

WILL THEY ALLOW GOD
TO USE THEM AGAIN
IN 2007?

TAYLOR OFF FOR TRIAL.... Former Liberian President, Charles Taylor (l) being escorted to the plane in Freetown, Sierra Leone
en route The Hague, Netherlands for trial at the World Court
Photo: AP

ERASMUS ALANEME, Abuja

A total of N257 billion was shared yesterday by the three tiers of government as revenue for June.

Riots: Govt extends curfew beyond Onitsha

MALACHY UZENDU, Abuja,
ALPHONSUS NWEZE, Onitsha

Kalu yesterday indicted his men for increasing jail breaks in the country.

COMPTROLLER General of

and negligence but was quick to add that his men lacked tools to operate effectively.

This is at Anambra State

curfew to six other towns in the Onitsha metropolis to avert the spread of crisis.

A breakdown of the amount showed that the Federal Government received N117 billion, while the 36 states got N59.69 billion. The 774 local government areas received N46.06 billion

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over the performance of his men especially on duty at the Onitsha Prisons, Mr. Kalu said the burning of the subsequent escape of 204 inmates could have been averted if the warders had lived up to expectation.

"The government is tired of jail break and the staff cannot be totally exonerated because some of them are not committed, even some used to abandon their duty post without permission," Kalu noted while on the assessment of Onitsha prisons alongside the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ogbonna Onovo.

He said hoodlums would not have gained access to the prison yard if the warders on duty resisted the attack, "they could not fire a single gunshot when the miscreants came calling."

Continuing, Kalu said, "I want to seize this opportunity to tell everybody to sit up." He said that people are no longer interested in their activities because the officers are not showing enough dedication.

The comptroller general said government has improved the working condition of prison officials and needed reciprocation from the officers and men of NPS.

Kalu explained that government has improved domestic allowance, insurance scheme introduced, promotion interview conducted and door of upgrading opened to the officers like in other paramilitary services.

The Deputy Inspector-General of Police said that traitors, armed robbers and social misfits abound in the force, stressing that many people in the service are not enthusiastic but only after personal gains.

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He faces 11 charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity for backing Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebels who sent drugged child soldiers into battle and killed, mutilated and raped civilians during the West African country's civil war in the 1990s.

Taylor was flown in a U.N. helicopter to the country's main airport at Lungi from the compound of the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone which has charged him with war crimes and will conduct his trial in The Hague.

"He's in a plane headed for the Netherlands. He left Lungi International Airport at 9:40 this morning (yesterday)," said court spokesman Peter Andersen. Taylor was on board a commercial corporate jet.

"I talked to Mr Taylor briefly. We didn't discuss his case, we joked around a little bit and I wished him a safe journey," Andersen said. Asked about Taylor's mood, he said: "It's difficult to tell -- he looked very serious."

The Dutch Foreign Ministry said Taylor would be held at the detention unit of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Scheveningen.

"This means that the focus can now be on the trial against Taylor, who is accused of serious war crimes," Foreign Minister Ben Bot

Onitsha

He said there were seven reported cases of jailbreaks in the country in the last one year because of lack of commitment by the staff.

"If the first incident in Onitsha prisons was by accident, why should we be caught again napping on the second attack," stating that he was in Onitsha to see what the authorities could do about the hundreds of criminals set free by the hoodlums.

On the curfew, a statement signed by chief of staff Government House Awka, Mr. Chuks Iloegbunam said, the affected new towns are Ogbaru, Okpokoro, Nsugbe Oba, Nkpor and Nsugbe, Oba, Nkpor and Obosi noting the restriction would continue till Sunday.

Meanwhile, 14 out of 204 freed prison inmates have been re-arrested.

Anambra State Governor, Mr. Peter Obi yesterday said he invited soldiers to Onitsha, the commercial nerve centre of Anambra State, because he discovered the state lacked security and felt disturbances in the town could lead to unexpected consequences.

Obi while fielding questions from reporters when he paid a visit to the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), also apologized for the unruly behaviour of the Onitsha Market Traders when the Agency's officials came to seal off the market.

Obi said previous governments in the state rather than putting in place an enduring security arrangement resorted to mushrooming security matters and promoting quasi security organizations.

He explained that unlike the adjoining South-East states where joint Military/Police security system had been put in place, what obtained in Anambra State was the presence of unorthodox "Bakassi, Vigilante or MASSOB" agents.

He stated that he had to call in the soldiers to assist in providing security in Onitsha when he analysed the level of mayhem in Onitsha and concluded that it needed drastic measures to put under control.

"I invited the military because when I came into office, there was nothing called government in the state. Anambra State for 14 years had no Governor's Office, had no accredited hospital, had no state secretariat.

"Mbadinuju had Bakassi, Ngige had Vigilante and MASSOB and I said no, we can't hand our security to miscreants.

"That is why we handed over our security to the Police and the Military. I don't have to hire thugs to provide security for me. I want to make Anambra State see progress.

"Since we put in place the joint Military/Police patrol in Onitsha, the situation normalized and it is now under control. It is a situation where you faced a difficult situation, when you start cleaning up the mess, you see a lot of stench in the first instance.

"You can imagine it is only in Onitsha that NARTO exist. Why is NARTO not in Enugu; why are they not in Abuja; why are they not in Lagos or elsewhere? We are cleaning the process," Governor Obi stated.

On the said casualty recorded as a result of the crises in Onitsha, the governor said the figure was not more than six, adding that Deputy Inspectors-General of Police (DIG), Mike Okiro and Ogbonna Onovo who moved into the state, did a marvelous job. "I know the situation is getting better than it was".

On the NAFDAC ban of the sale of drugs and closure of Onitsha Markets, the governor pleaded to be given three months to sanitise the market, adding that few people were responsible for the sale of fake and unwholesome drugs in the market.

"I am sincerely apologizing on behalf of the people of Anambra State over the unfortunate attack on NAFDAC Officials. We know the consequences on the pronouncement made on the market. We plead with the Agency to allow us clean up the place.

Taylor

"This is a signal from the international community that exemption from punishment will not be tolerated," Bot added.

Sierra Leone's Vice-President Solomon Berewa welcomed the news. "We are now satisfied that he is going to be tried in a well secured area by the Netherlands while we in Sierra Leone and the Mano River Union states will continue to consolidate our peace," Berewa told Reuters.

The Mano River Union groups Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, which were all dragged into a spiral of violence in the 14 years after Taylor began Liberia's civil war in 1989. "All I think Sierra Leoneans were interested in was to see Taylor arrested and charged, which has been done," Berewa added.

But Taylor's half-brother Adolphus Taylor was disappointed. "We are downhearted. They had told us that Mr Taylor will be transferred on Wednesday but instead they transferred him today. We just don't know what's happening. We do not know whether he will get a fair trial," he told Reuters in Monrovia.

Years of civil war in Liberia finally came to an end after Taylor agreed to go into exile in Nigeria in 2003. Caught trying to leave Nigeria earlier this year as pressure mounted for him to be tried, Taylor