

MEDIA ADVISORY

Access to Justice and 8 Civil Society Organizations File Action against President Jonathan Seeking Order of Mandamus to Compel Investigation of Allegations of War Crimes Committed by JTF Troops

On the 13th of November 2014, Access to Justice and 8 other civil society, namely **One Voice Coalition for Sustainable Development in Nigeria (OneVOICE)**, **Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)**, **Human Rights Law Services (HURILAWS)**, **Social Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)**, **Network on Police Reform in Nigeria Foundation (NOPRIN)**, **Nigerian Automobile Technicians Association (NATA)**, **Centre for Constitutional Governance (CCG)** and **Centre for Constitutionalism and Demilitarization (CENCOD)** filed a suit before the Federal High Court Abuja Division against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1st Defendant/Respondent) and the Attorney General of the Federation (2nd Defendant/Respondent). The lawsuit seeks an **Order of Mandamus** to compel the defendants/respondents to conduct a thorough, prompt, and impartial investigation into allegations of brutal extrajudicial killings/executions and war crimes made by Amnesty International (AI) on 5th August 2014.

AI's report, accompanied with video footage depicts horrendous acts of extrajudicial killings and possible war crimes against suspected members of the Boko Haram sect carried out by members of the Nigerian military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF).¹ The accompanying video footage shows horrific images of detainees having their throats slit one after the other and their bodies dumped in mass graves by men who appeared to be members of the Nigerian military and the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF). It also shows 16 young men and boys all seated in line. One by one, they are called forward, and ordered to lie down in front of a pit that served as a grave. Five of them were reportedly killed this way.

The suit follows the refusal of the government to demonstrate that it had acceded to demands by the applicants for thorough investigation of the serious allegations.

¹ The report can be found at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/nigeria-gruesome-footage-implicates-military-war-crimes-2014-08-05>

Access to Justice and its partners in this action are committed to fighting impunity and lawlessness in the delivery of security services, and ensuring that security operatives carry out their duties professionally, within the constitutional rule of law framework, and with respect for the rights of Nigerians, particularly those who are especially at risk of being stereotyped, or branded as “terrorists”, within the context of the war on terrorism in Nigeria. We are not unmindful of the peculiar difficulties faced by security agencies in fighting terror and terrorist groups, but lining up people accused of membership of a terrorist organization alone, and, without trial by a law court, cutting their throats in cold blood, cannot represent the benchmark for a legitimate campaign against terror. That would be sheer barbarism. We believe that it is our duty, as well as the duty of every Nigerian to take steps to ensure that State power is used accountably and responsibly.

The case comes up on Dec. 2 before Hon. Justice Abdul Kafarati of the Federal High Court.

Signed,

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For the Applicants