release venue from Nigeria to UK, as was the case three days ago.

Signed:

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