

How Acquittal Of 15 Mothers Of Igbo Nation Secured Unconditional Freedom For 112 Others

(Intersociety Nigeria: 24th August 2018)-By the unconditional release and acquittal yesterday, 23rd August 2018 at Owerri Magistrate Court, of 15 Mothers of the Igbo Nation, the freedom and victory for 112 detained others released hours ago were fully secured. The two other mothers that would have made them 114 in number are a pregnant young woman and a sick mother, excluded from the charge sheet. They collapsed in Court on Monday and were rushed to hospital for treatment.

In other words, the 112 Mothers of Igbo Nation arrested, humiliated, bullied and tortured by the Imo State Police Command since 17th August 2018 and remanded in prison custody since 20th August by Magistrate S.K. Durumba regained their unconditional freedom hours ago on account of earlier discharge and acquittal of fifteen of their colleagues through motion for discontinuation of their prosecution made by the Attorney General of Imo State, Barr Miletus Maduakolam Onukaogu Nlemedim. The motion is otherwise known as “nolle prosequi”. The wrongfully and unconstitutionally detained 112 Mothers of Igbo Nation were hours ago discharged and acquitted and subsequently released from prison on account of the said discontinuation application by the Attorney General of Imo State and his DPP.

With the AGF of Imo State (Barr Miletus Maduakolam Onukaogu Nlemedim), represented by his DPP, having applied yesterday (23rd August) for the discontinuation of the prosecution of the 15 innocent and defenseless Mothers of Igbo Nation on spurious charges of “treasonable felony” and “terrorism”, etc; for want of sufficient pieces of evidence linking and sustaining the named spurious charges, the coast was finally cleared for the release, discharge and acquittal of the remaining 112 others; effected few hours ago in line with our earlier prediction as contained in our statement issued few hours before their release. This is more so when the latter were arrested with the former on the same date, place, time, and scene and slammed with the same spurious criminal accusations, which the Government of Imo State under sustained pressure has just reversed with shame.

It is on clear record that but for sustained prayers, outcries and other forms of pressure from media, rights groups of Igbo Land base and other expressive concerns coming from all over the world, the Government of Imo State and its master central Government of Nigeria would have fully implemented their abominable and atrocious script. The timely hearkening to our clarion call by selected and concerned lovers of freedom, democracy and human rights is therefore exceptionally commendable.

It is recalled that the 15 discharged and acquitted Mothers of Igbo Nation could not be arraigned alongside their colleagues on 20th August 2018 owing to certain factors possibly including congestion, administrative or health issues. They were belatedly arraigned yesterday, 23rd August 2018 before an Owerri Magistrate Court and slammed with spurious felonious charges of “treasonable felony”, “conspiracy to commit treasonable felony” and “terrorism”, etc.

As was the case on Monday, 20th August 2018, the presiding Magistrate, again, declined jurisdiction and remanded them in prison custody. The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice in Imo State and his DPP were also put on legal notice, immediately; leading to a follow up by the defense legal team led by Barr Ifeanyi Ejiofor. This paid off hours later with filing by office of the Attorney General of Imo State of written application or motion for discontinuation of the case as well as discharge and acquittal of the 15 innocent mothers. The motion was brought before the Magistrate who was still sitting; sequel to strong conviction by the said AG’s office, of lack of sufficient pieces of evidence to sustain the spurious

charges slammed against the 15 detained mothers. The motion succeeded, leading to their immediate discharge, acquittal and release from detention yesterday being 23rd August 2018.

The names and ages of the fifteen discharged and acquitted Mothers of the Igbo Nation are (1) Chinyere Ubani (35yrs), (2) Precious Anyanwu (45yrs), (3) Nwakaego John (43yrs), (4) Nwadike Chinyere (29yrs), (5) Chika Uruagwu(38yrs), (6) Florence Ifeanyi (25yrs), (7) Cynthia Okoroagwu (40yrs), (8) Chinedu Chibuzo (25yrs), (9) Paulina Iroanya(38yrs), (10) Josephine Ntizi (45yrs), (11) Blessing Nwelele (45yrs), (12) Chinyere Achonna (48yrs), (13) Nneka Okoro (38yrs), (14) Margret Eze (36yrs) and (15) Ijeoma Nwafor (43yrs). This is in addition to names and ages of 112 others earlier disclosed in our first statement issued two days ago (22nd August 2018).

While congratulating the 15 mothers freed earlier (yesterday) and 112 others released hours ago for their victory and regaining their non negotiable freedom, our commendation also goes to those within and beyond the shores of Nigeria that added their voices against such unspeakable atrocities and abominations meted out on the vulnerable members of the human family by the Buhari central Government of Nigeria and the Okorochoa led Government of Imo State. Commended, too, are dogged efforts of members of the legal team of the 127 Mothers of Igbo Nation led by Barr Ifeanyi Ejiofor and the likes of Barristers Aloysius Ejimakor and (our own) Chinwe Umeche.

The motion of *nolle prosequi* by the Government of Imo State is not only an irrefutable confirmation of the innocence of the 127 Mothers of Igbo Nation over spurious charges slammed against them, but also a typical instance of Buhari Government unrelenting effort to visit unspeakable state violence against the Igbo Nation so as to push their defenseless citizens in particular and the old Eastern Nigeria in general to the wall of irreversible and intractable retaliation.

Signed

For: Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law
Emeka Umeagbalasi, Board Chairman
Mobile Line: +2348174090052
Email: botchairman@intersociety-ng.org

Obianuju Joy Igboeli, Esq.
Head, Civil Liberties & Rule of Law Program
Email: igboeliobianuju@gmail.com