PRESS RELEASE

Sherrif’s arrest: CISLAC condemns Government’s incessant unruly attitudes towards civil rights, demands immediate release

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) is seriously perturbed by the incessant disrespect to democratic values and unchecked violation of citizens’ rights by the present administration.

While we follow with keen interest, the deliberate disregard for the rule of law and nonchalant response of the administration towards public agitations, we condemn in totality outright disproportionate deployment of armed forces with resultant arbitrary arrest that creates unjustified tensions and threatens civil liberty in the country; as recently observed in a cases of Alhaji Nasturah Ashir Sherrif, who is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Coalition of Northern Youth.

We recall that Sheriff was arrested by the Nigerian Police for organising a series of protests against the killing of innocent people by bandits and other criminal elements in Katsina state.

We on this note articulate our disappointment and discomfort at unruly manners in which the administration handles civil agitations on governance coupled with devastating insecurity at all levels; instead of re-directing focus towards apprehending the perpetrators of ceaseless banditry and killings in Northern Nigeria.

We uphold our position that arbitrary arrest and disproportionate deployment of armed forces to frighten the citizens from demanding accountability on electoral mandates in form of peaceful protest, personal liberty and freedom of expression as guaranteed under relevant national and international laws, are unacceptable, undemocratic, and totally unwelcome in our nation’s democracy.

As we express our worries and dissatisfactions over the administration inaction to address citizens’ agitations in civility, we reiterate that citizens’ right to personal liberty, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are safeguarded, protected and must be respected, as enshrined under Section 35, 39 and 40 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; African Charter on Human and People’s Rights; African Youth Charter; and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

We therefore, demand immediate release of Sheriff and all other victims of unjustified arrests with strict adherence to the Constitutional provisions by governments at all levels while piloting affairs of the nation, as a clear demonstration for leadership respect for sanity and sanctity of the rule of law, civility and democratic core values.

We also demand sincere and proactive policy effort to address the resurging insecurity permeating Northern Nigeria with targeted action to apprehend the perpetrators of ceaseless banditry and killings in the region.
We urge all government agencies including the armed forces to deter from undemocratic actions that could be interpreted as harassment, intimidation and oppression of citizens on the basis of exercising their Constitutional and internationally guaranteed freedoms and rights.

We further call on civil society and the media to discourage unconstitutional and undemocratic actions against citizens.

Signed:

**Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**

Executive Director, CISLAC