

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY CAPACITY-BUILDING SESSION FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY HUMAN RIGHTS DESK OFFICERS, ANTI-CORRUPTION TRANSPARENCY UNITS OFFICERS, AND SERVICOM DESK OFFICERS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CORRUPTION PETITIONS, ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC)/TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL IN NIGERIA (TI-NIGERIA) IN COLLABORATION WITH TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL – DEFENCE AND SECURITY PROGRAM AT GOLDEN DEBIS HOTEL, KEFFI NASARAWA STATE ON 5TH AND 6TH OCTOBER, 2023.

PREAMBLE:

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)/ Transparency International Nigeria and Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in collaboration with Transparency International – Defence and Security Program with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands held a Two-day capacity building session for Defence and Security Human Right Desk Officers, Anti-corruption Transparency Units Officers and Servicom Desk Officers on the Management of Corruption Petitions. The Workshop aimed at revisiting issues and challenges of human rights within the Defence and Security sector, while proffering holistic recommendations for improved operations and services. There was an **opening remark** from the Director General, of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Dr. Joseph P. Ochogwu. The session had some technical sessions with papers titled ***Security and Respect for Human Rights: Legal Frameworks and Challenges in Nigeria***, presented by Dr. Gerald Okafor; ***Anti-Corruption Reforms in Advancing Human Rights Protection in Defence and Security Operation***, by Dr. Paul Andrew Gwaza; ***Human Rights Accountability in Internal Security Management***, by Mr. Adamu Halilu; ***Advancing Civil-Military Relations to Promote Human Rights in Defence and Security Sector***, by Dr. Paul Andrew Gwaza. The Dialogue was attended by Security Agencies, Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Civil Society. After brainstorming exhaustively on various thematic sessions, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS:

1. As Nigeria faces multi-faceted and growing security challenges, response to threats at institutional levels has largely impacted human rights protection and promotion; just as maintaining a balance between security, laws and human rights lingers unresolved.

2. Protection of human rights remains sacrosanct as enshrined under relevant legal provisions backed by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. Civilian control of the armed forces is necessitated by the need to ensure representative government, prevent militarisation of civil space, and promote civilianization of the military.
4. Poor operational working conditions and remunerations within the Defence and Security sector, inadequate training and re-training programs for personnel on human rights protection in accordance with global standards, constitute major barriers to activating human rights in various Defence and Security operations.
5. Within the context of human security, every well-intended reform and intervention must take into cognizance, relevant right-based legal provisions, and humanitarian and sustainability aspects of enforcing human rights.
6. Lack of a centralized databank on the protection of human rights and security, inadequate Needs Assessment to ascertain capacity gaps among personnel, and operation activities within the Defence and Security sector result in mismatched responses at policy levels.
7. Disproportionate allocation of security personnel for public/private services, given the reported personnel shortage across security agencies widens existing gaps in operational efficiency and security services at all levels.
8. As corruption hinders development and undermines security in Nigeria, delayed transparency and accountability of the Security Votes implementation at sub-national levels remains a major challenge to the promotion and realization of human security.

9. Unchecked violation of fundamental human rights and dignity breeds continuous corrupt practices that weaken Defence and Security structures, operations, and services.
10. Despite various anti-corruption reforms initiated by successive administrations with a specific focus on system audit, payroll synchronisation, and budgetary and operational reviews, endemic corruption in Defence and Security sector persists with consequential threats to human rights and security.
11. Delayed integration of modern Information and Communication Technology tools and equipment in Defence and Security operations, and implementation summonsault of various recommendations of the security reforms by successive administrations hamper overall Defence and Security efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the Two-days Capacity Building Session, participants recommended as follows:

1. Aggressive awareness, sensitisation, training and re-training of Human Rights, SERVICOM, ACTU Desk Officers in the Defence and Security sector and other relevant stakeholders on various instruments and legal provisions protecting human rights.
2. Institutionalisation of a centralised databank to improve and ensure accurate information provision on human rights protection, abuse and violation to inform rational intervention and adequate reform in Defence and Security operations.
3. Uphold the respect for human rights principles and practice within the Constitutional and relevant legal provisions through collective and continued oversight of Defence and Security agencies for maximum accountability and efficiency.
4. Improve the operational conditions and review existing remunerations across Defence and Security agencies to reflect current realities, taking

into cognizance stress management, post-trauma services, professionalism, and efficiency.

5. Address the systemic corruption across Defence and Security spheres through targeted and holistic reforms to secure public trust and protect human rights, while promoting core values of the national ethics.
6. Strict adherence to the Rules of Engagement by personnel operating in civil space to prevent human rights violation; and exhaustive corruption/human rights Risk Assessments of Defence and Security operations.
7. Enhance the whistleblowing protection through policy transition into legislation to encourage sustainability and citizens' participation in the anti-corruption process and human rights protection.
8. Reinforce Nigeria's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 which emphasizes "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions" through the integration into the national policy documents for the institutionalization of the anti-corruption crusade.
9. Institutionalisation of independent oversight entities with specific authority to monitor and investigate reported cases of corruption and human rights abuses in the Defence and Security sector, to enhance transparency and accountability.
10. Encourage constructive civil-military relations through enhanced synergy and collaboration among communities and security agencies to build trust and restore public confidence.
11. Build a mutual respect and cooperation between Defence and Security agencies, oversight institutions to encourage synergy in order to facilitate continuous accountability of human rights and security.
12. Integrate human rights and anti-corruption knowledge into the Nigerian educational curriculum from Primary to Tertiary institutions to amplify awareness creation and capacity building.

13. Mainstream modern Information and Communication Technology tools in Defence and Security operations for an enhanced intelligence gathering and timely response.

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