PRESS RELEASE

Lagos Killing: CISLAC demands Crime Justice, passage of Police Reform Bill

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) condemned the unwary extra-judicial activities of the operatives of the Nigerian Police Force which continues unabated as manifested in the recent reckless killing of an innocent Nigerian named Kolade Johnson at a football viewing centre in Lagos, during a clueless raid to arrest a suspected offender in his neighbourhood.

We are seriously perturbed that hitherto lack of adequate justice for the prevalent extra-judicial activities has discriminatorily enhanced unchecked dehumanisation, human rights violation, and disproportionate response by the Police Force to especially civil cases.

While the Police has a fundamental mandate to secure and protect the citizens, the persistently unjust physical and mental torture experienced and extensively reported by innocent citizens across the country demonstrate otherwise and call for immediate operational review and re-alignment to accommodate well-defined rule of engagement in its dealing with civil cases.

We are worried on the ruthless and ill-thought response by the Police in addressing civil cases, just as we bemoan needless brutalities leading to the untimely death and dehumanisation of innocent citizens and arrogant display of lawlessness by the institution.

It is worrisome that that poor intelligent gathering, inefficiency, and inadequate response capacity by the security forces has largely paved way for pervasive criminal activities and other social vices that remain unaddressed despite ceaseless public outrages.

We are convinced that immediate passage of the awaiting Police Reform Bill by the National Assembly has become paramount to restore sanity and sanctity in the activities of the Police; and legitimately constrain and penalise Police operatives in the country against such undemocratic decision that to pull their guns while apprehending defenceless offenders of law or push citizens into custodial black holes without proper procedures.

We therefore, demand prompt response by the relevant authorities to investigate the recent ruthless killing of the innocent citizen at football viewing centre in Lagos and reported cases in other places with appreciable and transparent effort to bring the perpetrators to justice.

We call for the immediate passage of the awaiting Police Reform Bill to criminalise human right violation by the Police; ensure stringent safeguards to protect human rights; define a positive legal framework for effective policing, ensuring proper and lawful arrests generally, without unnecessary restraints; conducting lawful searches of criminal suspects; and examination and detention of suspects in humane holding facilities, with their rights to bail secured.

We also call for proactive response, adequate intelligent gathering, encouragement and enhanced efficiency in the Police Force to effectively curtail widespread criminal cases that continue to exacerbate tension, insecurity and socio-economic uncertainty in the country.

CISLAC has through the Criminal Justice (CRIMEJUST) Project been advocating for the passage of Police Reform Bill in Nigeria.

Signed:

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