



\$9.3 MILLION IMPOUNDED IN SOUTH AFRICA: MONEY LAUNDERING OR BLACK MARKET ARMS PROCUREMENT?

Nigerian Muslims Network (NMN), an association of Nigerian Muslims at home and in Diaspora; wishes to lend its voice to the condemnation of the export of the whopping sum of \$9.3 million from our great Nation, Nigeria, allegedly for black market arms purchase. The discovery and subsequent detention of the private/commercial jet stashed with the said mind-boggling amount from the shore of Nigeria by South African authority is not only highly embarrassing but suspicious.

Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, President, Christian Association of Nigeria, has admitted ownership of the said private jet. However, his attempt to extricate himself from the illegality by his claim that the jet was hired out by Eagle Air in which he has only “residual interest” is both dangerous and diversionary. Could it just be a coincidence that the company in which he has residual interest, which borrowed his jet, is also the one involved in the illegality? Considering the fact that the CAN president had severally suggested that Nigerians, especially the Christian communities, be allowed to bear arms purportedly for self defense requires that this matter not be treated with a pinch of salt.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government (FG) has issued a statement shamelessly admitting ownership of the cash. We believe this is just an attempt to cover up the illegality and shield those involved, because of their closeness to the Presidential Villa. It is an open secret that there is an illicit relationship between the Pastor and the Presidency. It will therefore not be surprising if the Presidency would stoop to the lowest to defend him. This attempt by the Federal Government to explain away the volatile issue is not only unacceptable but also highly suspicious.

While the reasons offered by the FG for resorting to procurement of arms through black market without due process as enshrined in the Procurement Act guiding such transaction is untenable, we challenge the FG to publish the memo or the minutes of the Federal Executive (FEC) Meeting where such procurement was debated and approved. We believe that the illegitimacy involved was the whole reason why a private jet of someone close to the Presidency was used, despite the number of jets available within the Presidential fleet.

Further question begging for answer is: from where was the cash sourced? The whole scenario also smell of money laundering. From whichever perspective it is viewed, the action is reprehensible, dishonorable, illegal and a threat to national security.

The NMN hereby, as a matter of utmost urgency, call on the National Assembly to constitute a high level investigative panel to probe the matter and prosecute all those involved and assure Nigerian citizenry, especially Muslims, of their safety and security.

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