

Defending Human Rights Abusers In Nigeria: Time For Moribund Southwest Rights CSOs To Leave The Stage And Become Full-Fledged Politicians

(Intersociety/SBCHROs, Onitsha Nigeria, 23rd December 2016)-The death of Rights CSOs and their human rights advocacy activities in the Southwest Nigeria became noticeable prior to the 2015 General Elections. It became full-fledged from June 2015 to date following the emergence of the Administration of Retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari.

Indisputably, Lagos and its surrounding States/environs served as ***Nigeria's epicentre of independence, democracy and human rights struggles***; reaching its peak from 1984 to mid 1999 during the military's inglorious epoch. The ***Lagos School of Human Rights and Democracy Free Speeches and Struggles*** contributed immensely and pricelessly to the country's advancements in democracy, human rights and press freedoms with one of the arrowheads of the country's dark eras being the current President of Nigeria, Retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari.

Sadly, the same ***Lagos School of Human Rights, Democracy and Press Freedoms and Struggles*** has been conquered, annexed and transformed into the country's current ***epicentre of miseries, despotism and democratic barbarism***; with same ***Lagos School*** leading the way as its arch promoter, defender and advocate. What breeds and saddens our heart most is not the collective decision of ***the Rights CSOs*** of Lagos extraction to collapse and nail the internationally best practices of human rights advocacy activities; but their refusal to leave the stage and retire into permanence of politicking.

Attempts by the referenced to ***probate and reprobate*** or ***eat their cake and have it***, have resulted in brutal corruption and bastardization of core human rights, democracy and justice values in Nigeria, to the extent that heinous rights abusers are now labelled "international human rights defenders"; with their image laundered nationally, regionally and internationally on daily basis under what look like executive scripted and oiled circumstances.

The tragedy that befell these dead rights CSOs started way back in Lagos in the middle of 2000s through what some informed sources labelled "Alausa Virus", using the instrumentality of ***Lagos-CSO Liaison***; a sort of egoistic and materialistic partnership; which subsequently collapsed the then mainstream Rights CSOs of Lagos extraction into "an alliance of ACN and Rights CSOs". It was from this that "grassroots rights activism was abandoned" and "executive/laptop rights activism" created and promoted; given birth to "CSO-INEC Engagement"; "APC-CSO Opposition Consortium"; "APC-CSO Anti Corruption Consortium", "CSO-Legislative Engagement"; "CSO Election Situation Room"; to mention but few.

While it is the constitutional right of any citizen or CSO to leave the human rights advocacy stage and become a full-fledged politician or political party; it is morally abominable for such a group or citizen to be utterly paradoxical or maintain two contradictions at the same time. That is to say that ***a promoter of human rights abuse/abusers can never be a defender of human rights at the same time; neither can a human parts dealer be admitted into a rights community as a human rights defender.*** In Mathematics, one minus one will always give a negative result.

It is therefore shocking, alarming and deafening that arch human rights abuser with gross moral minus, in the person of Mr Ibrahim Magu of the Nigeria Police Force; who is, unconstitutionally, the Acting Chairman of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); is being labelled internationally as "a human rights defender", by some say; rights group, named "Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project".

The image laundering letter of "SERAP" to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, dated 16th of December 2016; is also considered a grave insult on the person and integrity of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Michel Forst; as well as collective image of the United Nations. The letter is dangerously misleading, cancerous, politically and ill motivated and scripted.

The letter also clearly amounts to meddlesomeness in the constitutional duties of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; to investigate, clear or reject any executive nominee for the occupation of any of the Federal Executive bodies established under Section 153 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999; as amended in 2011. The questions as to: ***are there no limits to renewal by the President, of executive appointments into constitutionally established federal executive bodies under acting capacity and when was Ibrahim Magu appointed as acting Chairman of EFCC; do not border the authorities of "SERAP"***. What despicably matters to them is Mr Ibrahim Magu's leprous baptism as "international human rights defender"; against all odds and his motley of rights abuses including long detention of suspects without trial and late night invasion and violent arrest of the suspects in their sleep.

For the avoidance of doubt, we again invite all Nigerians and members of the international community to read and analyse the authoritative statement reproduced below, dated 1st of July 2016. It was exclusively published by the News Express Online Media; owned by Mr. Isaac Umunna who is also the chief media aide to late Prof Dora Akunyili and her family till date. Prof Dora Akunyili was a former NAFDAC DG and Minister of Communications. The authoritative statement has not been credibly refuted by Federal Government and the authorities of EFCC till date. The rejection by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, of Police Officer Ibrahim Magu as the substantive Chairman of EFCC was substantially based on dubious circumstances surrounding his multimillion naira rent payment to Akunyili family for their House, located at No. 8B, Rudolf Close, Off Katsina Ala Crescent, Maitama District in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

Acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr. Ibrahim Magu, has rented a mansion in the elitist Maitama District of the Federal capital territory (FCT) Abuja, News Express can report this morning. The storey building located at No. 8B, Rudolf Close, off Katsina Ala Crescent, in the highbrow Maitama District, was the abode of a former federal minister who died sometime in May 2014. An impeccable source said: The property was rented to the Acting EFCC Chairman for N40, 000,000 at N20, 000,000 per annum.

Furthermore, the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) curiously awarded a contract to Africa Energy, a company owned by Rtd Air Comm. Umar Muhammad, to furnish the residence at the cost N43,000,000, in a Government where the President is known to have frowned at and rebuked his ministers for requesting N20,000,000 each to secure accommodation and furnish them. It is shocking that the man spearheading the anti-corruption crusade of the government will be involved in such a venture. More surprising is the involvement of FCDA in renting a house for EFCC and under what arrangement. News Express made efforts to get the reaction of Magu and EFCC but the commission's spokesmen Osita Nwajah and Wilson Uwujaren did not respond to text messages sent to them seeking their reaction to the story.

Today, through the magic of "APC-CSO Partnership", sacred cows in the so called "fight against corruption" abound. To be "Mr or Mrs Clean" under Buhari Administration, you must belong or join the federally ruling party and its "APC-CSO Consortium". It is also an incontestable fact that the present Buhari Administration and its "APC-CSO Consortium" parades the highest number of doyens of corruption both in its government and in the moribund Southwest CSOs' circles. The rate of aiding and abetting corruption and abuse of office under the Buhari Administration has gone viral as well.

We therefore condemn in totality the letter of "SERAP" and its contents. It is our express call and advice to the United Nations particularly its Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Mr. Michel Forst, to tear the letter into pieces and delete its delivery and documentation from its records. Such embarrassing letters should at all times be declared dead on arrival!

We consider Police Officer Ibrahim Magu as is a serial human rights abuser and constitutional violator. As a serving member of the Nigeria Police Force alone; noted globally for its butchery and notorious corruption records; Mr Magu can never be a human rights defender on account of same; not to talk of his gross rights and constitutional abuses as "acting head" of EFCC.

It is our strong advice to the moribund Rights CSOs and activists of Southwest or Lagos extraction to courageously leave the stage and form a political party so as to become full-fledged politicians. We invite new breed rights activists and democracy promoters to join us in the Southeast Nigeria which is now the epicentre of human rights and pro democracy struggles in Nigeria.

The international community is called upon to take advocacy and diplomatic notice of the rise of defenders and promoters of human rights abusers and despotism in Nigeria, majorly concentrated in the Southwest Region; who still go about parading themselves as "human rights groups and activists".

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