

Written by freezak

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With increasing pressure on the Buhari regime from home and abroad occasioned by the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague to investigate the crimes against humanity committed by this regime during the Zaria Massacre of 2015, there have been increased efforts at belittling the matter and trivializing the issues. This reached a peak in the last hours when the Kaduna state governor, Nasiru El-Rufai was rattling half-truths and pathological lies, for which he has come to be known.

In this his warped position, he insinuated that so long as he remains Kaduna Governor, Sheikh Zakzaky would remain in detention. According to the governor, Sheikh Zakzaky is being tried for crimes he and his followers committed in the last 30 years in Zaria.

On the contrary, after the criminal invasion of the Sheikh's residence in December of 2015 and the subsequent killing of hundreds of his supporters including his sons and relatives by Officers and men of the Nigerian Army, the Sheikh and his wife were shot at and arrested. The Sheikh and his supporters were the victims of state terror and crimes and not the perpetrators. The Department of State Security (DSS) illegally detained them without charges until May 2018, when the pressure on the government to release them became so intense and unbearable. It was at that point that the government thought of charging them of inciting his followers to commit alleged offences.

Prior to that, the government had struggled to give any sensible explanation for their continued detention. They had even clearly stated that the Sheikh was being kept in "protective custody" for his own safety and not because he had committed any crime. They also declared that the wife was not in detention but "merely keeping her husband company" and that she was free to walk out anytime she so wishes. So what crimes is Elrufai referring to?

Meanwhile before all these, on December 2, 2016, the Federal High Court presided over by the Honourable Justice G. O. Kolawole (now of the Court of Appeal) declared illegal and unconstitutional their arrest and detention. The Judicial Commission of Inquiry had indicted Nigerian army for the extrajudicial murder of 347 of their supporters during the raid on their residence and burying them secretly in mass grave and ordered that the officers and men involved be tried. The government has since demonstrated a stubborn unwillingness to prosecute those indicted. On the other hand, they arrested hundreds of members of the Sheikh Zakzaky-led Islamic Movement and put them on trial for allegedly being responsible for the death of one of the soldiers, who was accidentally shot by his colleagues. The Kaduna High Court has cleared all of them of these framed up charges and subsequently discharged and

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acquitted them all. So again, what crimes is Elrufai referring to?

Governor Elrufai's fraudulent claims that only court can free Sheikh Zakzaky pales in the face of the obvious. Firstly, the fabricated charges of inciting, aiding and abetting brought against him (as a ploy to perpetually keep him in detention) have been squashed in the High and Appeal courts. Secondly, the Federal High court had declared his detention as unconstitutional and therefore ordered his release. The government has remained in contempt of that order. Thirdly, even when the Kaduna high court granted the Sheikh medical leave, Elrufai never conceded. He took measures to thwart the medical bail, putting stringent terms and conditions independent of the courts. Clearly, Elrufai, like the master he is working for, General Buhari, has no respect for the rule of law.

Finally, we would like to let Elrufai and his master that the day of reckoning is very near indeed. Justice will be served and no amount of blackmail and misuse of state power could avert this whirlwind of justice from catching up with them all. On our part, we will intensify our peaceful campaigns until justice is done to the victims of Zaria genocide of December, 2015 and Sheikh Zakzaky and all those still being held regain their freedom.

SIGNED BY

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