

## A Joint Statement

### Dichotomy, Pecuniary & Selfish Interests Behind Southeast PDP Govs & Others' Opposition To The Choice Of Atiku Abubakar's Running Mate

--SBCHROs

**(SBCHROs, Onitsha Nigeria: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018)**-"Politics of dichotomy, pecuniary and selfish interests; not "non consultation", are the irrefutable reasons behind the open opposition by the three PDP Governors and others to the emergence of the PDP/Atiku Abubakar's Vice Presidential Candidate from Southeast Region"-**SBCHROs** say today in a **joint statement** issued in Onitsha Nigeria. **The SBCHROs** are a coalition of twenty human rights, public governance accountability and pro democracy advocacy groups based in Southeast or Igbo heartland of Nigeria, spread across the five States in the Region.

As visible, investigative and research based rights, public governance and pro democracy coalition watchdog in the Southeast, we are not visitors or new to politics, its dynamics and players in the Region. We not only understand the mechanics and mechanisms of politics in the Region but are also in the know of the characters or political players playing the politics in the Region especially since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule.

In the instant case, therefore, the issue in contention is far from "non consultation". This is just to give dog a bad name so as to hang it. At the levels of our coalition or its affiliate membership, researches and investigations bordering on issues of democracy, good governance and human rights have been conducted and reports issued. Top among our affiliate groups in this respect are the Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law (Intersociety)-see [www.intersociety-ng.org](http://www.intersociety-ng.org) and the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), Southeast Region and its Anambra State Branch.

We make bold to say that the unfounded, unwarranted and frustrated anger of the named PDP political figures including the three Southeast PDP Governors led by Governor Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State, a diehard "Buharist"; who met in Enugu yesterday to register their open opposition to the emergence of the named PDP's Vice Presidential Candidate from the Region is undeniably premised on "politics of dichotomy, pecuniary and selfish interests". The "non consultation" mantra being bandied is dead on arrival and a groundless excuse in the history of picking or nomination of a vice presidential candidate in Nigeria.

*Politics of dichotomy* as reason number one in the instant case is a monster that has reared its ugly head again in the Region after its devastating role in the politics of "old Eastern Nigeria"; politics of "Wawa" and "Agbaenu" People of old Anambra State and that between "Wawa" and "Nsukka" People in the present Enugu State, to mention but few.

In the instant case, the monster has reared its ugly head against the choice of Mr. Peter Obi of Anambra State. From our findings, the proponents of politics of dichotomy in the instant case may have held nothing against the person and record of Mr. Peter Obi; only that "he ought not to have been chosen as Vice Presidential Candidate of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and his PDP having come from the same Anambra State that had produced a onetime Vice President and Senate President of Nigeria".

It is also on irrefutable record that Imo and Ebonyi States have respectively produced Senate President of Nigeria in recent years. Enugu State had also produced the first Igbo Inspector General of Police in recent Nigeria; likewise Abia State which recently produced the first Igbo Chief of Army Staff in Nigeria. Also the first Igbo Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters (vice president) is from Abia State and the first Igbo Chief of Naval Staff is from Enugu State, etc. Totality of the above has not only rubbished the antics of the proponents of "politics of dichotomy" in the instant case but also rendered any sentiment associated with same totally useless, infantile and brainless.

*Politics of pecuniary interest* as reason number two notoriously indicates that politics in the Southeast Region or Igbo heartland is roundly monetized or utterly transactional, to the extent that stark illiterate moneybags and questionable billionaires are now in charge. Primitive and crooked wealth accumulation is also running riot on politics of the Southeast Nigeria; to the extent that political players in the Region are consistently in mad rush to crookedly grab as much material wealth as they can while in public elective and appointive offices. This is done at irreparable expense of the welfare of the people of the Region including good governance and use of public funds for public good.

The social standard of measurement in the present politics and other social activities in Igbo heartland are utterly placed at crooked wealth and its possession. Too much possession of crooked wealth by political actors in the Region has instantly turned them into beasts and trouble makers or violent political actors; leading to escalation and institutionalization of bribery and corruption, election rigging and violence in the political life of the Region and beyond.

Pursuit of crooked wealth in public offices has also robbed the Southeast Region of desired good governance including legacy projects and other tangible and intangible democracy dividends. A rare public office performer in the Region is roundly rejected among the political class including those that served or are serving him or her at commissionership and non commissionership levels. Use of public funds for public good in present Igbo heartland is viewed with serious contempt by the political class; with its user isolated and treated as an “outcaste” or “one who starved or starves his or her cabinet members or political associates in office”.

It is possible that another hidden reason behind the named PDP key players’ opposition to Mr. Obi’s Vice Presidential nomination is his opposition to “share the money” syndrome that characterizes the Nigerian political class and public offices especially in the Southeast Region. The above highlighted elements of “politics of pecuniary interest” are likely to have played out in the instant case whereby the anger of the proponents of same is likely to include fears that Mr. Obi’s choice is not going to favor their pecuniary interests. The said pecuniary interests of political actors in the Region including the named have for long been placed far above the collective and future wellbeing of the People of Southeast Region.

*Politics of selfish interest* as reason number three clearly indicates that every PDP “political leader” in the Southeast Region wants to be chosen as “Atiku Abubakar or PDP’s Vice Presidential Candidate” or be allowed to nominate a puppet for same, not minding whether he or she has what it takes to run the economy of the country which is the main job of the Nigeria’s Vice President. To such selfish political actors, “what matters is how much stolen or controversially accumulated wealth or cash in his or her possession or amount of cash to be pocketed directly or by proxy as Nigeria’s Vice President” if nominated and elected.

Issues of possessing track records of integrity and charismatic qualities as benchmark for the occupation of such plum office of the Vice Presidency in this troubling chapter in the history of the country and wriggling the Region out of decades-long political repression and exclusion do not matter to such political actors. The said political actors are so money conscious, selfish and inconsiderate that they even preferred the Vee Pee slot to be given to another Region if one of them cannot be considered or nominated. We understand that it was on account of this that the Southwest Region intensified their recent campaign to grab or snatch the plum position off Southeast Region.

Even when a political actor is given the rare opportunity of his or her lifetime to organize his or her people and govern them for eight years in Nigeria especially in the Southeast Region so as to have his or her name in gold for eternity, he or she ends up disastrously; messing and wasting the entire eight years in flamboyant lifestyles, frivolities and monumental governance failure. Falling back on too much cash wealth he or she stole or steals in office, he or she goes into town and uses the stolen wealth to cause trouble and pride himself or herself as “Igbo leader” or “generalissimo of Igbo politics” or “godfather/godmother of Igbo politics”.

It is so shocking and saddening that in the present Igbo Land or Southeast Region, every possessor of dubious wealth or stolen public office funds is “a general and jack of all trades in politics”; to the extent stark illiterate billionaires now cook up WASC certificates to vie for plum, exalted and sacred elective offices. Igbo Land as one of the pioneer centers of knowledge and intellectualism in Nigeria is presently desolated and castrated that quarks and stark illiterates with crookedly made wealth have become federal and state lawmakers or aspiring to be same.

We, therefore, make bold to say that the trio of **politics of dichotomy, pecuniary and selfish interests** are the real reasons behind the despicable and condemnable stance of the so called “Southeast leaders of the PDP and other Igbo leaders” including the three PDP Governors. Their unpopular stance which has attracted widest bashing and condemnation from concerned Igbo citizens far and near is thousands of miles away from the issue of “non consultation”. The height of their political suicide was their reported threat to “openly endorse Buhari for second term”, a suicide mission reportedly embarked already by the leader of the Southeast PDP governors; unless Mr. Atiku Abubakar reverses himself and dumps Mr. Peter Obi as his running mate.

We have not rested well in the past 24hrs owing to torrential phone calls and other messages sent to us through various social media networks by members of the public within and beyond Igbo Land; expressing shocks and disbelief over the action of the referenced political actors.

This is one of the most suicidal political decisions taken collectively and individually in the political life cycles of the named “Southeast PDP political actors”. This is more so when the Southeast PDP and other Igbo leaders did not deem it fit to call any “emergency meeting of Southeast PDP leaders” prior to the choice of Mr. Atiku Abubakar to consider the Southeast Region and pick Mr. Peter Obi as his running mate; likewise the aftermath of Nigerian Army’s Python Dance 11 of September 2017 in Abia State during which no fewer than 180 defenseless citizens of the Region were massacred in four days. Till date, no Southeast Governor of PDP, APC or APGA extraction or any other serving or former elective public office holder from the Region has risen in condemnation of the massacre.

It must be stated clearly that the issue of vice presidency or its candidacy in Nigeria is never opened for direct contest or election or Electoral College arrangement. It is exclusively the prerogative of the nominated party presidential flag bearer to choose anyone from anywhere he or she deems fit, qualitative and cooperative to work with as his or her running mate or vice president if elected.

However, the said Presidential Candidate may or may not consult a section of his or her political party leadership or stakeholders before or after picking whoever he or she wishes or deems fit. The referenced Presidential Candidate cannot be coerced into mandatory “consultation” or have a nominee imposed on him or her. This clarification is to put the records straight and further debunk the inexcusable excuse of the named “Southeast PDP actors”, hiding under “non consultation” to justify their yesterday’s political hara-kiri in Enugu, Enugu State.

Even if the said Southeast PDP Governors and ors have met and picked a nominee for Atiku Abubakar, he is still at liberty to reject him or her and pick a person outside the Southeast Region especially if he strongly believes that the former nominee does not have what it takes to work with him as his vice presidential candidate or vice president if elected. In the instant case, too, the Southeast Region is historically and circumstantially fitted to be given a slot to Nigeria’s vice presidency under the PDP arrangement; preparatory for the Region being supported and allowed to successfully take a shot at the Presidency of Nigeria in 2023.

We not only congratulate Mr. Peter Obi for his popularly acceptable emergence as Atiku Abubakar’s Vice Presidential Candidate, but also commend Mr. Atiku Abubakar and his PDP for making a wise and popular choice by considering the Southeast Region in his political equation. Mr. Peter Obi’s profile, integrity and achievements in life especially as Anambra Governor are unrivalled and too numerous to be mentioned. They are conceptually chronicled or better understood in the context of *Obinomics*.

Mr. Atiku Abubakar and his PDP are also respectfully urged to adopt “Igbo Presidency for 2023” as one of their new blue prints and ensure its actualization so as to restore the sense of belongingness to the Igbo People in the Nigerian Project. This is not in any way prejudice to popular demand across the country for Nigeria to be restructured from the foundation or constituent and constitutional levels in line with the rights of all ethnic nationalities in the country to self determination; on how best to live together or apart using nonviolence.

Mr. Atiku Abubakar’s decision to come down to the Southeast Region upon his return from abroad to meet with the Igbo/Southeast PDP antagonists who are openly opposed to the zoning of his vee pee to the Region and choice of Mr. Peter Obi”, is apt and commendable. It is a further attestation of signs of his capability and ability to govern the turbulent and highly divisive Nigeria if elected.

The said Southeast PDP leaders including the three PDP Governors must be made to sheath their “swords of dichotomy, pecuniary and selfish politics or interests” and join him with Mr. Peter Obi to work for the overall interests of Nigeria in general and Southeast or Igbo heartland in particular, if elected in the February 2019 presidential poll. It is our firm appeal to Mr. Atiku Abubakar to ignore any call for reversal of his choice of Southeast Region and nomination of Mr. Peter Obi, whether such unpopular call is coming from within the Southeast Region or outside the Region including the Southwest Region and have same trashed into the dustbin of irretrievability.

The Southwest Region who are clamoring for Vice Presidential Candidature under PDP arrangement at the expense of the Southeast Region are reminded again that “there is no vacancy for the Region in Nigeria’s Vice Presidency and Presidency” not only for now but also in near future. Contrary to wrong impression in some Southwest quarters that Igbo People are always disunited and antagonistic among themselves, it must be stated clearly that disagreements are the very foundation of human relationship.

As a matter of fact, the moment two people start talking or interacting, dispute or disagreement becomes inevitable, but what matters is not the disagreement or dispute which must always occur in human relationship; but how it is handled or its constructive handling. It is therefore a truism that Igbo People when collectively disagreed have always resolved their differences constructively devoid of bloodshed.

**For: SBCHROs**

- \* **Int’l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law**
- \* **Civil Liberties Organization, Southeast Zone**
- \* **Centre for Human Rights & Peace Advocacy**
- \* **Human Rights Organization of Nigeria**
- \* **Society Watch & Advocacy Project**
- \* **Anambra Human Rights Forum**
- \* **Southeast Good Governance Forum**
- \* **Int’l Solidarity for Peace & Human Rights Initiative**
- \* **Igbo Ekunie Initiative**
- \* **Civil Liberties Organization, Anambra State Branch**
- \* **Foundation for Environmental Rights Advocacy & Dev**
- \* **Society for Economic Rights & Social Justice**
- \* **Initiative for Ideal Dev & Emancipatory Leadership in Nigeria**
- \* **Igbo National Council**
- \* **Forum for Promotion of National Ethos & Values**
- \* **Easy Life Initiative for Rural Youths**
- \* **Voice of the Voiceless Int’l**
- \* **Community Empowerment Network**
- \* **Primate (Human Rights) Salvation Initiative**
- \* **Southeast Movement against Transactional Politics & Profligacy**