

EXCALATING POGROMS IN NIGERIA; LIBERAL ARMS LICENSING IS STRATEGIC NOW

Accusing the Nigerian military establishment and the Nigeria Police Force of systemic failures to prevent large scale genocidal killings by armed non- state actors including terrorists, armed Fulani herders, kidnappers and serial mass murderers, the prominent civil rights group: HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) has faulted the Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja for opposing private ownership of military grade weapons just as it supported the advocacy for Liberal gun licensing regime to stave off the continuous killings of citizens. HURIWA said that even the state of natural law permits individuals to legitimately take up strategic means and ways to remain alive because the moment a human being is killed; he/she has no fighting chance of obtaining a remedy.

HURIWA recalled that the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja, says allowing Nigerians to carry arms in self-defence against bandits, gunmen, and rampaging killer herdsmen will lead to anarchy. Lagbaja said this while speaking on Christmas Eve killings across villages in Plateau State that left over 162 dead and scores injured. Asked whether he supports Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang's call for locals to defend themselves against rampaging bandits, Mr Lagbaja said such would result in anarchy. He said "I do not support that. I think that is a call for anarchy. The Nigerian army is the people's army. It is organized and funded with the people's money to protect lives and property. When you have a situation where people freely carry and use arms, then it becomes a lawless state," Mr Lagbaja said.

Countering the position of Lt. Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja which supports that the status quo of continuous attacks of citizens should continue because of his misplaced fear of imminent anarchy should Liberal gun licensing regime be permitted in Nigeria, the Rights organisation referred the Army chief of staff to the United States of America and other jurisdictions whereby Liberal gun licensing permissions exist and stated that whilst the USA whereby their citizens have the fundamental right to own guns which is the World's most advanced democracy and highly organised whereas in Nigeria whereby only rogues and terrorists are allowed to bear sophisticated weaponry and what is worse than anarchy is in existence as we speak.

"The excuse that if private ownership of guns is allowed in Nigeria that there will be anarchy as narrated by the chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja is lame, untenable and vacuous because the right to life is constitutionally guaranteed and this inherent right to life is the only fundamental human right which if taken away or violated, will never be remedied, redressed or will any kind of justice be done directly to the victim of the violation of the fundamental human right to life as enshrined in Section 33(1) of the constitution of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria of 1999 which states thus: "Everyone has a right to life and no one SHALL BE DEPRIVED INTENTIONALLY OF HIS LIFE, save in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which the accused person has been found guilty in Nigeria".

"So bearing legal arms to prevent the deprivation of life is very lawful and it is error-prone to argue otherwise that doing anything legitimate to preserve life could promote anarchy is like putting logic on its head and is incurably fallacious, illogical, farcical, puerile and laughable".

"Nigerian government should organise a referendum on Liberal gun licensing practice in Nigeria and see whether the overwhelming majority of Nigerians who now live under an atmosphere and a general climate of fear of attacks by terrorists wouldn't opt to own guns even if such guns are of high military grade just like the renegades whom the Nigerian Army have failed to conquer are wielding and deploying to unleash devastating and blood cuddling attacks on innocent Nigerians. It is better to die fighting than to die being slaughtered like a fowl as the Army chief is advocating."



HURIWA also condemned the Chief Army Staff's argument that volunteering information to the military will prevent attacks because according to information, the residents of the 23 Plateau State

villages whereby armed Fulani terrorists attacked and slaughtered over 200 innocent souls, had poured in several calls to the Army through the phone numbers provided but the military responded too late on the lame excuse that the roads were not motor able but we ask the military to tell the World how come the terrorists transported heavy weaponry and manpower to carry out the pogroms successfully for many hours and still came back after few days to unleash more attacks but the Army is busy rendering watery and illogical excuses for their gross failures of security?"

"Why do we as a nation spend billions of dollars training the military, DSS and police on intelligence gathering mechanisms and yet the Army chief is asking the people to give the Army information as if that was the reason the terrorists succeeded in killing massive numbers of innocent citizens? This is preposterous."

HURIWA said if the Army chief and others heading sister security agencies have honour, the most honourable thing to do us to resign immediately since they collectively failed to prevent the pogroms in Plateau State that even the United Nations, the Vatican City and presidents of many European nations are condemning as atrocious and despicable.