

Clean up Prisons from deeply-rooted criminality, drug trafficking.

...*HURIWA advise Minister of Interior*...

HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) has expressed shock and concern that months after the scandal broke out that Transgender Socialite Bobrisky, sentenced to 6-months in jail over Naira abuse lived in a special flat outside the prison facility which was found doubtful by an investigative panel constituted by the ministry of Interior, the authority has failed to clean up the Correctional facilities of all kinds of organized crimes including trafficking and selling of hard drugs and sex. HURIWA recalled that the investigative panel reported that Bobrisky, real name Mr. Idriss Okeneye was allowed other privileges including frequent visits from family and friends, had a furnished single cell, a fridge and even a phone. The panel was instituted after a bribery allegation was made against Bobrisky by the Social media influencer Mr. Martins Otse, widely known as VeryDarkMan, who said officials of the Correctional Centre had been bribed to drop money laundering charges against Bobrisky, who vehemently denied the bribery allegation.

HURIWA said the federal ministry of Interior has since moved on and allowed the status quo to be maintained in the Correctional facilities across Nigeria said to be characterized by all kinds of organized criminality which include sex and drug trafficking, financial inducement of prison officials, aiding and abetting crimes including kidnapping, armed robbery and advanced fees fraud committed by inmates from right inside the Correctional facilities aided by rogue officials.

The Rights group in a media statement endorsed by the National Coordinator Comrade Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko said the minister of Interior Mr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo seems preoccupied with overseeing only the Nigerian Immigration Service and should be directed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to pay greater attention towards sanitizing the Correctional facilities of organized criminality because permitting these deeply rooted dangerous criminal activities to continue in the Correctional facilities amounted to grave threats to national security. HURIWA argued that it is too dangerous to allow terrorists, bandits and drug traffickers to continue to flourish in their businesses of the underworld from inside of Correctional facilities maintained by the taxpayers.

"The Federal government needs to investigate if these crimes have direct nexus to the frequent cases of prison breaks that Nigeria has witnessed in the past few years with hundreds of escaped hardened criminals, terrorists and murderers who escaped during prison breaks in Kuje, Abuja, Lokoja, Owerri, Ogbomosho and several other Correctional Centres are still roaming the streets without being recaptured by the security agents. "These crimes going on inside of the Correctional facilities in the Country have gained notoriety for a long time," just as HURIWA asserted that confronting the hydra-headed monster and 'cutting off the head of this cobra' is of extreme importance to minimize the occurrences of sophisticated and bloody crimes/terrorism which cause the violent deaths of innocent citizens.

HURIWA recalled that last week, the famous Journalist and activist Agba Jalingo had described Nigerian detention centers and prisons as hubs of extortion and illicit activities, alleging that access to basic rights in custody depends largely on money.

Speaking in a joint interview on Arise TV's Perspectives programme alongside Media Room Hub publisher, Azuka Ogujiuba, Jalingo recounted his multiple experiences of arrest and imprisonment, including six months at Calabar prison during the administration of former Cross River State governor, Ben Ayade, and nine days at Kuje prison in Abuja. He alleged that "there is no detention center in Nigeria that you don't pay," adding that the claim that bail is free is false. "One of the biggest lies in Nigeria is that bail is free. Or that visit to prison is free. It is a lie. None of them is free. If you don't pay money, you will not see your relative in prison," Jalingo said.



According to him, extortion is systemic, ranging from minor payments to large sums. "In Calabar, they collect as little as N50. If you bring them N10,000, N20,000, any amount of money you give them, they collect. That is the truth of the matter. Even in Kuje, that is supposedly the best prison in West Africa, as it were, they still collect money from you." He further claimed that with enough money, detainees and inmates could access a range of prohibited items and privileges. "People stay in jail and do all kinds of things. There are those in jail with phones; they live large in prison. They have everything that they want. The only thing I did not see in jail is human parts and guns. Every other thing you want, including

cocaine, it is in jail. If you want to have sex, you will have it. With the right amount of money, everything can be arranged."

HURIWA said these allegations made by someone with an insider's knowledge has been offered official seal with the most recent confirmation by the authority of the Nigeria Police Force that the Police Command in Enugu State had arrested a personnel of the Nigeria Correctional Service over alleged involvement in kidnapping-related transactions. Security sources confirmed the story to Zagazola, a renowned security analyst, saying the suspect, identified as Mr. Ezu Ugochukwu, 41, also known as Sheyi, was attached to the Enugu Correctional Centre. According to the sources, his arrest followed credible intelligence and confessions made by a suspect earlier apprehended in connection with a kidnapping case. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the officer was in possession of the ATM card of the suspect while in prison custody, as well as those of other inmates. HURIWA has therefore asked the minister of Interior to approach the Chairman, Chief Executive Officer of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency and the Director General of the Department of State Services (DSS) to jointly assist the federal ministry of Interior by embarking on the comprehensive uprooting of these organized criminality being masterminded by inmates and in most cases with the active connivance and conspiratorial partnership of officials of these Correctional facilities.