

NIGERIA CIVIL SOCIETY
SITUATIONROOM

SITUATION ROOM CONDEMNS HIRED PROTESTS SIEGE AT AMNESTY'S OFFICE

Issued: Thursday, 23rd March 2017 - 5:00pm

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) expresses concern over the apparent hiring of thugs and protesters to lay siege to the Nigeria offices of Amnesty International and the threats against the foremost international human rights organization.

This statement is issued in the immediate aftermath of coordinated protests by a group, Global Peace and Life Rescue Initiative (GOPRI), which has barricaded the Abuja office of Amnesty International, demanding the international organisation leave Nigeria. Rather than address Amnesty International's charge of rights abuse by various government agencies against Nigerian citizens, perpetrators procure protesters to lay siege at its Abuja Office. This is embarrassing and saddening especially since Amnesty International is a well-known international NGO and has been operating legally in the country for decades. This obviously sponsored and ill-conceived protests against the operations of Amnesty International in Nigeria underscores the increasing threats against human rights defenders and diminishing space for civil society in Nigeria. This is contrary to principles and practices of democracy, which we believe that Nigeria is guided by.

Situation Room calls on the Federal government and all law enforcement agencies to stop the unlawful harassment and threats against Amnesty International and its staff. Nigeria is a signatory to numerous international human rights treaties and has an obligation to protect the rights and freedoms of human rights defenders under the **UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders**. Amnesty International is duly registered in Nigeria and protected under Nigerian laws as well as international human rights conventions.

Situation Room strongly calls on the Federal Government to ensure that individuals, Civil Society Groups and human rights defenders are not intimidated or harassed in the course of their work or for criticizing the government.

The Situation Room is made up of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in support of credible and transparent elections in Nigeria and includes such groups as Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), CLEEN Foundation, ActionAid Nigeria, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Proactive Gender Initiative (PGI) Enough-is-Enough (EiE) Nigeria, WANGONET, Partners for Electoral Reform, JDPC and Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA). Others are Development Dynamics, Centre for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Stakeholders Democracy Network, Human Rights Monitor,

Election Monitor, Reclaim Naija, Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, CITAD, Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE), CISLAC, and several other CSOs numbering more than seventy.