

PRESS
RELEASE

Following the recent unfortunate massacre of members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, subsequent arrest of the leader of the Movement, His Eminence Sayyed Ibraheem Zakzaky (H), arrest of hundreds of other members, destruction of properties,

perpetrated by the Nigerian Army in Zaria, Kaduna State under the watchful eyes of the Nigerian government and the propaganda instituted by Army and the government, seeking to cover up their crime against humanity, the Movement finds it necessary to make the following submissions:

BACKGROUND

On 25th July 2014, the last Friday of the month of Ramadan, internationally recognized as the day for the commemoration of the Quds Day during which peaceful pro-Palestinian processions are conducted, the Nigerian Army attacked the tail of the procession in Zaria, thereby killing, injuring and arresting innocent unarmed members of the Movement. The following day 26th July, 2014, the Army also commenced another killing spree at the Hussainiyya Baqiyyatullah (Centre of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria) where several others were also killed or injured. This resulted to the murder of 34 members of the Movement, some of whom were tortured to death after their arrest by the Army, including three children of the leader Sayyed Ibraheem Zakzaky (H).

The incident was widely condemned and the revered leader of the Movement received condolences from far and wide with a promise by the government to look into the matter to fish out those responsible, for justice to take its course and the leader calling for calm among members and sympathizers of the Movement. Since then nothing has been done on the side of the government even as the leader said legal means would be adopted to seek redress. That not being enough, there had been series of attempts on the life of Sheikh Zakzaky which led to members of the Movement and other people staging peaceful rallies across the country which has been widely reported in the media at local and international levels.

THE ATTACK ON HUSSAINIYYA

On the morning of Saturday 12th of December 2015, soldiers were stationed opposite the Hussainiyyah Baqiyatullah (Center where teaching sessions and other activities are held) located at No.1, Sokoto Road, close to the polo pitch. On that day, the Movement was to commemorate a flag hoisting event. The event was to mark the beginning of the Month of Rabiul Awwal, the birth month of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) where a green flag is to be hoisted replacing the black one. Some people from different places have started gathering for the event which was to commence in the evening.

Those in attendance were inside the Husainiyyah while the organizers were busy putting the place in order. At about 12:30pm, some of the organizers went to confirm why the Army in such numbers were stationed in front of the Hussainiyyah; and were informed that they were having a passing-out parade. They told the soldiers that they have had passing-out parades in the past but they had never stationed soldiers there and that their presence was generating tension considering what they did in 2014 where they killed 34 of the members of the Movement. The soldiers started shooting in the air.

This was what made those inside the Husainiyyah to start coming out on the road. In the midst of this, the soldiers started taking positions and all of a sudden there was siren of the purported entourage of the Chief of Army Staff General Tukur Buratai which was blocked as a result of the presence of people in front of the Hussainiyyah and on the road in front. That was when the Army took advantage of the situation and took video of the tension and part of what ensued between some people and the Army.

When the tension persisted, the entourage shot some people and passed through. About an hour later there was reinforcement of the Army carrying heavy arms and ammunitions that resumed killing indiscriminately. Eye witnesses saw Nigerian Army killing small children who were confused and running for refuge outside the Hussainiyyah. They remained in that situation killing any of the members at sight while the members of the Movement, who are armless, took cover inside the Hussainiyyah.

The soldiers called on those inside the Hussainiyyah who are in their hundreds to come out with their hands up, of which some of them did, but were shot by the soldiers as they went out and

this prevented the others from conceding. Later that night, the Nigerian Army threw grenades at the Hussainiyyah putting down part of the wall to gain access. Those inside were taking refuge were trapped as the soldiers surrounded the entire building and were shooting indiscriminately.

Not less than 300 armless civilians were murdered by the Army at the Hussainiyyah that night, with about a hundred of them children and women. They cordoned off the entire area and took away the corpses of those they murdered. The corpses were initially deposited at the Mortuary of Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Shika near Zaria, but were later removed for mass burial at unknown destination by the same Nigerian Army. They later brought down the frontage of the Hussainiyyah and later leveled the entire structure on Sunday 20, December 2015.

ATTACK ON THE HOUSE OF SAYYED ZAKZAKY AT GYELLESU

Just as the Nigerian Army was on its killing spree at the Hussainiyyah on that fateful Saturday, members of the Movement that were yet to arrive at the Hussainiyyah were informed to stay at home, and those that have arrived Zaria should proceed to the house of the leader, His Eminence Sayyed Ibraheem Zakzaky (H) and stay away from the Hussainiyyah. This was what gathered all the people at the Gyellesu residence of the leader of the Movement.

At about 9:00pm, the Nigerian Army in about nine trucks carrying heavy arms and ammunitions arrived Gyellesu area registering their presence by bombing a tea joint and setting the shop on fire. They took position outside the walls of Congo Campus of Ahmadu Bello University facing the road leading to the house of his Eminence Sayyed Zakzaky using the fire they ignited to see the armless members of the Movement protecting the house of their leader and shooting indiscriminately at them. They kept on killing people indiscriminately in their bent to reach the house of the revered leader which was shielded by members of the Movement but could not disperse the members.

The members of the Movement continued chanting Allahu Akbar (Allah is great) and Labbaika ya Rasulallah (We answer to you Messenger of Allah) and throwing stones at the direction of

the soldiers who fearfully stayed away but continued shooting and killing. Whenever they shoot down a member, as other members rushed out to pick him up, the soldiers shoot at them and killed them as well. This situation lasted for hours with the soldiers breaking from their shooting only for 10 to 15 minutes and resuming again.

At about 5:30am on Sunday, there was another reinforcement of soldiers in about 20 trucks with Armored Personnel Carriers forging their way through. Members of the Movement maintained their position chanting 'Allah is Great' while the Nigerian Army engaged in continued bloodshed breaking the human shield made by armless members of the Movement. This took another two hours before they could successfully reach the fence of the house of the leader and another one hour before they could get to the gate of the house.

Prior to this, the soldiers had already brought down the side wall of the leader's house and the remaining members continued with efforts to repel them but all to no avail. That was when many of the leading members including Sheikh Muhammad Mahmud Turi and Ibrahim Usman (a seasoned journalist with Kaduna State Media Corporation) were martyred. Also they killed 3 children of Sheikh Zakzaky, namely Hammad, Ali and Humaid, shot his wife Zeenat Ibrahim in the head, wounded his daughter Suhaila and his elderly sister as well as his sister in-law.

Thereafter, the Nigerian Army cordoned off the surrounding area killing those that were injured to make sure they finished everybody. They then set part of the frontage of the house on fire and invited thugs who stole money, phones and other belongings from the corpses of the members and also mutilated dead bodies; in fact a number of the injured were also killed by the thugs invited by the military.

They mutilated the dead bodies and cut some of the members by the throat and cut the bodies of others into pieces all in the presence of the soldiers. They were at the same time inciting sectarian hatred and phobia to justify their crimes as they shoot and kill anyone identified by the thugs as a member of the Movement. The soldiers were celebrating and jubilating, saying "we have finished with Shia and the Zakzaky. No more Shia in Nigeria" as if the Nigerian government was fighting the Shia faith while the Constitution allows freedom of religion and worship.

THE ATTACK AT DARUR RAHMA

Darur Rahma is a park, a graveyard and a film village owned by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. Towards evening on Sunday, some of the members of the Movement had taken refuge at the place following the military attack on the Hussainiyah and the house of the leader at Gyellesu. The Nigerian Army went to the Darur Rahma and shelled the buildings down using rocket launchers and later opened fire at the members of the Movement present killing many of them while some others escaped narrowly. The dead bodies from that place were also taken to the mortuary of ABU Teaching Hospital at Shika where corpses deposited by Nigerian Army from Hussainiyah and Darur Rahma numbered over eight hundred. This is in addition to those killed at Gyellesu.

THE ARREST OF THE SAYYED ZAKZAKY (H)

The circumstances surrounding the arrest of the revered leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria by the Nigerian Army is not very clear. Very reliable sources that included phone calls with the revered leader show that he was shot in four places. The face, the right leg, one of the arms and the chest were shot at. He was taken away by the Nigerian Army at about 9:00am on Monday 14th December 2015. This followed the announcement by Nigerian Army that he was with them under protective custody and later handed over to the government for prosecution for charges that are yet to be established. Since his arrest, no member of the Movement has been allowed to see him or has any idea of his situation and condition.

OUR STRUCTURES RAZED TO THE GROUND

Finally, the Kaduna state government took over from where the Nigerian Army stopped and completed the destruction of all the structures owned by the Islamic Movement across Zaria. These include the Hussainiyah Baqiyyatullah (Study Center and other gatherings) at GRA Zaria, Fudiyya Islamic Center at Dan Magaji and Darur Rahma (graveyard, park and film village). Even the NTC building which the Islamic movement bought not long ago, has been bulldozed by KASUPDA on the orders of the state government, a building that has been there for over 50 years.

13 PEOPLE KILLED IN KADUNA DURING PEACEFUL PROTEST.

On Tuesday December 15, 2015, anti-riot police (Mopol) opened fire upon members of the Islamic Movement who were staging a peaceful protest demanding the release of Sheikh Zakzaky in Kaduna. On the spot 4, people died, while additional 9 died later due to the gunshot wounds they sustained. Some of them were even electrocuted and stabbed severally while in custody.

COVER-UPS BY THE NIGERIAN ARMY

There are dozens evidences showing that the Nigerian Army in its attempt to cover up its crimes against humanity has buried a lot of corpses and has also incinerated a lot of others in already identified locations. Similarly, those in detention were tortured while young girls have been harassed and in some cases raped.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it can be clearly seen that the Nigeria Army operation was preplanned and executed accordingly. There were no such things as plans to assassinate the Chief of Army Staff General Tukur Buratai, or deliberate blockage of the entourage of the COAS. It was only an oppressive act of impunity displayed by the Army with an already planned intention of genocide against the over 20 million members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria by the government. We hereby call on peace lovers in Nigeria and the international community to rise against this form of tyranny and terrorism perpetrated by the Nigerian government on its citizens.

Finally, in view of all the above, we hereby call on all peace lovers and the International Community to join us in condemning the act for what it is - Genocide. In addition, we demand that:

- 1- Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky (H) should be released unconditionally as a means of taming the situation from further escalation.

- 2- All corpses of slain brothers and sisters still with the authorities must be handed over to us for proper Islamic burial.

- 3- All detainees must be released together with the injured for medical attention.

- 4- A strong and all-inclusive committee must be set up that include local and international representations to investigate and make public its findings for the world to know the truth.

- 5- Compensation must be paid for properties destroyed and lives lost and those who committed the genocide must be made to face the wrath of the law.

SIGNED: ISLAMIC INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

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