

Written by freezak

Thursday, 12 December 2019 11:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 12 December 2019 11:43

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The Islamic Movement in Nigeria has disclosed its concern on the continued detention of its leader Sheikh Ibraheem Yaqoub Zakzaky for four years after the Army's onslaught on members of the Movement known as Zaria massacre of December, 2015.

This was made known by Ibrahim Musa, President Media Forum of the Movement to pressmen in a press statement released today marking the fourth anniversary of the Zaria Massacre.

“As we mark the fourth anniversary of this Zaria Genocide Memorial, we unequivocally reiterate that enough of this systematic oppression of Sheikh Zakzaky and members of the Islamic Movement. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the Sheikh from this unjustifiable detention, along with all those still in detention on this account,” according to the statement.

The Islamic Movement also called for the prosecution of the military officers involved in the brutal massacre of over 1000 people in Zaria, something which it said even the kangaroo Judicial commission of inquiry set up by Kaduna state government recommended. “Earlier, the lopsided Commission they instituted to cover their tracks, could not entirely cover up the gravity of these crimes. The Commission had observed the highhandedness of the military, which was not in consonance with their rules of engagement or any known international best practices, and therefore had recommended the trial of the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's 1st Division Kaduna, Gen. Oyebade, who led the operation and all other officers who participated in the operation, “before a court of competent jurisdiction.” Years after, none of these Army officers has been arrested for these heinous crimes and atrocities.”

Below is the full press statement:

**Zaria Genocide Memorial: It is Four Years of Continuing Brutality and More Heinous Crimes by the Buhari Regime**

The days 12-14th December 2019 mark the fourth anniversary of the Zaria Massacre. On days like those, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria and thousands of his followers faced the most brutal crackdown ever, spearheaded by the Nigerian

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Army, at the behest of the Buhari-led Nigerian regime and its foreign backers. In those forty-eight hours of that eventful weekend, over a thousand unarmed Nigerian citizens were extra judicially gunned down in cold blood and many hundred others were arrested.

It was in those two cruel days that many infants and babies that knew nothing about the crimes their parents were allegedly accused of were mercilessly killed. It was during that black period too that even the elderly were not spared. The seventy-year-old elder sister of Sheikh Zakzaky was gruesomely thrown in a raging blaze while still alive, as she cried for water to quench her thirst. It was during that period that many families were completely wiped out of existence. It was during that period that not less than 193 children were butchered without any pity. Over 297 women, 548 men and 23 pregnant women were all killed within those two eventful days in December 2015. Valuable properties worth millions of Naira were torched and vandalized.

Within those terrifying days, graves of martyrs, earlier killed by the same Nigerian Army extra judicially, were desecrated and bodies were exhumed. In those same petrifying days, they secretly buried their victims in mass graves at a location several kilometres away from the crime scene. It was during those days that worship and educational centres, graveyard and the residence of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky were razed and completely demolished.

These heinous crimes against humanity by whatever standard one looks at them, were the subject of celebration by the very same trio culprits, President Buhari, Gen. Buratai and Governor Elrufai only last week, during the Chief of Army Staff annual conference held in Kaduna. The Governor specifically applauded the Nigerian Army for playing a leading role in confronting what he labelled “the menace of the outlawed Elzakzaky Movement.” The World has acknowledged that proclamation as a further confession in the body of growing evidence of their culpability in these heinous war crimes.

Earlier, the lopsided Commission they instituted to cover their tracks, could not entirely cover up the gravity of these crimes. The Commission had observed the highhandedness of the military, which was not in consonance with their rules of engagement or any known international best practices, and therefore had recommended the trial of the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's 1st Division Kaduna, Gen. Oyebade, who led the operation and all other officers who participated in the operation, “before a court of competent jurisdiction.” Years after, none of these Army officers has been arrested for these heinous crimes and atrocities. In fact, some sat in the conference hall where Governor Elrufai, Buratai and Buhari cheering and applauding.

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In the meantime, four years on, the government has never been able to prove any of their allegations against Sheikh Zakzaky or any of his supporters in any court of law. The Sheikh has remained unlawfully detained in spite of a judgement by an Abuja Federal High Court that his continued detention is a breach of the constitution and his fundamental rights, and indeed all known laws. For most of his years in detention since then, Sheikh Zakzaky has been held virtually incommunicado with only limited access to his legal representation. He was apparently poisoned in detention and is being denied medical treatment, putting his life at very great risk.

This oppressive Buhari regime has also since gone ahead to escalate their tyranny against members of the Islamic Movement, further killing many hundreds and arresting and detaining equally many hundreds more. The rights of Sheikh Zakzaky and his supporters are continually being violated with impunity. We, therefore, call on the International community, especially the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague and the UN to expedite action to hold the Nigerian government accountable for its crimes, and help uphold the inviolable human rights of the people of Nigeria.

Finally, as we mark the fourth anniversary of this Zaria Genocide Memorial, we unequivocally reiterate that enough of this systematic oppression of Sheikh Zakzaky and members of the Islamic Movement. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the Sheikh from this unjustifiable detention, along with all those still in detention on this account. We also demand the immediate arrest and prosecution of all the culprits involved in the Zaria genocide of December 2015 and its aftermath.

SIGNED BY

IBRAHIM MUSA

PRESIDENT MEDIA FORUM

ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA

SKYPE: Ibrahim.musa42

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