

## **To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected: Why The Three New Faces (Obi, Kanu & Ekweremadu) Of Socio-Political Reawakening In Igbo Land Must Not Be Found Wanting**

**(Intersociety & SBCHROs, Nigeria: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017)**-The leaderships of **Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)** and **Southeast Based Coalition of Human Rights Organizations (SBCHROs)** have carefully appraised the goings on as they concern recent social and political developments in the Southeast Nigeria particularly as they concern Igbo socio-political reawakening and assertion of their rights to existence and ethnic identities with successes trailing last Tuesday's sit-at-home protest voluntarily organized by IPOB and reformed MASSOB leaderships as a clear case in point.

Another reason behind this joint statement is to remind the trio of Peter Obi, Ike Ekweremadu and Nnamdi Kanu of their existing prestigious status as *distinguished Igbo personalities of the year 2016*. This reminding advocacy voice is to strongly advise them to always watch their backs and refrain at all times from associating themselves with activities and conducts capable of forcing the Igbo People to look down and disrespect them. They must not make themselves or be seen as demigods and must always be closer to the Igbo People. The concept of *power drunkenness and psychology of politics* must never be their portion. In other words, *to whom much is given, much is expected*.

We are particularly appalled and deeply worried over an allegation making the news in the web and social media (i.e. 247UReports) concerning Governor Willie Obiano's car and cash gifts to Citizen Nnamdi Kanu. According to the said online news report, "Nnamdi Kanu was recently handed over a cash of \$50,000 and two SUV cars by Governor Willie Obiano and the gifts were gladly accepted from the giver". On further enquiry, a dependable and authoritative source told the coalition that "the acceptance of the gifts by Kanu from Governor Obiano was owing to the fact that Governor Obiano has been assisting Nnamdi Kanu's father while Kanu was in prison".

The link to the online story is here: <https://247ureports.com/2017/05/27/nnamdi-kanu-receives-50000-and-two-suvs-from-obiano/>. The publisher, Ikenna Ezenekwe, is a known close ally of Governor Obiano. The jeeps and cash, according to Ezenekwe's 247UReports of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2017, "were delivered to Citizen Kanu shortly after his conditional freedom from prison by one Primus Odili, said to be Gov Obiano's distant relative"..

It must be pointed out clearly here that there is nothing wrong in giving and receiving plain and charitable gifts from a public office holder or a wealthy philanthropist for the advancement of a nonviolent social struggle such as Biafra self determination campaigns, but a lot is morally wrong and socially abominable when such gifts are seen or perceived as politically motivated, ill conceived or evidentially and atrociously escapist. If it is true that Governor Willie Obiano gave out such gifts to Nnamdi Kanu, valued at about N98million (i.e. N80M for the two SUV cars and N19M equivalent of \$50,000), then our immediate appeal to Citizen Kanu is for such gifts to be returned to the Awka Government House with immediacy. If it is not true, then he should direct his IPOB to respond publicly and convincingly on his behalf. The response under demand is grossly belated.

The acceptance of such gifts, if true, will spell doom to the nonviolent pro Biafra campaigns and pose a generational clog and curse for those championing the ongoing pro Biafra agitation. The gifts, if truly given and accepted, can further evoke incurable wrath from the spirits of the 140 innocent, defenseless and unarmed Igbo citizens that were slain under Governor Obiano's supervision and mobilization on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 at Nkpor, Onitsha and Asaba. Mortally, if it is true that such gifts were given and accepted, then the moral rectitude and competence of IPOB under Citizen Nnamdi Kanu to seek culpable and compensatory justices for the slain defenseless and unarmed citizens, numbering not less than, 140 and their beloved families may most likely have been jeopardized (only victims of 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 massacre at Nkpor, Onitsha and Asaba).

We have insisted and still insist that Governor Willie Obiano must make an open confession and admission of truth regarding his culpable roles and that of his government in the massacre. He must follow it up by constituting a judicial panel or commission of enquiry, to be composed of 70% non State actors and 30% State actors to further unravel the atrocities of 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The Nigerian Army in Onitsha must publicly disclose where and how they criminally buried dozens of slain innocent Igbo citizens; many of them the army was caught in camera conveying or moving them via their military trucks inside the Onitsha Army Barracks.

What shocks us the more is Governor Willie Obiano's continued denial of death toll in the said Nkpor, Onitsha and Asaba massacre. The Governor was authoritatively reported to have maintained this stance recently when a Nigerian Army's kangaroo probe team visited him during which he was reported to have told the team that "nobody was killed at Nkpor and Onitsha on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and if they said somebody was killed, I am not aware". This was disclosed when the so called "army probe team" visited a certain establishment.

The so called "army probe team" never bothered to visit our coalition or the leadership of Intersociety, which thoroughly investigated the referenced massacre. The leaderships of Intersociety and our coalition also never bothered to seek to meet the team, because we see the said army probe team as nothing but "a kangaroo army probe team", seeking to trace and profile members and relatives of the slain families for purposes of *evidence erasure, destruction and self exoneration*.

For purposes of refreshing the minds of all and sundry, not less than 140 unarmed and defenseless citizens including those participating or attending church night vigils (i.e. inside St Edmunds Cath. Church Primary School Classrooms located along Umuoji Road, Nkpor), early morning church service returnees and travelers, passers-by, street petty traders, artisans and onlookers were in the late night of 29<sup>th</sup> and morning and afternoon hours of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016; shot and killed by members of the Anambra State Joint Security Taskforce (JTF), comprising soldiers of the Onitsha Military Barracks led by Col Abdullahi Isah Maigari and operationally commanded by Major M.I. Ibrahim of the Military Police.

Other key culprits in the massacre are the Anambra State Police Command led by then DCP OPS, now Commissioner of Police, Johnson Babatunde Kokomo and the Onitsha Area Commander and all DPOs under Onitsha Area Command; Anambra Police SARS led by CSP Basse Annang; personnel of the Onitsha Navy Post Command, operatives of the SSS, personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps, the personnel of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency and armed members of the Anambra State Vigilante Services (AVS).

It is further recalled that prior to the State Government supervised massacre, a letter of notification was sent and successfully delivered to the Governor of Anambra State through the then Commissioner of Police, now AIG Hosea Karma (AIG Zone 9, Umuahia). The IPOB's notification letter duly informed the Obiano Administration of its plan to hold the 2016 Igbo/Biafra Heroes Day near Eke Nkpor at a bulldozed multi plots of land temporarily let out for the event by a concerned property magnet. Following the successful and nonviolent marking of the anniversary in Umuahia and Enugu in 2014 and 2015, Anambra State was chosen as the host venue for 2016 anniversary. The notification letter also clearly disclosed the intent of the event and solicited for security presence from the Government of Anambra State for the purpose of ensuring effective and peaceful crowd control.

Shockingly, the Governor of Anambra State and his Joint Security Taskforce used the notification letter to plan and strategize for violent crackdowns. Unknown to IPOB, Governor Willie Obiano doled out millions of naira from the meager State coffers for logistics and mobilized all the security agencies under his JTF. Signals were sent to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu for reinforcements and before the late night of 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, all strategic nooks and crannies of the State including all strategic entry and exit roads around Onitsha, Nkpor, Nnewi, Awka and Asaba had been violently blocked by soldiers and Police SARS. As a result, shooting and killing spree targeted at those arriving for the anniversary commenced from 11pm of 29<sup>th</sup> May and terminated around 2pm of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

At the end, field reports gathered by Intersociety evidentially showed that not less than 140 citizens were killed, out of them 110 died at Nkpor and Onitsha, while 30 others died at Asaba. Over 130 others were terminally injured: 70 in Onitsha and 60 in Asaba. Several Army Hilux vans carrying scores of dead bodies were caught in camera heading to Onitsha Army Barracks. The bodies of the dead citizens picked by soldiers were later buried in most abominable and heartless manner inside one of the Onitsha Army Barracks' two cemeteries (in about 15 graves with each containing at least seven shrank and acidified bodies). Their criminal burial took place on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016; eyewitnesses say, in the presence of one of Governor Willie Obiano's Commissioners in charge of Public Communications.

About half of those killed in Asaba, numbering not less than 30, dumped at the Federal Medical Center including Citizen Chinedu Udoe were later on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016 removed and buried at a certain location around Asaba Airport Road. Amnesty Int'l had in its report, disclosed that "not less than 60 citizens were killed at Nkpor and Onitsha, with at least 70 others injured". The Report did not include those killed and injured in Asaba. The culpable Government of Anambra and its mobilized security agencies including Nigeria Police Force and Nigerian Army not only boasted and justified the massacre, but also labeled the slain and the IPOB as "miscreants", "violent and armed" and "armed independent people of Biafra". Credit: Intersociety 2016/2017.

Governor Willie Obiano had also after the massacre and its allied litany of denials told by his Government made cursed offers including announcement of a N10million gift to injured victims during his crocodile tear-visit to hospitals where the wounded were being treated. The offer was roundly rejected by IPOB and our coalition. A number of late night raids in private and public clinics and private residences were also carried out by soldiers and Police SARS leading to forceful removal of dead bodies of the slain pro Biafra activists; forcing families and relatives of other slain and injured activists to summarily whisk them out of Anambra State for safety.

*Revocation of Nnamdi Kanu's Prisoner-Of-Conscience Status:* Following the conditional release of Citizen Nnamdi Kanu who was named *Prisoner-Of-Conscience* by our coalition in 2016, following his long detention without formal trial and several disobedience to judicial pronouncements for his freedom by his captors (Federal Government and its SSS), we hereby revoke his *Prisoner-Of-Conscience* status. The trio of Bright Chimezie, Chidiebere Onwudiwe and David Nwawuisi; alongside Sheik Zaky El-Zaky and his wife-Malama Zeenatu El-Zaky are hereby renamed **SBCHROs' Prisoners-Of-Conscience**.

While Sheik El-Zaky and his beloved wife, Malama Zeenatu have been held by SSS without any form of trial or court proceedings or freedom since 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, David Nwawuisi and Chidiebere Onwudiwe have remained in detention without trial since October 2015 and June 2016 respectively for un-tried offence of *conspiracy to commit treasonable felony*, which is lightly bailable and attracts not more than seven years imprisonment on conviction.

Citizen Bright Chimezie's arrest and incarceration by the Akwa Ibom State Directorate of SSS is complicated and lawless. He was arrested in Uyo by SSS on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and detained without trial. All efforts by his lawyers and family to see him proved abortive, forcing his lawyers to file a fundamental rights suit in Abuja in which the SSS filed a counter affidavit, saying that he was being held by its Uyo Directorate. Fresh suit was filed before the Uyo Federal High Court and the Uyo SSS flouted an order of the Court and refused to produce before same; leading to the judgment of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017, ordering for his unconditional release. Citizen Bright Chimezie has not been released by the Uyo SSS till date; thereby fueling speculations of his possible death in SSS custody.

Citizen Benjamin Madubugwu is denied a *Prisoner-Of-Conscience* status because of his connection with firearms found in his custody. The *prisoner-of-conscience* status is strictly meant for those who never used violence (pacifists) or implied as violent citizens in asserting their constitutional, regional and international human rights. In the eyes of Nigeria's body of laws, Citizen Madubugwu is entitled to possess guns in the category of firearms (two pump action guns) found in his custody provided he operates same with lawful license.

*Commendation:* The following are worthy of commendation for their priceless and immeasurable roles in *the human rights, humanitarian, research, documentation and media advocacy aspects of the nonviolent pro Biafra campaigns in Nigeria so far*. They are Amnesty Int'l, SBCHROs, Intersociety, Alaigbo Development Foundation, Igbo Youth Movement, Ike Ekweremadu, Peter Obi, Joe Achuzia, US Embassy in Nigeria, Mike Akuoma, Ugochukwu Chinwuba, Ikechukwu Okoye, Clifford Iloanya, Prince Emeka Onyeso, Okechukwu Nwanguma, Aloysius Attah, Ibuchukwu Ezike, Tochukwu Ezeoke and his Igbo Ekunie group, Justus and Justine Ijeomas, Alex Olisa, Damian Ugwu, Damian Ogudike, Tools & Allied Market and its leadership, Ekwenche Group, USA, Uche Asiegbu, George Onyeibe, Samuel Kamanyoku.

Others are Isaac Umunna and his News Express Online, Daniel and Tim Elombah and their Elomba Reports, Madam Aziza Uko and her Trent Online, Emeka Odugwu and his Odogwu Blog, Chidi Opara and his Chidiopara Reports, Henry Oduenyi and his Nigerian Voice, James Ezema and his Street Reporters, Naija.Com, Nairaland, Barrister Chioma Kate Unini and her Nigerian Lawyer Online, Mazi Odera, Uchenna Madu, Barristers Ifeanyi Ejiofor, Chuks Muoma (SAN).

The rest are Chinwe Umeche, Uzochukwu Oguejiofor, Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Florence Akubilo, Ndidiamaka Bernard; the Galaxy TV and its Southeast crew, Minaj TV, Vanguard Newspaper, Innocent Anaba and his InosReport, Leonard Sobechi of Guardian Newspaper, Senator Iroegbu and Dave Eleke of This Day Newspaper, Today Online, Uncova Online, the Authority Newspaper, the Premium Times, Emmanuel Mayah, Mary Ann Onwuchekwa, Anita Foster, Tony Okafor, the Independent Newspaper, Champion Newspaper, Alphonsus Nweze, Cyprain Ebele, to mention but a few.

*Why Igbo Spoke In Unisom On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017:* The massive reactions of the most Igbo People on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017 by voluntarily shutting down their businesses across the country and beyond the shores of Nigeria for the purpose of honoring their fallen heroes and heroines killed in the 1967-70 Biafra-Nigeria Civil War and others butchered since 1945 is not only a strong message to those behind the decades long butcheries, but also a red card to those who mocked the Igbo People to the effect that *Igbo People are not united and can never be united*. It is also a red card to those who falsely claimed that *Igbo People have no leadership or kingship*.

Most importantly, this collective feat also calls for caution particularly on the part of IPOB and reformed MASSOB under Citizens Nnamdi Kanu and Uchenna Madu leadership. That is to say that such massive support must not be taken for granted. Igbo People have no leadership, kingship or oneness so long as there are no credible people in leadership positions or genuine and formidable social cause to fight or agitate for. Once credible leaders or genuine social cause are spotted or found, unity, oneness and credible leadership commands take the centre stage among the Igbo People. That is to say that the same way the Igbo People have hearkened to IPOB and reformed MASSOB's recent call for a sit-at-home protest, is exactly the same the same Igbo People will turn their back permanently against the likes of IPOB and reformed MASSOB and their leaders once they are seen or perceived as deviants and conformists.

This was why we had on 11th December 2016 named the trio of Peter Obi, Ike Ekweremadu and Nnamdi Kanu as distinguished Igbo personalities for 2016. We found in them great potentials to lead and wriggle Igbo People out of their decades' long trepidations, agonies, unprovoked attacks and butcheries. We had then counseled them strongly to jealously guide and guard their leadership potentials and resist any attempt to get them rubbished or compromised. Till date, in Anambra State, Peter Obi's leadership and public governance imprints are next to nothing or second to none.

The trio of Peter Obi, Ike Ekweremadu and Nnamdi Kanu still retain their prestigious *distinguished personalities of 2016 status* till the end of this year. With this in their hands, they must at all times not disappoint the Igbo People as "new faces of Igbo renaissance or reawakening". They must understand that the Igbo People are watching them all the time as per wherever they go and whatever they do. They are now like the great mgburuichi and *nze-na-ozo* people of the Oracular Igbo Society, who on account of their membership of the two highly revered groups; were incapable of associating themselves with evil doing or disappointing themselves and their society. We also welcome Citizen Nnamdi Kanu's ongoing reconciliatory moves, geared towards mending fences with those in disagreements with others. Such gesture must also be extended to key members of his group's Directorate of State (DOS) and Coordinating Office of Coordinators (COC) as well the likes of Ekwenche Igbo group in USA.

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