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**The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,
United Nations Office at Geneva, CH 1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Our Inputs for the Preparation of the 2023 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 47/21

Effium Extra-Judicial Killings; Indigenous Group Decries Conspiracy on the Army Operation

Effium is an indigenous community located in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi state, Nigeria. The community has been engulfed in communal war since January 2021-between the indigenous people of Effium and their Ezza residents over political and communal misunderstanding. This war led to the deployment of military personnel for peace-keeping mission in Effium land.

Sadly, as a result of corruption and other unethical behaviour, the military deployed for peace keeping operation in the community has turned against the indigenous people. Effium people have accused the army of conspiracy with the rival Ezza tribe as a result of huge bribe received in buying the conscience of the soldiers on a mission against the indigenous people of Effium.

Nigerian army has committed a lot of human rights violations against the indigenous people of Effium. Notable among these attacks against the African descent of Effium is the recent midnight military operation at Okporo village in Effium community in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi state as Effium indigenes are demanding for full investigation and accountability from the military authority.

The taskforce operation which was carried out by officers of the **Nigerian Army on the directive of Chief of Army Staff -Lieutenant General Farouk Yahaya under the supervision of Major General Aminu Chinade, GOC of 82 Division Enugu was executed around 1:00 am in the midnight of Wednesday 22nd of February 2023 which led to the killing of two Effium aborigines namely (1) Ejem Monday and (2) Ejem Ebube and gunshot wound of one Chukwuebuka Ibobo-** all of which are Effium indigenes.

Nigerian army executed the covert operation against the indigenous people in their land and at such a time where everyone was asleep as deeply suspected an illegal/manipulated operation.

It is on record that Effium people have been maintaining good relationship with the army officers deployed for a peace-keeping mission in the community since the war began in that community in 2021. It is still bewildered how an army sent to protect lives and property in the community has turned out to be the killers of the indigenous people and destroyers of their property.

The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** should take note that this is not the first time Nigeria army has been involved in extra-judicial killing of Effium indigenes in their aboriginal land. Similar incidents have occurred in mid-year 2022 where army officers deployed in Effium were complicit in killing of Effium indigenes at Effium urban. Effium people are seriously worried and pained in these growing unprovoked, unjust and unlawful attacks and wastage of indigenous peoples lives and property in their aboriginal community.

The indigenous group therefore calls on the army authority, local and international human rights organizations, civil society and concerned stakeholders to conduct a full and unbiased investigation in order to unravel the mystery behind these continuous and unprovoked attacks against the indigenous people of Effium in their community by the military officers sent to quell the crisis in Effium.

According to an eyewitness, the soldiers who came for the last midnight covert operation threatened to forcefully eject Effium people from their own community if they refused to leave. As an indigenous group, we wish to re-echo that the threat to indigenous individuals' security and use of state forces to dispossess the indigenous people of their land and other resources is a complete violation of both local, national and international laws that protect the rights of indigenous people.

Article 7 of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) guarantees (1) indigenous individuals' rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person. (2) Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

Furthermore, Article 26 of the UNDRIP states that (1) Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. (2) Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. (3) States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.

We hereby submit our collective opinion to the **OHCHR** stating that the action of the Nigeria is a complete systemic racism, violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies, to contribute to accountability and redress; and call for measures to ensure equal and effective access to justice and effective remedies for violations of the right to participate in public affairs.

We demand accountability from the Nigerian Military in terms of their sufficient in their rules of engagement and standards of operation while in peace keeping mission in Effium land, and not to be seen as agents of further destruction of Effium land and killers of Effium people they are lawfully meant to protect.

Although, peace was gradually returning to the community, this unfortunate and unprovoked attack by the military has further deepen the crisis as number of civilian casualties keep escalating as a result of the armed state actors.

We call on OHCHR, oversight agencies and other relevant institutions to expedite their accountability and oversight mechanisms/actions on the operational activities of Nigeria military in Effium community whether this is in line with their rules of engagement and international best practices for military operations on a peace keeping mission and we demand that erring officers be brought to book.

We are indigenous people at risk and danger. We are facing existential and evacuation threats from our aboriginal land. Let justice prevail.

Reported by:

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