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## Documents (454)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** dele giwa "journalist"

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**Narrowed by**

news

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Timeline: Oct 20, 1986 to Oct 20, 2023

1. Remembering Dele Giwa
2. Dele Giwa's Death: 37yrs After, Council Chairman Establishes Essay Competition
3. Letter bomb did not kill Dele Giwa — Saka
4. AFRICMIL invites young journalists to submit essays on late Dele Giwa
5. 37 years after Giwa's death: Etsako council chairman set up secondary school essay competition in his honour
6. Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa
7. Remembering Dele Giwa, An Icon Of Bold Investigative Journalism
8. Dele Giwa's Assassination: 37 Years After -By Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye
9. 37 Years After, Analyst Blames Babangida, Successive Govts. For Failure To Find Giwa's Killers
10. Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa

11. Dele Giwa: 34 Years After His Gruesome Murder!
12. Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (1)
13. Land grabbers invade 'property of Dele Giwa's doctor'
14. 'Why Dele Giwa's doctor left home after Newswatch editor's death'
15. Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After
16. Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After
17. Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (2)
18. I am Dele Giwa
19. Sunday Igboho: Why I rejected IGP Adamu's invitation
20. Why I Shunned Inspector-General Of Police's Invitation - Igboho
21. The enduring ministry of Ray Ekpu
22. The journalist as a game
23. MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming
24. Ita-Giwa tackles ex-DIG Omeben over Dele Giwa's death
25. Dele Giwa, 29 Years After
26. Dele Giwa's Mother Dies At 87 - As Community Demands Fresh Probe Into Dele Giwa's Death
27. Dele Giwa and the Dilemma of a Journalist

28. 'How Govt Can Unmask Dele Giwa's Killers'
29. Remembering Dele Giwa [opinion]
30. I won't rest until Bakassi people are properly resettled - Ita-Giwa
31. Sunday Igboho declines IGP's invitation via letter
32. Eminent journalist Ray Ekpu at 75
33. Dele Giwa - 25 Years of Fruitless Search for Killers
34. HATS OFF TO UNCLE RAY
35. FG Urged to Establish Journalism School in of Honour Dele Giwa
36. Ray is the reason I'm in journalism
37. Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism - Iboro Otongaran
38. Prologue: A diary of wastage
39. 30 Years After, Dele Giwa's Pen Remains Mightier
40. Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism
41. Who 'Killed' Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru?
42. Prologue: A diary of wastage
43. Dele Giwa: Omeben is a liar -Tsav
44. Ugbekpe -Ekperi - Remembering Dele Giwa 29 Years After
45. Return of Newswatch , Victory For Dele Giwa Ray Ekpu

46. Dele Giwa: Among Marwa, Amoda and Ogunade
47. What a murderer said
48. Why I turned down IGP's secret invitation - Sunday Igboho
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62. Boko Haram Started With Bombing of Dele Giwa - - Prof Odinkalu
63. Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry

64. A Rare Ray at 75
65. NMMA honours PUNCH, others - Punch Newspapers
66. Ex-Police Chief Opens Up On Dele Giwa Assassination
67. A master-reporter on top of his game
68. How Nzeribe helped IBB annul Abiola's election
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70. Who Replaces Adedayo Among Nigerian Journalists?
71. Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]
72. Uncle Ray is 75
73. Vanguard Reporter: Police Must Produce Killers Of Tordue Salem, Says Omo-Agege
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75. NUJ Calls for End to Impunity, Crimes Against Journalists
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77. The Controversial Lekki Conundrum
78. My good friend Ojeagbase gone for good
79. Dele Giwa Assassination - Investigation Was Marred By Interferences From'high Places' - Ex-DIG
80. Ihedioha Breaks Silence, Says God Will Render Ultimate Judgment
81. Did Investigative Journalism Die With Dele Giwa? [analysis]

82. Ex-DIG - Dele Giwa's Assassination Was Marred By Interference From 'High Places'
83. Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Uwazuruike mourn Tony Momoh
84. My journalism journey
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86. 'How Dele Giwa's Murder Led to Mother's Slow Death'
87. Chuks Iloegbunam: Restless But Peaceful Soul
88. My journalism journey
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90. My Journalism Journey
91. Dele Giwa's murder suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria , say ex-DIG who probed the murder
92. Nigerian journalists and the military coup in Niger
93. Dimgba Igwe's Journalism Masterpiece
94. No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole
95. Whitewashing impunity and iniquity
96. No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole
97. GandoDollar Gate: Beyond Ja'afar's video
98. Pupils learn about journalism, others on career day

99. Gideon Orkar: The man who saw tomorrow
100. PETER ENAHORO (Peter Pan) TO THE RESCUE!
101. Stanley Macebuh: Unforgettable pathfinder of modern Nigerian journalism
102. Giwa, Death, and Journalism
103. Giwa, Death, and Journalism
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105. Murder in the Consulate
106. Chronicles of an uncommon journalist
107. Giwa, Death, and Journalism
108. #EndSARS Protests: FG Asked To Probe TV Reporter's Death
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110. 'How journalism became love of my life'
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116. 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

117. Dele Giwa - Facts And Hearsay Evidence [opinion]

118. 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

119. Reviewing parallax view of heroism

120. Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar

121. Dele Giwa - Still No Clue Yet On Killers [analysis]

122. So Long A Reading Session For Ray Ekpu

123. 25 Years After, Dele Giwa Rests On, As His Killers Remain Restless [analysis]

124. Agent From Abuja : An Unending Nigerian Story

125. Dele Giwa's Assassination - the Verdict of History

126. Agent From Abuja : An Unending Nigerian Story

127. Media Trust Chairman, Others Get Newswatch Awards

128. Tompolo and the Niger Delta oil thieves

129. Between church and World Cup finals

130. Imo guber: I didn't expect my application for review would be rejected - Ihedioha

131. Journalist With A Heart: Nkanga Gets Reward For Courage

132. Nollywood As Compass to National Questions

133. Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xa0

134. Human Rights Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

135. Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists
136. Zik's death story which turned out to be false, taught me a profound lesson - Azubuike Ishiekwene, ex-Punch Editor
137. Obi And His Obedient Tyrants
138. Press Freedom - Report Indicts Govt, Govs, Senators As Greatest Violators
139. Shekarau Urges Journalists to Expose Bad Leaders
140. A peep into history (III)
141. Supreme Court Judgment Portends Grave Implications For Judiciary, Democracy, Electoral Process — Ihedioha
142. Press Freedom: Report indicts FG, govs, NASS, others
143. Imo : God'll Judge Supreme Court Justices -Ihedioha
144. The road to the Sabres
145. The Nation flies highest with 10 prizes at NMMA
146. Ethical Dilemma, Journalism Practice and Remedies -By Taiwo Hassan
147. Favoured by Benevolent Gods...
148. Dele Giwa's Murder - Omeben Lied, I Gave Statements to Police Twice - Soyinka
149. A peep into history - 3
150. My Mother Was In Labour For Eight Days, I Came Out Presumed Dead -Onayiga
151. Why I sought review of Supreme Court judgement, by Ihedioha

152. Quadruple Heritage: The Drama of Post-Colonial Nigeria !

153. Duro Onabule: A library burns down, by Femi Adesina

154. Remembering Nigeria 's journalism pathfinder, Stanley Macebuh

155. Duro Onabule: A library burns down

156. Gen. Babangida On The Marble

157. Of reign of gangsters and fraudsters

158. ODUKOMAIYA: The man who gave me my first newspaper job

159. Celebrating Dele Momodu, my star reporter

160. Dotun Oyelade Reporting...(Memoirs Of A Newshound)

161. A Nation On The Precipice

162. A Nation Astray

163. Remarkable Historical Occurrences And Events In Nigerian History Made In August

164. Taking the power of the air

165. I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa

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167. 29 Years After, IBB Opens Up on What Killed Dele Giwa & 159 Officers on Crashed Military Plane

168. Wayas' Waltz Across History's Stage

169. A Return To A Season Of Anomie print

170. God will Judge Supreme Court Justices - Ihedioha
171. Dahiru Lawal On Yushau Shuaib: Less Sense, More Nonsense
172. Abubakar Tsav - When the Times Were Tough [opinion]
173. We'll reopen Dele Giwa's case - Sowore
174. I Will Temper With Press Freedom
175. Mike Adenuga buys Masekela's trumpet
176. The Nation stars at NMMA
177. Noble Birth, Troubled Adulthood
178. Nigeria Kills Them All (For Precious Owolabi)
179. Why IBB Should Not Be Celebrated - By Festus Aofun
180. The journalist, still an endangered species
181. Osinachi: Questions begging for answers -2
182. Former Nigerian dictator seeks to block possible probe into journalist's slaying
183. The Journalist, Still An Endangered Specie!
184. The editors' editor
185. Tony Momoh: Each Man, His Time
186. Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles
187. 27 Yrs After Parcel Bomb - I Could Have Been Killed Like Dele Giwa - Kayode Soyinka

188. I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter - Oyelade
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190. Magazine Disavows Lawyer's Move Against Security Chiefs
191. Tinubu's ministerial gyrations fail to inspire
192. Omatsola's Rhythmic eyes, watching and telling
193. Only restructuring can save Nigeria -Eze Ogbonnaya
194. Omatsola's Rhythmic Eyes, Watching and Telling [book review]
195. Kingsley Osadolor: Quintessential Media Man Teacher-to-be
196. Fact-Checking Technology, Key To Combating Fake News - Olupohunda
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204. My Journey: A Personal Story by Kingsley Moghalu
205. OF KARMA, CAMA, THE CHURCH, AND MUSHROOMING CHURCHES (1)

206. New book blames Odili for political violence in Rivers, Amaechi, Wike for profiting from it

207. NUJ demands arrest, prosecution of killers of Bayelsa journalist

208. NIGERIA SEEKS THE SLAYERS OF AN EDITOR

209. Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless

210. Why I Ventured Into Movie Production -Foluso Lala

211. RIGHTS- NIGERIA : PROBING 15 YEARS OF ABUSES UNDER THE MILITARY

212. NUJ demands arrest, prosecution of killers of Bayelsa journalist

213. OPINION: AT 78, IBB MAINTAINS HIS IMPORTANT BEATS, BUT

214. At 78, IBB maintains his important beats, but...

215. At 78, IBB Maintains His Essential Beats, But...

216. Blame Obasanjo For Bad Leadership In Nigeria Osoba

217. Ife prepared me for journalism, even though, I read Psychology -Lanre Arogundade

218. Killing of Journalists Now Game [opinion]

219. Echoes of parcel bomb

220. Another Roots for IBB

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222. Six Things June 12 Taught Me

223. THE UNFORGETTABLE MEE 20 YEARS GONE

224. Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape And Murder So Gruesome!

225. I like doing house chores to encourage my sons -Bolaji Abdullahi

226. Only idiots make cases for terrorist-herdsmen -General Togun

227. Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape, Murder So Gruesome!

228. NIGERIA : INTERNATIONAL JURY TO PROBE INTO MURDER CASE

229. The myth of cars in a holy well

230. The Myth of Cars in a Holy Well

231. #EndSARS: My father would be proud of Nigerian youths - Dele Giwa's daughter

232. June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

233. June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

234. I Was a Security Guard Before I Became a Lawyer, SAN

235. NGE Mourns Slain Journalist

236. Understanding Hazards of The Country's Journalism [analysis]

237. Makinde, Adeolu Akande, Ogunwuyi, Fatia Buhari, Others Make 2021 Oyo 100 Most Influential List

238. War against everybody

239. The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa (II) [opinion]

240. Gani: Ten Years On, Still The Finest

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242. Babangida: The Prince At 78
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245. PARCEL BOMB KILLS NIGERIAN JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF PLOTTING
246. Derek Ingram (1925-2018)
247. Derek Ingram: A tribute
248. Will the deceased get justice?
249. Will the deceased get justice?
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251. A President in Need of Disciples [opinion]
252. NUJ Abuja Protest Over Murdered Journalists
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278. Former Daily Times MD, Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo murdered

279. Clowns, the Tortoise And Babangida's Quest [column]

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289. Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

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- 302. Nigeria : Lagos journalist gunned down at home, 2 others killed in religious violence in Jos
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- 307. Nigeria : 3 journalists killed in weekend violence
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313. Omisore's thoughtful thoughts

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319. Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect

320. Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect

321. Chronicling Ordeal of Journalists [analysis]

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323. Journalists in Nigeria , long threatened, become target of radical Islamist sect  
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351. Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria
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363. The Case of Buhari's Alleged Plagiarism [column]
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373. Review: Fiction: Out of the shadows: A passionate first novel that emerges victorious against all the odds: Waiting for an Angel by Helon Habila 226pp, Hamish Hamilton, pounds 12.99

374. Abuja Bomb Blasts And 2011 Elections [analysis]

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376. NIGERIA 'S PANEL ENCOUNTERED UNREPENTANT MILITARY CHIEFS. MANY FAILED TO EVEN APPEAR. INQUIRY INTO RIGHTS ABUSES STYMIED

377. Learning African Politics Through Chinua Achebe (IV) [opinion]

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- 402. Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu
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- 411. Dele Momodu Visits His Father's Rented House In Ile-Ife (Video, Pics)
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450. Volksadvocaat van Nigeria Gani Fawehinmi (1938-2009), mensenrechtenactivist

451. Smiling enigma may return to fore NIGERIAN POLITICS PRO-DEMOCRACY  
CAMPAIGNERS CONCERNED OVER LEGAL MOVE AGAINST PRESIDENT OBASANJO BY  
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## Remembering Dele Giwa

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 19, 2023 Thursday

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### **Body**

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How time flies? Today makes it exactly 37 years that founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, **Dele Giwa**, was killed by parcel bomb in his Adeniyi Jones, Ikeja, Lagos home. Time virtually stood still that Sunday, as news spread of his death. Sympathisers rushed to his residence and the Newswatch office then at Oregun to condole with his family and colleagues.

**Giwa** was a colourful **journalist**. After returning home from the United States (US), he landed at the Daily Times, where he made the features pages a delight to read. He crossed over to Concord Group of Newspapers to edit the Sunday paper. **Giwa** wrote with passion. He threw himself into his job and when he and his three friends started Newswatch in 1985, magazine publishing came of age. **Giwa**'s forceful nature gave Newswatch its outlook.

'Why **Dele Giwa**'s doctor left home after Newswatch editor's death'

The circumstances surrounding his death remain as hazy as they were when he was bombed in 1986. Who killed **Dele Giwa**? This is the question his family, friends and colleagues have been asking since his death. The question remains pertinent today, just as it was in 1986. The Ibrahim Babaginda-led junta under which he was killed pledged to fish out his killers. It failed to do so despite the linking of some of its top officials with the dastardly act.

Will **Giwa** die in vain? Will we continue to ask the question: Who killed **Dele Giwa**? Or will the latter change to: Revealed: Those who killed **Dele Giwa**? For his children and grandchildren, finding **Giwa**'s killers and bringing them to justice is the only way to bring closure to the matter. May he continue to rest in peace.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2023



## Dele Giwa's Death: 37yrs After, Council Chairman Establishes Essay Competition

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 20, 2023 Friday

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**Length:** 367 words

**Byline:** Our Correspondents

### **Body**

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#### **Dele Giwa**

BENIN - As a way of immortalizing late **Dele Giwa**'s name after 37 years of his death, Etsako Central LGA chairman Hon. Solomon Obomighie has established essay competition among secondary schools in the local government in commemoration of his journalism profession.

Late **Dele Giwa**, was a prominent **journalist** and an illustrious son of Etsako Central, a renowned editor-in-chief and chief executive of Newswatch magazine, made significant contributions to the journalism profession and remains a symbol of integrity and courage in the face of adversity who was killed on October 19th, 1986, through a pancel bomb.

The chairman said late **Dele Giwa** secondary school essay competition is aimed to celebrate and promote the values that he embodied throughout his career and it will provide a platform for young writers and journalists in the local government to know more about him and express thheir thoughts on pressing societal issues and showcase their writing skills.

"This competition will not only serve as a tribute to late **Dele Giwa** but also foster a nurturing environment for budding writers and journalists to receive recognition and encouragement. It is our hope that through this platform, we will inspire the next generation of journalists to embrace the core principles of truth, transparency, and accountability", he added.

Hon Obomighie further stated that the late **Dele Giwa** secondary school essay competition is an initiative that demonstrates his commitment to appreciate the worthy sons of the entire Etsako Central local government and a way to promoting education, fostering talent, and upholding the legacy of our remarkable individuals.

## Dele Giwa's Death: 37yrs After, Council Chairman Establishes Essay Competition

"We will be collaborating with local education authority, private school owners and professional journalists to make this competition a success and impactful among the young ones.

The chairman said that the council would give a details regarding the essay competition, including eligibility, prizes, and submission guidelines, will be released soon in.

Hon. Obomighie however urged all secondary school principals to give a wider awareness to their students in the Local Government for participation as it will help in widening their writing skills.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2023

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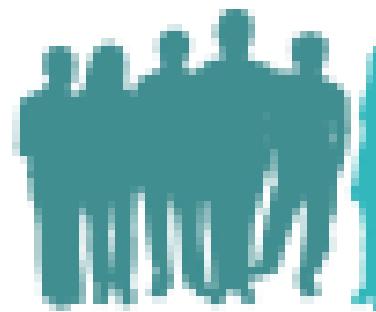


## **Letter bomb did not kill Dele Giwa — Saka**

Opinion Nigeria

October 20, 2023 Friday

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### **...Addressing today's topical issues**

**Length:** 350 words

**Byline:** Opinion Nigeria

### **Body**

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Thirty-seven years after the death of the founder of Newswatch, a public affairs analyst and public relations consultant, Mr. Deyemi Saka, yesterday, refuted claims that the veteran journalist, late Dele Giwa, died from a letter bomb.

Saka, who spoke on a breakfast show, a Television Continental, TVC, programme, said no investigation or forensic analysis was carried out to determine the cause of Giwa's death.

According to him, if Giwa truly died from a parcel bomb, his hands would not have been intact, adding that examples abound of individuals who lost their hands after opening a letter bomb.

Saka insisted that there is a need for Nigerians to call the eye witness for a clear account of all that transpired before Giwa passed on.

His words: "Dele Giwa did not die from the explosion of the letter bomb. He held it with his left hand and tore it. It mangled the mahogany table. The right hand that tore the bomb was intact. I am not happy that Chief Gani Fawehinmi isn't alive because he sought closure to Giwa's death before he died."

Letter bomb did not kill Dele Giwa — Saka

"Victims or survivors of parcel bombs always have injuries on their faces or limbs. The death of Giwa wasn't consistent with this. The eyewitness account explained how he tore it open. His face was spared.

"I am probably hopeful that Nigerians will start asking more questions. I probably see that if Nigerians accept this, it is an opening that will help the Dele Giwa family to get closure and justice.

"The only blame on Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (retd) was not fishing out his killers. I also blame successive governments for this. Nigerians should please start asking questions, probably need to call the eyewitness to please sit back and tell Nigerians maybe he missed a thing or two.

"He died from an explosion, but not necessarily from a parcel bomb. Michael Lassie, who was a victim of a parcel bomb, lost both hands. He now uses prosthetic hands.

"Giwa died of an explosion, but not a letter bomb. The idea that General Akilu called Giwa's house to know his residence as an alibi for the fact that the Federal Government killed him is farther from the truth.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2023

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AFRICMIL invites young journalists to submit essays on late Dele Giwa



## **AFRICMIL invites young journalists to submit essays on late Dele Giwa**

The Nation (Nigeria)

September 18, 2021 Saturday

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**Length:** 288 words

### **Body**

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The African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) has invited young journalists across the country to contribute to the book of essays in honour of **Dele Giwa**.

Oladele Sunmonu **Giwa** was a fiery and courageous Nigerian **journalist**, Editor-in-Chief and founder of Newswatch, a weekly magazine founded in 1984.

He was assassinated on October 19, 1986, through a letter bomb delivered at his residence in Lagos. He was 39 years old at the time.

AFRICMIL is putting together a book of essays in honour of the late **journalist**.

October 19, 2021, marks the 35th anniversary of the murder of **Dele Giwa**. Thirty-five years later, his family is still waiting for justice to be served; his killers and their accomplices have yet to be brought to book.

The **Dele Giwa** Book of Essays is a key feature of the **Dele Giwa** Annual Lecture and Awards on Courage and Accountability in Journalism scheduled to hold later in the year.

**Dele Giwa** redefined Nigerian journalism because of his courage and his writing. Although there are a few books on **Dele Giwa**, the first being 'Born To Run' by **Dele** Olojede, another gifted **journalist**, who was working with **Giwa** in Newswatch at the time the heinous crime was committed, not much has been done in concrete terms to promote his legacy.

The **Dele Giwa** Book of Essays is a key feature of the **Dele Giwa** Annual Lecture and Awards on Courage and Accountability in Journalism scheduled to hold later in the year.

The essay, according to AFRICMIL is open to journalists under 40 years and affiliated with a recognised media house in Nigeria.

Essays it said should be between 1000 and 1200 words (maximum) and submitted in Microsoft word document (Times New Roman - 12 points). They MUST reflect the aims of the book.

AFRICMIL invites young journalists to submit essays on late Dele Giwa

**Load-Date:** September 18, 2021

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37 years after Giwa's death: Etsako council chairman set up secondary school essay competition in his honour



## 37 years after Giwa's death: Etsako council chairman set up secondary school essay competition in his honour

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 20, 2023 Friday

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*Voice of the Nation*

**Length:** 368 words

**Byline:** Cyril

### **Body**

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From Ighomuaye Lucky, Benin

As a way of immortalizing his name after 37 years of his death, Etsako Central LGA chairman Hon. Solomon Obomigie has established **Dele Giwa**'s essay competition among secondary schools in the Local Government in commemoration of his journalism profession.

Late **Dele Giwa**, was a prominent ***journalist*** and an illustrious son of Etsako Central, a renowned editor-in-chief and chief executive of Newswatch magazine, made significant contributions to the journalism profession and remains a symbol of integrity and courage in the face of adversity who was killed on October 19th, 1986, through a pancel bomb.

The chairman said late **Dele Giwa** secondary school essay competition is aimed to celebrate and promote the values that he embodied throughout his career and it will provide a platform for young writers and journalists in the local government to know more about him and express their thoughts on pressing societal issues and showcase their writing skills.

"This competition will not only serve as a tribute to late **Dele Giwa** but also foster a nurturing environment for budding writers and journalists to receive recognition and encouragement. It is our hope that through this platform, we will inspire the next generation of journalists to embrace the core principles of truth, transparency, and accountability", he added.

37 years after Giwa's death: Etsako council chairman set up secondary school essay competition in his honour

Hon Obomighie further stated that the late **Dele Giwa** secondary school essay competition is an initiative that demonstrates his commitment to appreciate the worthy sons of the entire Etsako Central Local Government and a way to promoting education, fostering talent, and upholding the legacy of our remarkable individuals.

"We will be collaborating with local education authority, private school owners and professional journalists to make this competition a success and impactful among the young ones.

The chairman said that the council would give a details regarding the essay competition, including eligibility, prizes, and submission guidelines, will be released soon.

Hon. Obomighie however urged all secondary school principals to give a wider awareness to their students in the Local Government for participation as it will help in widening their writing skills.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2023

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## Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa

The Punch

October 17, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 298 words

### **Body**

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Ademola Olonilua Published 17 October 2021

Political economist and former presidential candidate, Prof. Patrick Utomi, and Human Rights lawyer, Mr Femi Falana, are billed to attend a lecture in honour of **Dele Giwa**, as well as to commemorate the first anniversary of the #EndSARS protest.

**Dele Giwa** was the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine. He died 35 years ago. However, the event is organised by the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy, in partnership with Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, Enough is Enough Nigeria, National Consultative Front, PLAYYA and MILID Foundation

Moreso, the event will also mark the public presentation of Remaking Nigeria: Sixty Years, Sixty Voices – a book of 60 essays by 60 young Nigerians which salutes 60 years of Nigeria's independence and points the way towards a better country.

The #EndSARS advocacy made global headlines last October when young Nigerians across the country and in major cities around the world embarked on protests against persistent brutality and rights violations by the Nigeria Police Force.

The Coordinator of AFRICMIL, Chido Onumah, said in a statement, "One year after the protests and the reprehensible violent response by the Nigerian Army which led to the death of unarmed protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos. It is important to cast a critical eye on that incident and see what lessons have been learnt and what needs to be done going forward."

Significantly, the first-year remembrance of these protests coincides with the 35th anniversary of the murder via letter-bomb of the celebrated **journalist, Dele Giwa**.

"It is a measure of the acute dysfunction of the Nigerian state that till date, no one has been arrested let alone brought to trial for this heinous crime, Onumah noted.

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2021

Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa

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## Remembering Dele Giwa, An Icon Of Bold Investigative Journalism

Nigerian Tribune

October 19, 2022 Wednesday

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**Length:** 447 words

### **Body**

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It's 36 years today since the death of journalist, Dele Giwa, editor-in-chief and chief executive of Newswatch, who was killed via a parcel bomb.

He died on October 19, 1986 by a parcel bomb that was delivered to his house during the military regime of former military Head of State, Major General Ibrahim Babangida.

Giwa was killed while having breakfast with his friend Soyinka at his residence, located at 25 Talabi Street, Ikeja, Lagos, in 1986. He died at the age of 39.

Looking at the manner of his death, a death in his family home, by bomb parceled, sealed and delivered to his home, what could be more worrying than this manner of death?

This may be why, even after his death, Giwa has not ceased to arouse more controversies and theories about who killed Dele Giwa? And why? The question has not died.

It's quite unfortunate that African journalists face several violations of their right to press freedom and freedom of expression in the form of intimidation, harassment, threats, attacks, beatings, illegal detentions, arrests and imprisonment, and confiscation of equipment.

These are dark days for Nigerian journalists when they operate in difficult situations.

Nigeria has recorded a number of important journalists who have lost their lives in the course of exposing evil and wrongdoing.

Giwa would be remembered for his nature of exposing corrupt and illegal acts of the government and this earned him deserved recognition. He said he never answered to any powerful authority except for himself because he never liked to be the errand boy of some powerful politicians.

He once wrote in one of his rejoinders: 'I have said at every available opportunity that NOBODY tells me what to write in my column. It is my property, and I guard it jealously, for it is my freedom to think and write as I see. Nobody

## Remembering Dele Giwa, An Icon Of Bold Investigative Journalism

higher than me in the Concord Group has ever demanded my column for editing before publication. Any reaction to any of my columns has come after publication'... culled from the article - Enough of Errand Boy Journalism.

In 1984, two years before his death, **Giwa** and fellow journalists Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed founded a news magazine called Newswatch, that resurrected investigative journalism.

At first, the magazine triggered attention and praise from the public and also from the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. But by the second half of 1986, the magazine had become a threat to the military administration as a result of its criticisms of the government.

**Giwa**'s death has always reminded us of the dangerous nature and power of journalism.

He died as a hero and his legacies of a good name and enchanting words will not be forgotten

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

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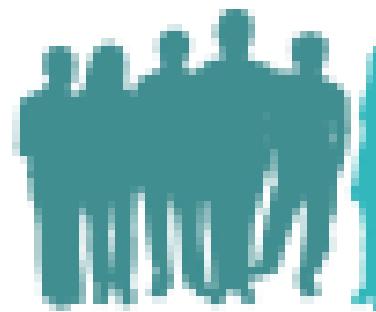


## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 37 Years After -By Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye

Opinion Nigeria

October 19, 2023 Thursday

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### ...Addressing today's topical issues

**Length:** 1926 words

**Byline:** Opinion Nigeria

### **Body**

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"Death is...the absence of presence...the endless time of never coming back...a gap you can't see, and when the wind blows through it, it makes no sound" – Tom Stoppard

In the morning of Monday, October 20, 1986, I was preparing to go to work when a major item on the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) 6.30 news bulletin hit me like a hard object. Mr. Dele Giwa, the founding editor-in-chief of 'Newswatch' magazine, had the previous day been killed and shattered by a letter bomb in his Lagos home. My scream was so loud that my colleague barged into my room to inquire what it was that could have made me to let out such an ear-splitting bellow.

We were three young men who had a couple of months earlier been posted from Enugu to Abakaliki to work in the old Anambra State public service, and we had hired a flat in a newly erected two-storey building at the end of Water Works Road, which we shared. My flat-mate, clearly, was not familiar with Giwa's name and work, and so had wondered why his death could elicit such a reaction from me.

But later that day, as he interacted with people, he realised that Giwa's death was such big news, and by the next couple of days, he had become an expert on Giwa and his truncated life and career. Across the country, Giwa's

## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 37 Years After -By Ugochukwu Ejinkonye

brutal death dominated the news not just because of the pride of place he occupied in Nigerian journalism practice, but more because of the totally novel way his killers had chosen to end his life.

Indeed, death is an appointment which every human being must keep. While we are on earth, we reserve the right to reschedule or even cancel our day-to-day appointments. But in the matter of birth or death, any cancellation or rescheduling of appointments remain the exclusive prerogative of the Creator.

Although death is unavoidable, yet, no man has any right to arrogate to himself the role of bringing forward another person's appointment with death. In fact, it is abominable to even use one's hands to hasten one's own appointment with death. Laws of God and man fiercely abhor such an action. So, murderers, including suicide bombers, their sponsors and supporters should get it into their heads that they have no mandate whatsoever from the Creator of man to take even their own lives let alone that of other people, no matter the motivation.

Now, deep down the heart of every man and woman, and beyond the facade of all apparent fearlessness and bravery, lie this cold loathing and resentment for death. The survival instinct is always there and there is always this desire and care to avoid danger, to postpone one's date with death, temporarily at least, hence the constant struggle at many a deathbeds.

No doubt, Mr. **Giwa** was not expecting his own appointment with death when it came calling on Sunday, October 19, 1986. His friends say he loved life, was full of life, and wanted to make the best out of life. He had also worked hard to excel in his chosen career – journalism. But on that Sunday morning, as he had a late breakfast in his study in the company of Kayode Soyinka, the magazine's London Bureau Chief, a parcel was handed to him. On it was written: "From the Commander-in-Chief" with an instruction that it must be opened only by the addressee.

"This must be from the president", **Giwa** was reported to have said.

But unknown to him, in that seemingly innocuous parcel, was the cold, callous agent of brutal death, intent on accomplishing the abominable mission of hastening his appointment with death. Conceived by man, prepared by man, sent by man and delivered to him by man, this lethal instrument had only one mission: to bomb out the young life of **Dele Giwa**. And it did precisely that with chilling exactitude, tearing his flesh, wasting his blood, talent, usefulness to himself, his family, Newswatch magazine, Nigerian journalism and the Nigerian nation.

**Giwa** had written in 'Sunday Concord' newspaper of June 8, 1980 that "Death looks for a happy home where it can turn happiness into grief and ensure that for days the household will have nothing to discuss but the blow of death." He was the pioneer editor of 'Sunday Concord'. By writing this, he unwittingly wrote his own elegy.

"They got me!" That was **Giwa**'s last words at First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja, where the Chief Medical Director, late Dr. Tosin Ajayi and his doctors had battled to see how they could save his life. Earlier, on their way to the hospital, **Giwa** was saying to his wife, Funmi, in Yoruba, "Nwon ti pa mi", meaning: "They have killed me."

Now, who are these "they" that were so heartless, so senseless, so callous, so fiendish and irremediably inhuman? How can a human being elect to do such a horrifying damage to another person? **Giwa**'s flesh was reportedly shattered, with some pieces (some of which were discovered many days later) scattered about in his study. The autopsy report performed by pathologists at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) said that **Giwa** suffered from "multiple blast injuries with 25 percent burns, mutilated thighs with fractures of femoral bones and avulsion of femoral vessels".

This is indeed horrible! The first reaction at the news of such a horrendous tragedy would be to ask like Banquo in William Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth,' whether we, as a people, had "eaten on the insane root that takes reason prisoner?"

**Dele Giwa**'s death was a very slow painful death. The pictures of his shattered body which late Chief Gani Fawehimbi displayed during the sitting of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission of Nigeria (also known as Oputa Panel) set up in 1998 and headed by late Justice Chukwudifo Oputa could have passed as horror images of the goriest type, showing man (**Giwa**'s killer) at his basest, most bestial and fiendish worst.

## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 37 Years After -By Ugochukwu Ejinkonye

"They have killed me", **Giwa** moaned while writhing in indescribable pain, begging Dr. Ajayi to do all within his power to save him.

For more than three decades now **Giwa**'s killers have been hiding, afraid of the inevitable fall-out of their satanic deed, haunted and tormented by their dirty, murky, slimy conscience. Even if they eventually manage to escape the judgment of man, they cannot escape the judgment of the Almighty God which is much more dreadful. As we all know, they will surely serve their indescribable punishment forever. That will surely be the case unless they repent of their hideous deed and make the necessary restitutions!

**Giwa**'s had death plunged a broad spectrum of the Nigerian population into clearly unprecedented, monumental grief and fear. People were afraid to open parcels sent to their homes and offices. The public outcry and loud condemnations were deafening. Indeed, **Giwa** was right when he wrote in his highly regarded column, 'Parallax Snaps,' some months earlier, that "One life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom." The reactions that followed his death vindicated the truth of this assertion.

A lot of accusing fingers pointed at the government of the day. It was believed that only a special panel could unravel the mystery that seemed to have attended the gory affair and unearth the unseen hands that perpetrated the spine-chilling murder. In fact, 'Newswatch's Board of Directors called for a three-man Judicial Commission of Enquiry headed by a retired judge of high repute, with an archbishop and an Imam as members, to probe the murder. But the General Ibrahim Babangida regime insisted that it was the police that should investigate the murder. And as would be expected, public skepticism about the likely outcome of investigations undertaken by the Nigerian police was widespread.

In its editorial of October 28, 1986, 'The Guardian' newspaper disagreed with the Babangida regime's insistence that the investigation should be left for the police, despite widespread calls for a Commission of Inquiry to be set up to probe it.

Said 'The Guardian': "The police have been signally inept in solving much simpler crimes, and the public is justifiably unimpressed by their investigative ability and seriousness... The government has very little choice but to appoint a special prosecutor... [which] will be a dramatic demonstration by government that it has nothing to hide, and is as interested in discovering **Giwa**'s assassins as the public is..."

A year after **Giwa**'s murder, when the police predictably "found" nothing and "caught" no one, Ray Ekpu, 'Newswatch's new editor-in-chief, in a letter to the police reminded them that any murder which remained unsolved could only mean "added insecurity to the living."

On his part, Lagos lawyer and human rights crusader, late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN, vowed to catch **Giwa**'s killers. Until his death in September 2009, Gani remained unrelenting in his determination to ensure that the people he had continued to accuse of the murder since 1986 were brought to justice.

It is now thirty-seven years since **Giwa**'s murder shook Nigeria to her foundations. Several other mysterious assassinations of journalists and other outspoken public figures have also followed. Maybe, if **Giwa**'s murder was solved and the perpetrators exposed and punished, it might have deterred other murderous characters from going ahead to kill the other victims that were assassinated afterwards.

And when police investigations into **Giwa**'s death eventually yielded no results, Gani said: The police have failed to find **Giwa**'s killers because they know the killers!

After 37 years, the gory story of **Giwa**'s gruesome murder has refused to go away. The greatest honour that can be accorded to his name now is to insist that his killers be found. It is not yet late to set up a reputable Commission of Inquiry as favoured by many Nigerians to reopen the case, reexamine the various narratives that have continued to trail the murder and really get to the root of the tragedy, especially, now that most of the witnesses and even those that have been consistently fingered are still alive.

## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 37 Years After -By Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye

Other cases of assassination which have also been shrouded in mystery need to be revisited too. Until Nigeria demonstrates a capacity to solve murder cases, especially, high profile ones involving people critical of government policies and actions, potential murderers would always derive incentive from the conviction that they can always eliminate anyone in Nigeria and get away with it. And "anyone" can be anybody! Somebody can be in government today and surrounded by heavy security, but tomorrow, such a person might be out of office and become as vulnerable as the next man out there. Leaders go all out to make society a safer place, not just because of others, but also, for them and their relatives.

As murderers continue to be allowed to circulate within the bounds of civilised ambience, and eliminate people with utmost impunity, they not only constitute a threat to hapless, decent and hard-working citizens, their vile activities go further to stifle critical thoughts that are very essential in influencing the evolution of responsible governance which fosters progress and development.

They may, however, continue to hide from man due to government's inability or unwillingness, or both, to fish them out, and bring them to justice, but they, certainly, cannot hide from God. Their day with Divine Judgment will surely come! And as the African-Caribbean writer, George Lamming, said in his classic novel, 'In The Castle Of My Skin', "God can see the blackest ant on the blackest piece of coal on the blackest night."

\*Ejinkeonye, a writer and journalist, is the author of the book, "Nigeria: Why Looting May Not Stop" ([scruples2006@yahoo.com](mailto:scruples2006@yahoo.com))

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2023

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## 37 Years After, Analyst Blames Babangida, Successive Govts. For Failure To Find Giwa's Killers

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 19, 2023 Thursday

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**Length:** 283 words

**Byline:** Joy Anigbogu

### **Body**

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LAGOS - A Political Analyst, Deyemi Saka has blamed former military President, Ibrahim Babangida and successive governments for failure to find the killers of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, 37 years after his demise.

According to Saka, who spoke on TVC on Thursday, Dele Giwa didn't die from the letter bomb but died from an explosion.

Saka, while making case for his position said that the late Giwa held the envelope with his left hand and tore it, stressing that his right hand that tore the bomb was intact, and the explosion mangled the mahogany table in his house.

He said, "I'm not happy that Chief Gani Fawehinmi is not alive, because he sought closure to Giwa's death before he died.

"Victims or survivors of parcel bombs always have injuries on their faces or limbs. The death of Giwa wasn't consistent with this.

"The eyewitness account by Kayode Soyinka explained how Giwa tore the envelope open. His face was spared.

"The only blame on Ibrahim Babangida was not fishing out his killers. I also blame successive governments for this.

On what he hopes to achieve with the new perspective as to who killed Giwa. Saka said, "He died from an explosion, but not necessarily from a parcel bomb.

### POLL

"Micheal Lassy, who was a victim of the parcel bomb, lost both hands. He now uses prosthetic hands. Giwa died of explosion, but not letter bomb.

37 Years After, Analyst Blames Babangida, Successive Govts. For Failure To Find Giwa's Killers

"The idea that Gen Akilu called **Giwa**'s house to know his residence as an alibi to the fact that the Federal Government killed him is far from the truth.

"If the State Security Service (SSS) as it was then known wanted anything on **Giwa**, they didn't have to call him to ask for his address.

"**Giwa** didn't die from a parcel bomb, he died of an explosion," Saka added.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2023

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## **Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa**

The Punch

October 18, 2021 Monday

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**Length:** 295 words

### **Body**

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Ademola Olonilua Published 17 October 2021

Political economist and former presidential candidate, Prof. Pat Utomi, and human rights lawyer, Mr Femi Falana, are billed to attend a lecture in honour of **Dele Giwa**, as well as to commemorate the first anniversary of the #EndSARS protest.

**Giwa** was the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine who was killed 35 years ago. The event is organised by the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy, in partnership with Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, Enough is Enough Nigeria, National Consultative Front, PLAYYA and MILID Foundation

More so, the event will also mark the public presentation of Remaking Nigeria: Sixty Years, Sixty Voices – a book of 60 essays by 60 young Nigerians which salutes 60 years of Nigeria's independence and points the way towards a better country.

The #EndSARS advocacy made global headlines last October when young Nigerians across the country and in major cities around the world embarked on protests against persistent brutality and rights violations by the Nigeria Police Force.

The Coordinator of AFRICMIL, Chido Onumah, said in a statement, "One year after the protests and the reprehensible violent response by the Nigerian Army which led to the death of unarmed protesters at the Lekki tollgate in Lagos, it is important to cast a critical eye on that incident and see what lessons have been learnt and what needs to be done going forward,"

Significantly, the first-year remembrance of these protests coincides with the 35th anniversary of the murder via letter-bomb of the celebrated **journalist, Giwa**.

"It is a measure of the acute dysfunction of the Nigerian state that till date, no one has been arrested let alone brought to trial for this heinous crime, Onumah noted.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2021

Utomi, Falana to attend lecture in honour of #EndSARS, Dele Giwa

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## **Dele Giwa: 34 Years After His Gruesome Murder!**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 18, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 1697 words

**Byline:** Editorial

### **Body**

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#### **Dele Giwa**

UG OCHUKWU EJINKEONYE

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In the morning of Monday, October 20, 1986, I was preparing to go to work when a major item on the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) 6.30 news bulletin hit me like a hard object. Mr. **Dele Giwa**, the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine, had the previous day been killed and shattered by a letter bomb in his Lagos home. My scream was so loud that my colleague barged into my room to inquire what it was that could have made me to let out such an ear-splitting bellow.

**ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW OVER 2,000 NIGERIAN MEN ARE NOW NATURALLY OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!**

Across the country, **Giwa**'s brutal death dominated the news not just because of the pride of place he occupied in Nigerian journalism practice and but more because of the totally novel way his killers had chosen to end his life.Indeed, death is an appointment which every human being must keep. While we are on earth, we reserve the right to reschedule or even cancel our day-to-day appointments. But in the matter of birth or death, any cancellation or rescheduling of appointments remain the exclusive prerogative of the Creator.No doubt, Mr. **Giwa** was not expecting his own appointment with death when it came calling on Sunday, October 19, 1986. His friends say he loved life, was full of life, and wanted to make the best out of life. He had also worked hard to excel in his chosen career – journalism. But on that Sunday morning, as he had a late breakfast in his study in the company of Kayode Soyinka, the magazine's London Bureau Chief, a parcel was handed to him. On it was written: "From the Commander-in-Chief " with an instruction that it must be opened only by the addressee."This must be from the president", **Giwa** was reported to have said.But unknown to him, in that seemingly innocuous parcel, was the cold, callous agent of brutal death, intent on accomplishing the abominable mission of hastening his appointment with

## Dele Giwa: 34 Years After His Gruesome Murder!

death. Conceived by man, prepared by man, sent by man and delivered by man, this lethal instrument had only one mission: to bomb out the young life of **Dele Giwa**. And it did precisely that with chilling exactitude, tearing his flesh, wasting his blood, talent, usefulness to himself, his family, Newswatch magazine, Nigerian journalism and the Nigerian nation. **Giwa** had written in "Sunday Concord" newspaper of June 8, 1980 that "Death looks for a happy home where it can turn happiness into grief and ensure that for days the household will have nothing to discuss but the blow of death." He was the pioneer editor of Sunday Concord. By writing this, he unwittingly wrote his own elegy. "They got me!" That was **Giwa**'s last words at First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja where the Chief Medical Director, Dr. Tosin Ajayi and his doctors battled to see how they could save his life. Earlier, on their way to Hospital, **Giwa** was saying to his wife, Funmi, in Yoruba, "Nwon ti pa mi", meaning: "They have killed me." Who are these "they" that were so heartless, so senseless, so callous, so fiendish and irremediably inhuman? How can a human being elect to do such a horrifying damage to another person? **Giwa**'s flesh was reportedly shattered, with some pieces (some of which were discovered many days later) scattered about in his study. The autopsy report performed by pathologists at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) said that **Giwa** suffered from "multiple blast injuries with 25 percent burns, mutilated thighs with fractures of femoral bones and avulsion of femoral vessels". This is indeed horrible. The first reaction at the news of such horrendous tragedy would be to ask like Banquo in William Shakespeare's play, "Macbeth" whether we, as a people, had "eaten on the insane root that takes reason prisoner?" **Dele Giwa**'s death was a very slow painful death. The damage on his body was massive. The pictures of his shattered body which late Chief Gani Fawehinmi displayed during the sitting of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission of Nigeria (also known as Oputa Panel) set up in 1998 and headed by late Justice Chukwudifo Oputa could have passed as horror images of the goriest type, showing man (**Giwa**'s killer) at his basest, most bestial and fiendish worst. Again, who are these "they"? Who are these cowardly bestial lot, these direct descendants of the first murderer – Cain? For more than three decades now they have been hiding, afraid of the inevitable fall-out of their satanic deed, haunted and tormented by their dirty, murky, slimy conscience. Even if they eventually manage to escape the judgment of man, they cannot escape the judgment of the Almighty God which is much more dreadful. As we all know, they will surely serve their indescribable punishment forever. That will surely be the case unless they repent of their hideous deed and do the necessary restitution! A lot of accusing fingers pointed at the government of the day. It was believed that only a special panel could unravel the mystery that seemed to attend the gory affair and unearth the unseen hands that perpetrated the spine-chilling murder. In fact, Newswatch Board of Directors called for a three-man Judicial Commission of Enquiry headed by a retired judge of high repute, with an archbishop and an Imam as members, to probe the murder. But the General Ibrahim Babangida regime insisted that it was the police that should investigate the murder. And as would be expected, public skepticism about the likely outcome of investigations undertaken by the Nigerian police was widespread. In its editorial of October 28, 1986, The Guardian newspaper disagreed with the Babangida regime's insistence that the investigation into **Dele Giwa**'s murder should be left for the police, despite widespread calls for a Commission of Inquiry to be set up to probe it. A year after **Giwa**'s murder, when the police predictably "found" nothing and "caught" no one, Ray Ekpu, Newswatch's then new editor-in-chief in a letter to the police reminded them that any murder which remained unsolved could only mean "added insecurity to the living." But Lagos lawyer and human rights crusader, late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN, vowed to catch **Giwa**'s killers. His attempt to dock Babangida's two security chiefs, Brig-Gen Halilu Akilu and Col A.K. Togun, brought him in direct confrontation with the Babangida regime which made no pretense of its intention to not allow any probe more penetrating than the unserious, shallow, perfunctory thing the police was doing. A day before **Giwa**'s assassination, Akilu had reportedly phoned **Giwa**'s house to enquire about the address of the house from **Giwa**'s wife, Funmi, explaining that Babangida's ADC was to stop by to deliver an item for **Giwa** at his house. And less than twenty-four hours after this call, a letter bomb was delivered at **Giwa**'s house, could that have been mere coincidence? After Babangida's military dictatorship expired, Gani took the matter to the Oputa Panel. And this once more caused the lingering question to ring out louder: Who killed **Dele Giwa**? Until his death in September 2009, Gani had been unrelenting in his determination to ensure that the people he had continued to accuse of the murder since 1986 were brought to justice. It is now thirty-four years since **Giwa**'s murder shook Nigeria to her foundations. Several other mysterious assassinations of journalists and other outspoken public figures have also followed. Maybe, if **Giwa**'s murder was solved and the perpetrators exposed and punished, it might have deterred other murderous characters from going ahead to kill the other victims that were assassinated afterwards. Even when Babangida and the two security chiefs who had served under him were summoned by the Oputa Panel following Gani's petition, they refused to show up. They instead sought a restraining order from the court to frustrate any attempt by the Panel to compel them to

### Dele Giwa: 34 Years After His Gruesome Murder!

appear before it. Their argument was that the Nigerian president lacked the powers to set up the Panel. Although the Supreme Court later agreed with their submission in a ruling that was delivered long after the Panel's report had been submitted, what has remained clear is that despite the court judgment, unanswered questions about the gruesome murder have continued to linger in many minds, which the Oputa Panel would have provided them an amazing platform to convincingly address. Interestingly, Col. A. K. Togun, in chat with airport correspondents in late 1986, gave some very instructive illustrations that appeared to have thrown some light on the circumstances surrounding Dele Giwa's murder. When asked what he thought about Col. Togun's revelations during his airport encounter with reporters, the then Deputy Inspector General of police, Mr. Chris Omeban, who was in charge of the investigations into Giwa's murder reportedly replied that the police does not go into proverbs. And when police investigations into Giwa's death eventually yielded no results, Gani said: The police have failed to find Giwa's killers because they know the killers! After 34 years, the gory story of Giwa's gruesome murder has refused to go away. The greatest honour that can be accorded to his name now is to insist that his killers be found. It is not yet late to set up a reputable Commission of Inquiry as favoured by many Nigerians to reopen the case, reexamine the various narratives that have continued to trail the murder and really get to the root of the tragedy, especially, now that most of the witnesses and even those that have been consistently fingered are still alive.\*Ejinkeonye, a journalist, is the author of the book, "Nigeria: Why Looting May Not Stop" (scruples2006@yahoo.com)

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**Load-Date:** October 18, 2020

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (1)

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 26, 2021 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1079 words

**Byline:** Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye

### **Body**

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We were three young men who had a couple of months earlier been posted from Enugu to Abakaliki to work in the old Anambra State public service, and we had hired a flat in a newly erected two-storey building at the end of Water Works Road, which we shared. My flat-mate, clearly, was not familiar with Giwa's name and work, and so had wondered why his death could elicit such a reaction from me. But later that day, as he interacted with people, he realised that Giwa's death was such big news, and by the next couple of days, he had become an expert on Giwa and his truncated life and career. Across the country, Giwa's brutal death dominated the news not just because of the pride of place he occupied in Nigerian journalism practice and but more because of the totally novel way his killers had chosen to end his life.

Indeed, death is an appointment which every human being must keep. While we are on earth, we reserve the right to reschedule or even cancel our day-to-day appointments. But in the matter of birth or death, any cancellation or rescheduling of appointments remain the exclusive prerogative of the Creator. Although death is unavoidable, yet, no man has any right to arrogate to himself the role of bringing forward any other person's appointment with death. In fact, it is abominable to even use one's hands to hasten one's own appointment with death. Laws of God and man fiercely abhor such an action. So, murderers, suicide bombers and their sponsors and supporters should get it into their heads that they have no mandate whatsoever from the Creator of man to take even their own lives let alone that of other people, no matter the motivation.

### Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (1)

Now, deep down the heart of every man and woman, and beyond the facade of all apparent fearlessness and bravery, lie this cold loathing and resentment for death. The survival instinct is always there and there is always this desire and care to avoid danger, to postpone one's date with death, temporarily at least, hence the constant struggle at many a deathbeds.

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"They have killed me", **Giwa** moaned while writhing in indescribable pain, begging Dr. Ajayi to do all within his power to save him.

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Ejinkeonye, a writer and **Journalist**, is the author of the book, "Nigeria: Why Looting May Not Stop".

Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (1)

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2021

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## **Land grabbers invade 'property of Dele Giwa's doctor'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 13, 2020 Tuesday

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**Length:** 282 words

### **Body**

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A lawyer, Mr. Akinjide Isola, has petitioned the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) to stop alleged trespassers from encroaching on land owned by the late founder of First Foundation Hospital, Dr Olutosin Ajayi.

Ajaiy died on April 27, 2020, after a brief illness. He was the doctor who tried to save the late renowned **journalist, Dele Giwa**, after he was parcel-bombed in 1986.

Isola, who is Ajaiy's lawyer, said the trespassers destroyed structures on the land on Afolabi Awosanya Street, Opebi, Ikeja, with the intention of grabbing the land.

He said armed hoodlums invaded the property less than a month after Ajaiy died.

'We reported to the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Zone 2 Police Command at Onikan, Lagos. The police instructed them to stay away from the property pending when investigations would be concluded.'

'Despite the police instructions, the land grabbers mobilised themselves and went back to the land, vandalised structures, materials, and started working day and night,' Isola said.'

The lawyer urged LASBCA to investigate the invasion.

He added: 'The late Ajaiy has been the legal owner of the land since 1975, which was duly registered with the Lagos Land Registry as No. 12, at page 12 in Volume 1705 of the Register of Deeds.'

'The land grabbers claimed to have obtained a court judgment since 1977. They are now enforcing the judgment with armed hoodlums and thugs, whom they brought into the land to injure, maim, and chased away the workers. They vandalised the land, demolished the fence and materials on site after the death of Ajaiy.'

The Nation learnt that the matter is being investigated by the police and the Lagos State Government.

**Load-Date:** October 14, 2020

'Why Dele Giwa's doctor left home after Newswatch editor's death'



## **'Why Dele Giwa's doctor left home after Newswatch editor's death'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 3, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 620 words

### **Body**

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The Lagos State High Court has been told why the late Dr Tosin Ajayi of First Foundation Medical Engineering Co. Ltd left home soon after renowned journalist, Dele Giwa died in 1986.

His widow, Mrs Oluyemisi Ajayi, said her husband did not leave home because he was fed up with his marriage to her.

She averred that neither were the couple separated for 35 years before his death as claimed by the deceased's lover and former Miss Nigeria, Helen Prest.

Dr Ajayi, who died on April 27, 2020, was the doctor who tried in vain to save Giwa's life after he was parcel-bombed by suspected agents of the military junta of former military president, Gen Ibrahim Babangida.

Giwa, then editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine, was attended to at Dr Ajayi's hospital, First Foundation Medical Centre.

Mrs Ajayi averred that Dr Ajayi kept away from home for fear of his life in the face of possible attack by the junta, and subsequently for business reasons.

His death has resulted in a legal battle over his estate filed at the Federal High Court in Lagos by Prest, under the name 'Helen Prest-Ajayi.'

Prest told then vacation judge, Justice Tijjani Ringim, in an ex-parte application that in the course of Dr Ajayi's separation, she married him and they had a child, Tosin, who lived with her until his demise.

On August 5, 2021, she obtained an order restraining Mrs Ajayi from dealing with or running the affairs of the firm as a sole surviving director/shareholder pending the hearing and determination of the main suit.

The court also, among others, restrained in the interim, Mrs Ajayi and three other respondents from carrying out or dealing with any assets of the company.

'Why Dele Giwa's doctor left home after Newswatch editor's death'

Mrs Ajai has prayed the court to vacate that order.

In her July 23, 2021 counter-affidavit to Prest's originating motion, Mrs Ajai said she became aware 'of an adulterous relationship between my deceased husband, Dr Tosin Ajai, and his adulteress, Ms Helen Prest.'

She added: 'Although my late husband had an illicit affair with the 2nd Plaintiff (Prest), my relationship with him remained extant from the time we got married till death did us part.'

'Though my late husband had decided to sleep away from home solely because of security concerns following the circumstances of the death of the late **Dele Giwa** (who was cared for by my late husband at First Foundation Hospital until his passing) in late 1986 and the phenomenal successes of our businesses in the years following that, my deceased husband and I were still happily married (with my husband still visiting home almost daily) until the 2nd Plaintiff began the illicit love affair with him;

'Despite the meddlesomeness of the 2nd Plaintiff in my marriage to my deceased husband, my relationship with my deceased husband was never estranged as he and I remained cordial throughout his lifetime;

'Throughout my deceased husband's lifetime, our relationship went beyond mere communications relating to the education and welfare of our children as my deceased husband never ceased in his responsibility towards me;

'In this regard, my deceased husband regularly gave me money for my upkeep, and he would lavish me with gifts from time to time, including buying me cars;

'Up till the time of his death, my late husband always liaised with me in my capacity as director and shareholder in matters relating to the 1st Defendant company and all other First Foundation companies in which my late husband and I were co-directors and co-shareholders.'

Mrs Ajai is seeking, among others, an order that she and her children (including Prest's daughter, Tomisin Ajai) are the only ones entitled to share in the deceased's estate.

She is praying, among others, that the court should exclude Prest from Dr Ajai's estate.

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2021

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

The Nigerian Observer (Nigeria)

November 6, 2021 Saturday

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Length: 2666 words

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We were three young men who had a couple of months earlier been posted from Enugu to Abakaliki to work in the old Anambra State public service, and we had hired a flat in a newly erected two-storey building at the end of Water Works Road, which we shared. My flat-mate, clearly, was not familiar with **Giwa's** name and work, and so had wondered why his death could elicit such a reaction from me. But later that day, as he interacted with people, he realised that **Giwa's** death was such big news, and by the next couple of days, he had become an expert on **Giwa** and his truncated life and career. Across the country, **Giwa's** brutal death dominated the news not just because of the pride of place he occupied in Nigerian journalism practice and but more because of the totally novel way his killers had chosen to end his life.

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iwa's had death plunged a broad spectrum of the Nigerian population into clearly unprecedented, monumental grief and fear. People were afraid to open parcels sent to their homes and offices. The public outcry and loud condemnation was deafening. Indeed, **Giwa** was right when he wrote in his highly regarded column, 'Parallax Snaps,' some months earlier, that "One life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom." The reactions that followed his death vindicated the truth of this assertion.

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### Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

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In its editorial of October 28, 1986, 'The Guardian' newspaper disagreed with the Babangida regime's insistence that the investigation into Dele Giwa's murder should be left for the police, despite widespread calls for a Commission of Inquiry to be set up to probe it.

Said 'The Guardian': "The police have been signally inept in solving much simpler crimes, and the public is justifiably unimpressed by their investigative ability and seriousness. The government has very little choice but to appoint a special prosecutor [which] will be a dramatic demonstration by government that it has nothing to hide, and is as interested in discovering Giwa's assassins as the public is"

year after Giwa's murder, when the police predictably "found" nothing and "caught" no one, Ray Ekpu, 'Newswatch's new editor-in-chief, in a letter to the police reminded them that any murder which remained unsolved could only mean "added insecurity to the living."

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

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Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

November 8, 2021 Monday

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Length: 2705 words

### **Body**

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"Death is...the absence of presence...the endless time of never coming back...a gap you can't see, and when the wind blows through it, it makes no sound"\xa0\x0Tom Stoppard\x0

In the morning of Monday, October 20, 1986, I was preparing to go to work when a major item on the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) 6.30 news bulletin hit me like a hard object. Mr. Dele Giwa, the founding editor-in-chief of\x0'Newswatch'\xa0magazine, had the previous day been killed and shattered by a letter bomb in his Lagos home. My scream was so loud that my colleague barged into my room to inquire what it was that could have made me to let out such an ear-splitting bellow.

We were three young men who had a couple of months earlier been posted from Enugu to Abakaliki to work in the old Anambra State public service, and we had hired a flat in a newly erected two-storey building at the end of Water Works Road, which we shared. My flat-mate, clearly, was not familiar with Giwa's name and work, and so had wondered why his death could elicit such a reaction from me. But later that day, as he interacted with people, he realised that Giwa's death was such big news, and by the next couple of days, he had become an expert on Giwa and his truncated life and career. Across the country, Giwa's brutal death dominated the news not just because of the pride of place he occupied in Nigerian journalism practice and but more because of the totally novel way his killers had chosen to end his life.

Indeed, death is an appointment which every human being must keep. While we are on earth, we reserve the right to reschedule or even cancel our day-to-day appointments. But in the matter of birth or death, any cancellation or rescheduling of appointments remain the exclusive prerogative of the Creator. Although death is unavoidable, yet, no man has any right to arrogate to himself the role of bringing forward any other person's appointment with death. In fact, it is abominable to even use one's hands to hasten one's own appointment with death. Laws of God and man fiercely abhor such an action. So, murderers, suicide bombers and their sponsors and supporters should get it into their heads that they have no mandate whatsoever from the Creator of man to take even their own lives let alone that of other people, no matter the motivation.

Now, deep down the heart of every man and woman, and beyond the facade of all apparent fearlessness and bravery, lie this cold loathing and resentment for death. The survival instinct is always there and there is always this

## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

desire and care to avoid danger, to postpone one's date with death, temporarily at least, hence the constant struggle at many a deathbeds.

No doubt, Mr. **Giwa** was not expecting his own appointment with death when it came calling on Sunday, October 19, 1986. His friends say he loved life, was full of life, and wanted to make the best out of life. He had also worked hard to excel in his chosen career – journalism. But on that Sunday morning, as he had a late breakfast in his study in the company of Kayode Soyinka, the magazine's London Bureau Chief, a parcel was handed to him.\xa0On it was written:\xa0"From the Commander-in-Chief"\xa0with an instruction that it must be opened only by the addressee.

"This must be from the president", **Giwa** was reported to have said.

But unknown to him, in that seemingly innocuous parcel, was the cold, callous agent of brutal death, intent on accomplishing the abominable mission of hastening his appointment with death. Conceived by man, prepared by man, sent by man and delivered by man, this lethal instrument had only one mission: to bomb out the young life of **Dele Giwa**. And it did precisely that with chilling exactitude, tearing his flesh, wasting his blood, talent, usefulness to himself, his family,\xa0Newswatch\x0magazine, Nigerian journalism and the Nigerian nation.

**Giwa** had written in\x0'Sunday Concord'\xa0newspaper of June 8, 1980 that\x0"Death looks for a happy home where it can turn happiness into grief and ensure that for days the household will have nothing to discuss but the blow of death."\xa0He was the pioneer editor of\x0'Sunday Concord'.\xa0By writing this, he unwittingly wrote his own elegy.

"They got me!" That was **Giwa**'s last words at First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja where the Chief Medical Director, late Dr. Tosin Ajayi and his doctors had battled to see how they could save his life. Earlier, on their way to the hospital, **Giwa** was saying to his wife, Funmi, in Yoruba, "Nwon ti pa mi",\xa0meaning: "They have killed me."

Now, who are these "they" that were so heartless, so senseless, so callous, so fiendish and irremediably inhuman? How can a human being elect to do such a horrifying damage to another person? **Giwa**'s flesh was reportedly shattered, with some pieces (some of which were discovered many days later) scattered about in his study. The autopsy report performed by pathologists at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) said that **Giwa** suffered from "multiple blast injuries with 25 percent burns, mutilated thighs with fractures of femoral bones and avulsion of femoral vessels".

This is indeed horrible. The first reaction at the news of such horrendous tragedy would be to ask like Banquo in William Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth,'\xa0whether we, as a people, had "eaten on the insane root that takes reason prisoner?"

**Dele Giwa**'s death was a very slow painful death. The pictures of his shattered body which late Chief Gani Fawehinmi displayed during the sitting of the\x0Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission of Nigeria (also known as Oputa Panel) set up in 1998 and headed by late Justice Chukwudifo Oputa\x0could have passed as horror images of the goriest type, showing man (**Giwa**'s killer) at his basest, most bestial and fiendish worst.

"They have killed me", **Giwa** moaned while writhing in indescribable pain, begging Dr. Ajayi to do all within his power to save him.

For more than three\x0decades now **Giwa**'s killers have been hiding, afraid of the inevitable fall-out of their satanic deed, haunted and tormented by their dirty, murky, slimy conscience.\xa0Even if they eventually manage to escape the judgment of man, they cannot escape the judgment of the Almighty God which is much more dreadful. As we all know, they will surely serve their indescribable punishment forever. That will surely be the case unless they repent of their hideous deed and make the necessary restitutions!

**Giwa**'s had death plunged a broad spectrum of the Nigerian population into clearly unprecedented, monumental grief and fear. People were afraid to open parcels sent to their homes and offices. The public outcry and loud condemnation was deafening. Indeed, **Giwa** was right when he wrote in his highly regarded column,\xa0'Parallax

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Snaps, "some months earlier, that" "One life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom." The reactions that followed his death vindicated the truth of this assertion.

A lot of accusing fingers pointed at the government of the day. It was believed that only a special panel could unravel the mystery that seemed to have attended the gory affair and unearth the unseen hands that perpetrated the spine-chilling murder. In fact, Newswatch's Board of Directors called for a three-man Judicial Commission of Enquiry headed by a retired judge of high repute, with an archbishop and an Imam as members, to probe the murder. But the General Ibrahim Babangida regime insisted that it was the police that should investigate the murder. And as would be expected, public skepticism about the likely outcome of investigations undertaken by the Nigerian police was widespread.

In its editorial of October 28, 1986, The Guardian newspaper disagreed with the Babangida regime's insistence that the investigation into Dele Giwa's murder should be left for the police, despite widespread calls for a Commission of Inquiry to be set up to probe it.

Said 'The Guardian': "The police have been signally inept in solving much simpler crimes, and the public is justifiably unimpressed by their investigative ability and seriousness... The government has very little choice but to appoint a special prosecutor... [which] will be a dramatic demonstration by government that it has nothing to hide, and is as interested in discovering Giwa's assassins as the public is..."

A year after Giwa's murder, when the police predictably "found" nothing and "caught" no one, Ray Ekpu, Newswatch's new editor-in-chief, in a letter to the police reminded them that any murder which remained unsolved could only mean "added insecurity to the living."

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### Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (2)

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 28, 2021 Thursday

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**Length:** 1601 words

**Byline:** UGOCHUKWU EJINKEONYE

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## Dele Giwa's Assassination: 35 Years After (2)

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**Load-Date:** October 28, 2021



## I am Dele Giwa

Weekly Trust

October 20, 2018 Saturday

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### **Body**

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The year 1986 reminds me of two events. First, the assassination of Dele Giwa and secondly as a football lover, Mexico '86 comes to mind because of Diego Maradona's performance. Although I was born the next year, as someone who loves history, I know about them very well. At a very young age, I was privileged to watch Maradona in USA '94 live on TV in the games he played against Nigeria and Greece.

However, I wasn't able to see Dele Giwa or read any of his columns while he was alive but I have read some of his columns and tried to imagine what it was like back then. It is now 32 years since Nigeria lost Dele Giwa, co-founder of Newswatch magazine.

He died as a result of injuries he sustained via a letter bomb on the 19th of October 1986 in his home at 25 Talabi Street, Adeniyi Jones, Ikeja Lagos. He died 12.27pm in First Foundation hospital, Opebi, Ikeja. Seven months later, I was born in the same hospital Dele Giwa died. Today, I am a journalist writing about him. I call it fate.

Who was Dele Giwa? Talking about him in terms of journalism alone is like reducing him. Yes, he was among the crème de la crème of the profession. He was one of the finest journalists ever but above all, he had all the qualities that a leader should have. He was selfless, fearless, detribalized and so on.

Today he is no more but we have to celebrate him. Speaking of Dele Giwa, it is almost impossible to leave out his colleagues. There were musical groups like the Beatles, Jackson Five, Cool and the Gang but here we had a group of young men who mesmerized us, but not with music.

They did it with the pen. According to Chief Dele Momodu, publisher of Ovation magazine, 'It was impossible not to be attracted to the writings of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, the powerful quartet that founded Newswatch magazine around 1984, shortly after their dramatic exit from Concord newspapers.

'These were the authentic superstars who titillated us with beautiful prose that dripped with poetic and colourful words. And they lived up to their billing. Newswatch was an instant success and the hottest cake out of the oven. Every issue was a collector's item.'

They wrote the minds of the masses irrespective of whose ox was gored. That is the true essence of journalism. It is just as if the words integrity, detribalized, fairness, equity, doggedness and brilliance were invented specifically for the Newswatch men.

### I am Dele Giwa

They had it all. These men coming together to found Newswatch was like a match made in heaven. They came from different backgrounds but they had professionalism in common. They were pacesetters and trend setters. They made journalism attractive in Nigeria because they combined intellect with swagger.

These men had 'swag' long before the word became popular. Unfortunately for Nigerians one of them was killed in his prime. **Dele Giwa** was assassinated at the peak of his powers. He was full of life when the angel of death came knocking. He had so much to offer Nigerians before his demise. He was only 39 years but today, everyone is talking about him. It isn't easy to be a legend at that age.

That was what he achieved with his colleagues, legendary status in their youth. It is 32 years now and people are still talking about how he died. As for me, I prefer to talk about his life and the things he stood for. What should we learn from the life and times of **Dele Giwa**? We should be objective and courageous. Without honesty and courage one has no business in journalism. Journalism should never be a cash and carry business.

The less privileged should be given an equal chance to air their views. Journalists should carry all Nigerians along irrespective of financial, ethnic or religious status. A **journalist** should be the voice of the voiceless. If you look at the rot in the judiciary, the executive and the legislative arms of government, it means there is more work to be done by the fourth estate. It would be catastrophic if journalists ignore the core principles of the job. In every institution there are bad eggs but we shouldn't allow the bad eggs overshadow the good ones. If that happens, then what hope would the ordinary Nigerian have?

Journalists are meant to be torch bearers. We should always shine the light. That is the best we can do for **Dele Giwa**. That is what he would want. Not partisanship. Not trying to be politically correct.

I believe practitioners of this great profession should dedicate October 19 to **Dele Giwa**. We should have public lectures or discourses on the professionalism of **Dele Giwa** because this job certainly requires that.

I am saying the best way to keep **Giwa**'s legacy is to be him. There is no better way than that. Let's all be **Dele Giwa**.

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2018

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## **Sunday Igboho: Why I rejected IGP Adamu's invitation**

PM News

April 2, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 276 words

### **Body**

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Sunday Adeyemo, a self-acclaimed Yoruba freedom fighter, popularly known as Sunday Igboho has explained why he turned down the invitation from the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu.

The letter was sent to the activist on Thursday via DHL and another with about 15 police officers - but both were rejected due to security reasons according to Igboho's media aide Olayomi Koiki.

Olayomi explained that both were not received by Igboho's security operatives due to safety reasons as such a letter had purportedly led to the death of Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa.

Olayomi said: 'We would like to tell the international communities and every Nigerian that this morning 1st of April, 2021, a letter was sent via DHL to Chief Sunday Igboho but the letter was not received by his security operatives.'

'Later around 3 pm of the same day, a team of about 6 men without uniform arrived in a Corolla car and another 9 were in police uniform but all were identified as police officers.'

'They wanted to see Chief Sunday Igboho with a letter said to have been addressed to him by the Inspector General of Police. Again, the letter was not received by Chief Sunday's security team.'

'Chief Sunday would like to know why a letter was sent to him and for what purpose. If the IG of police wants to invite him, we would like him to first send the same letter to all the bandits and Boko Haram members killing our mothers and farmers and those kidnapping them.'

'Since the IG of police wants to invite him, he should make a public statement addressed to Chief Sunday Igboho.'

'We should all remember how letters had been sent to previous Yoruba sons like the late Dele Giwa.'

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2021

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## Why I Shunned Inspector-General Of Police's Invitation - Igboho

Naija 247 News

April 3, 2021 Saturday

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Length: 307 words

### **Body**

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Yoruba freedom fighter, Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho has explained why he did not accept an invitation by the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu.

In a press statement issued by Igboho's media aide, Olayomi Koiki, a letter was sent on Thursday to his boss via a courier service and another with about 15 police officers.

Sunday Igboho

Olayomi explained that both were not received by Igboho's security operatives due to safety reasons as such a letter had purportedly led to the death of Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa.

The statement read, 'We would like to tell the international communities and every Nigerian that this morning 1st of April, 2021, a letter was sent via DHL to Chief Sunday Igboho but the letter was not received by his security operatives.

'Later around 3 pm of the same day, a team of about 6 men without uniform arrived in a Corolla car and another 9 were in police uniform but all were identified as police officers.

'They wanted to see Chief Sunday Igboho with a letter said to have been addressed to him by the Inspector General of Police. Again, the letter was not received by Chief Sunday's security team.

'Chief Sunday would like to know why a letter was sent to him and for what purpose. If the IG of police wants to invite him, we would like him to first send the same letter to all the bandits and Boko Haram members killing our mother's and farmers and those kidnapping them.'

'Since the IG of police wants to invite him, he should make a public statement addressed to Chief Sunday Igboho.'

'We should all remember how letters had been sent to previous Yoruba sons like the late Dele Giwa.'

A team reportedly comprising policemen, soldiers and others had in February attempted to arrest Igboho on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

The security operatives, however, failed in their attempt to arrest him.

## Why I Shunned Inspector-General Of Police's Invitation - Igboho

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2021

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## The enduring ministry of Ray Ekpu

The Guardian

August 17, 2023 Thursday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1407 words

## Body

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Ray Ekpu writes well. Since he left the University of Lagos 50 years ago, Ekpu has continued to regale and amaze us with his use of English language, his poetic twist of phrases, the cadence of his prose, the lilting alliterations and his uncanny coinages has put him in a special class. He is a public intellectual who is also appealing to the man on the street. He is the man in front with the flag. We follow him because he continues to amaze us.

He is brilliant and unforgivably prophetic. But I don't want to write about his amazing power to send words into battle. I want to write about his personal courage in the midst of battle. He had earned his glittering epaulet. On Sunday, August 6, Ray Ekpu celebrated his 75th birthday. It is now clear to us that the general, who has been leading us all these years, may be entering his winter years. He remains a roaring lion.

Ekpu's weekly column in The Guardian is a monument to the best of African journalism. He is not just informed; he is educated and draws regularly from his vast personal resources of knowledge and experience. He lavishes us with captivating prose and arresting logic. I don't know of any other *journalist*, who has endured more personal travails than Ekpu in the pursuit of public good. He is always in front in the quest to make our society and humanity better.

Ekpu became our Editor-in-Chief in the old Newswatch after the brutal assassination of *Dele Giwa*, our pioneer Editor-in-Chief, on October 19, 1986. The death of *Giwa* was our greatest trial. Ekpu and *Giwa* share the same twin duplex, each occupying one wing at their Adeniyi-Jones, Ikeja address. Our two other bosses, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, were also living not far. All the three of them (Ekpu, Agbese and Mohammed) were to see hell after the sudden death of *Giwa*.

No one could have predicted the rough road ahead when Newswatch hit the newsstand in February 1985. The quartet of *Giwa*, Ekpu, Agbese and Mohammed had moved us into a new frontier of journalism and we were giddy with excitements. It was a difficult period.

The Second Republic and democracy had just collapsed due to the greed and carelessness of the civilian politicians. Now we had militaricians in power led by the said Major-General Muhammadu Buhari and his unsmiling deputy, Major-General Tunde Idiagbon. Both of them were tough masters of double-standard and double-speak. Soon, we started complaining loudly when Buhari and his team brought out the koboko.

### The enduring ministry of Ray Ekpu

Then the coup of August 27, 1985 that brought in the smiling Major-General Ibrahim Babangida to power. It was a good relief and Buhari was thrown into detention. Only few people missed him. Babangida decided to open the cells and the detention centres and review the cases of those detained by the Buhari regime.

I was assigned to cover the Special Tribunal for the review of cases of those politicians thrown into detention by General Buhari. The tribunal was headed by Justice Samson Uwaifo of the Bendel (now Edo and Delta) State High Court and it was sitting in one of the committee rooms of the old National Assembly at the Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos.

The most important of the cases was the one about President Shehu Shagari and Vice-President Alex Ekwueme. After reviewing the cases against the two men, Uwaifo concluded that there was no genuine reason for their continuing detention. It recommended that they should be free. I brought this news to my superiors at Newswatch and everyone agreed that the Uwaifo Tribunal was wrong. We agreed that happenings at the Uwaifo Tribunal should become our cover story and I was assigned to write it.

The cover story titled: The Trial of Shehu Shagari, hit the newsstand on February 3, 1986. Anyone reading our story, especially the incendiary column penned by Ray Ekpu, would know that the respected judge was also on trial. "It was clear to most people after a few days of the clowning that was going on in the Justice Samson Uwaifo tribunal ... that the whole thing was a farce, inelegantly contrived much in the manner of a Kangaroo court, rendered even more kangarooic, permit the coinage, by the abject naiveté of the presiding judge."

Ekpu continued with acidic flourish: "What the Uwaifo tribunal was saying in effect is that Shagari and his gang did no wrong, that the country should call them back, apologise to them, give them a bouquet of flowers, kiss them on both cheeks and hand over the government to them and then it will be business as usual!"

I stayed away from the tribunal sensing that there would be trouble that Monday. Justice Uwaifo, believing that he had been unfairly vilified, was livid. He asked for me and when he was told that the Newswatch reporter was not present at the tribunal, he issued arrest warrant for me, Ekpu and other reporters who contributed to the story: Dele Olojede, Nosa Igiebor, Soji Omotunde and Joyce Osakwe.

The following day, we were all present in court except Olojede, who was out of Lagos on official assignment. We met an angry judge who upbraided Ekpu and promptly committed us to prison. The Black Maria prison vehicle was on standby outside the tribunal. Our lawyer, the incomparable Chief Gani Fawehinmi, however, rose to the occasion and said the tribunal cannot commit us to prison. The judge relented after extensive legal fireworks, fined Ekpu and asked the rest of us to go with a caution.

Barely nine months later, our world shattered, when suspected agents of the military junta killed Dele Giwa, who had led the Newswatch team to the Uwaifo tribunal. Ekpu stepped into his shoes. It was a truly trying period and despite our wounds, Newswatch maintained the tempo as the most radical media house in the country.

We soon ran into an ambush. In April 1987, six months after the assassination of Giwa, Newswatch was proscribed by the Babangida junta ostensibly for carrying an exclusive story on the report of the Political Committee set up by the military government. That was the public reason, but the real reason was because every week, we were carrying the disturbing question: Who killed Dele Giwa?

We were driven out of our office on Oregun Road, Ikeja and our three editors were harassed and detained. Reprieve was later negotiated for Newswatch. When asked by journalists whether he had any regret, Ekpu said if the situation should repeat itself, "I will do it again!"

Courage under fire is the hallmark of Ray Ekpu's ministry. As the editor of the old Sunday Times before his Concord and Newswatch days, he proved his mettle as a columnist of steadfast courage. At the Daily Times group, Ekpu soon found himself at odds with the leaders of the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN). He was shunted into the editorial seat of Business Times and when he would not relent, he was fired. He said he accepted his sacking with "philosophical calmness."

### The enduring ministry of Ray Ekpu

Chief Moshood Abiola hired him and made him the Chairman of Editorial Board of the Concord Group of Newspapers. His column was a must read in the old Concord. He was arrested and charged for murder for predicting, in one of columns, that fire may gut the giant NITEL Building overlooking the Marina. His prediction came to pass. NITEL was gutted and Sunday Adewusi, the then Inspector-General of Police, had Ekpu arrested and charged for murder!

Some people died in the NITEL fire. Temporary respite only came when Buhari seized power on December 31, 1983. This is 2023; Ray Ekpu is still standing and potent.

Oba Adedokun Abolarin, the Orangun of Oke-Ila, Osun State, himself a lawyer and veteran of our struggle against military rule, said recently that heroes like Ekpu should be honoured by our country. He said that is the only way to inspire the next generation to greatness. I agree with him. However Kabiyesi would need to wait long.

Those who inherited the estate after the arduous struggle against military rule are mostly those who collaborated with the military. Therefore, they perceive their era as the continuation of military rule. That is why Ekpu's assignment remains unfinished.

At 75, he remains a living inspiration, an intrepid general of the pen whose accomplishment and greatness cannot be diminished by whatever may be the attitude of those in temporary control of the Nigerian state.

Congratulations Oga Ray. May God grant you many more years of impact!

In this article Mr. Ray Ekpu

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2022 GUARDIAN Newspapers.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

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## **The journalist as a game**

The Sun (Nigeria)

November 5, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 1207 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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This year marks the 10th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. It's a commemorative plan triggered by growing impunity against journalists across the globe.

Every November 2, the UN tasks governments across the world to reaffirm their commitments to end impunity for crimes against journalists and to create a friendlier environment for the media to operate. The date was instituted after the UN General Assembly endorsed it in 2013 and it has continued to place a mirror before journalists, the general public and governments on how fairly or unjustly media professionals have been treated.

Journalism is not the only profession on earth. But it is the only profession whose practitioners are often subject of attack by public office holders, criminal merchants and sundry crooks. Journalists do not event news but they report it. Often, they report what the powers that be do not want reported. Journalists dive into the underworld of drug dealers, forex scammers, public office thieves and private sector swindlers. This puts them at great risk. They are harassed, heckled and, in some cases, hunted down to early grave. The **journalist** is a hunter for news. But sometimes, this same hunter becomes the hunted. He becomes the game, a prey to be hunted by persons aggrieved by the raw audacity of the **journalist**.

Such is the friction between the **journalist** and a section of the public. It's this friction that breeds impunity for crimes against the **journalist**. An impunity that has gone unchecked for years, an impunity that has shoved many journalists to the grave, usually at the prime of their lives. Countless journalists have been jailed without trial, without fair hearing.

Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of this year's International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists last Wednesday, November 2, lamented the high tide of impunity against journalists.

### The journalist as a game

Citing the latest UNESCO data on killings of journalists, Azoulay regretted that the global impunity rate for killing of journalists remains shockingly high at 86 percent. In the last decade alone, about 955 journalists were killed with many of the deaths still unresolved puzzles in different countries.

In a fast-transforming digital age, the role of the **journalist** and the methodology of his/her trade is yet to be fully appreciated by two key professions that ought to protect the **journalist**. Security and the judiciary. These two professions must, as a necessity, adopt new strategies to protect the **journalist** against the darts of societal renegades.

In her message to mark this year's anniversary, Azoulay said: "Here at UNESCO, we have developed guidelines and toolkits, and trained over 24,000 judicial actors and 11,500 law enforcement and security officials on issues related to freedom of expression and the security of journalists, including in the digital world. Despite these efforts, journalists continue to be killed at an alarming rate. According to our Observatory, 955 journalists have lost their lives since 2012. Seventy-one have been killed since January, making 2022 already the deadliest year since 2018. Just as shockingly, although we have seen a slight improvement over the past ten years, almost nine in 10 **journalist** killings remain unresolved."

This is at the core of the growing impunity and killings of journalists, the fact that such killings are usually unresolved. This gives extra incentives to the killers and their ilk to kill more journalists. Sadly, these killings happen outside war zones, usually among nations where there is no war. Nigeria has a fat share of unresolved killings of journalists and an even fatter portion of impunity and violence against journalists.

We've seen the murder of **Dele Giwa**, Bagauda Katho, Godwin Agbroko, Abayomi Ogundehi, Bayo Ohu, Sule Ugbagwu, Enenche Akogwu, Fidelis Ikwuebe, Nathan S. Dabak, Sunday Gyang Bwede, Okezie Amarubeni, Sam Nimfa-Jan, Samson Boyi, Tunde Oladepo, Zakariya Isa, among others.

The list is long. Save for **Giwa** and Katho who were bombed, the others were made to take the bullet in the most gruesome manner. Some were killed in their homes. Some waylaid on the road and shot dead, pointblank. In most of the cases listed, the killers never hid their intent. They came to kill, nothing more. They never faked robbery of any kind. Their mission was well spelt out by their sponsors: Kill the meddlesome interloper.

In all of its annual reports on global journalism practice, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) has consistently identified war as the major agent of death for the journalists. Year after year, more journalists have been reported killed in countries with long history of war. Iraq, Cambodia etcetera, have always featured in the yearly reports. And this is where the puzzle lies. Nigeria is not at war, yet her journalists can't find a safe place to keep their pens.

Nigerian journalists are not killed at battle fronts. They are killed right in their homes, on their way to and from their offices, or while investigating a story. **Dele Giwa** was bombed in his house, Bayo Ohu was murdered in his house, Ogundehi got the pellets pumped into his body while driving home, Ugbagwu was murdered in his house in a carefully choreographed operation.

Tunde Oladepo was a senior correspondent with The Guardian newspaper when he was murdered by five masked gunmen who entered his home early in the morning and shot him to death in front of his wife and children on February 26, 1998. It's not a case of robbery as nothing was removed from Oladepo's residence.

The case of Enenche Akogwu, a reporter and camera operator with Channels TV, was as scary as any. He had interviewed witnesses of terrorist attacks in Kano on January 20, 2012, and had just returned from a police press conference when unidentified gunmen badged into his home and killed him. Again, nothing was removed. They simply came for his precious life.

In all the reported cases, the journalists were not killed by some aliens from outer space. They were killed by Nigerians or by aliens resident in Nigeria. They were killed with arms and ammunition freely circulated in Nigeria by the hoodlums.

### The journalist as a game

And this brings us to the next puzzle. Why have the security authorities not been able to unearth any of these killers, right from Dele Giwa's murder case? In all the instances, police investigation has followed a familiar route. Arrests were made and suspects(?) were paraded. And it ends there. No justice for the bereaved; no succour for the victims and their families.

So, why were they killed? The answer lurks in the fact that there must be something the gunmen and their paymasters are hiding which they do not want the larger society to know. It is the duty of the journalist to inform the society. And it is the right of the people to know how they are being governed, how their collective patrimony is being managed.

But no matter, Nigerian government must make a renewed commitment to protect journalists. The best way to show good faith in this regard is to dispassionately investigate previous murder cases and mete out appropriate sanctions against the brood of murderers.

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2022

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MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming



## **MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming**

The Nation (Nigeria)

July 23, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 3096 words

### **Body**

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Talk of the biggest stars of Nigeria's journalism industry of the late '80s and '90s, and you can't but come up with the name, Mike Awoyinfa. As pioneer editor of Weekend Concord then, he rocked the boat, stirred controversies and generally redefined the face of tabloid journalism in Nigeria, becoming a name to look forward to every Saturday. His column, Press Clips and the paper as a whole became a must-read in every home and circle. The icon, who later became pioneer MD of The Sun newspapers at the turn of the millennium and made a name as an author and biographer alongside his lifetime friend, Dimgba Igwe (now late), clocked 70 today and took out time to regal Gboyega Alaka with some high points of his career.

YOU clocked 70 years of age yesterday, July 23; so you are officially a senior citizen; do you feel old? Or do you feel you can still do those things that you used to do as a young man?

In truth it feels scary. We used to see 70-year-old people back in those days as very old people, like people in the Bible (laughs); and it used to look very far away. But we thank God. He has been faithful. To be 70 is a cause for joy. We have every reason to be thankful. Everybody prays to grow old; and I pray that I would not just be 70. I hope to be 80, 90; and if God says 100, why not? As long as my faculties are intact. Also 70 brings you nearer to God. Even if you are not nearer to God or your religion is not that strong, 70 gives you that last chance to turn around your life to go to a better place. However, old age comes along with its own baggage too, chief of which is illness. I used to jog and do all sorts of fitness things, but suddenly old age came like nightfall. I had a degenerative disease at my lower back; I had prostate cancer, which I never bargained for. I used to see prostate cancer as a disease for people that are pope-like; but I'm not a pope. But I've gone through my treatment and I thank God for it. I am saying this so that everybody would who is 50 should take issues of their health seriously, do health checks, so that the doctor would know the state of your prostate, because it is a disease for everybody (male).

Talking about faculties being intact, there has been a lot of controversy over old age in recent time, especially in politics. There is this tendency to 'stigmatise' old people by younger people who are advocating that they should just retire and vacate the space. You are at a very good place to tell us how fit or alert a 70-year-old can be.

Mentally, I am as fit as fiddle. The older you are, the wiser, the more experience you have had in life and nothing surprises you. You are able to look at a situation and draw an accurate analysis and take an accurate decision,

MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming

more than young people. You are more like a historian. It's not like football, where you get to age 40 or 35 and they say you have aged and you are of no value. But even then, you become valuable as a coach. Same with tennis. So I won't run down old age. But having said that, I think the young people should be given a chance in politics, because governance requires some physicality, strength, and ability to do tasking things. You need good health. Look at the trends all over the world; take for instance Obama, when he became president. We have had of old presidents who go to the United Nations to doze. And then 50 percent of their lives is spent travelling for medical checkups. However, for writer, old age is like wine. The older you are the better. The more mature, the more reflective and you can sit down and write like a guru.

Your days as editor of Weekend Concord ushered many green-eyed youths into the beauty of the journalism profession, including this reporter. Your column was a must-read and the paper itself a must-buy in many homes. Tell us of those interesting times in your career.

Before you become an editor, you must have paid your dues as a reporter. Journalism is all about reporting. I don't believe in editors who rose to the position of an editor through being on the desk, and never went to the field. A reporter is like an infantry soldier in times of war. That is where the action is. All my life, I've been a reporter. I read Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, I passed out in 1977, and then worked with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) as a reporter in Jos. But the kind of journalism they were doing was anonymous journalism. They had no bi-line. So when National Concord came and we had names like Dele Giwa and others on board, I applied to work there. I had been reading Dele Giwa from his days at Daily Times; he had a column called Parallax Snaps, which was breezy, catchy, very readable and engaging. I was appointed Chief Correspondent for the paper in Kaduna. I have always been a very ambitious person, so my goal was to one day be the editor of a

newspaper. As a kid, I was a voracious reader. I was living with my uncle who was a teacher and I ended up reading all the books in his library. I had a lonely childhood, so I fought loneliness with my reading habit. There was a paper called The Spectator in Ghana - I was born and raised in Ghana, so I would buy and read it. That reading habit really helped my work at school. Every time I wrote an essay, the teacher would ask me to come and read it before the class. So it is important to groom our children to cultivate reading habit.

Back to Kaduna, there was a feature story I did for Dele Giwa, who was then the editor of Sunday Concord. It was about one illiterate Hausa woman journalist. We had gone for an Aminu Kano Press Conference and she stood up to ask questions in Hausa; I thought what's this woman doing in journalism? I saw that as news, so I sat her down and interviewed her. And Dele Giwa carved a column for me and called it 'Reporter's Column by Mike Awoyinfa'. He titled the piece, 'Hajia Bilikisu, Reporter without Biro and Notebook'. When I saw it, I said 'Wow!'. My view was that he created it for every reporter to contribute but I became so hungry and avaricious that every week, I sent him a human angle story for that column, so it became my column. And that is the origin of my being a columnist. And to be a columnist under Dele Giwa, you must be really worth your salt. And I wasn't just writing human angle stories, whenever there was an international story, I wrote my own commentary. I just imagined myself as little Dele Giwa, put myself in his mindset and say how would Dele Giwa write this? Like when Janet Cook, the Washington Post based journalist cooked a story of a nine-year-old cocaine addict, which won the Pulitzer. But at the end of the day, the police stepped in. They said they wanted to see the nine-year-old and to arrest the people that gave him cocaine. So it eventually turned out that it was a cooked up story, and that did her in. It became a big controversy and spoilt the image of Washington Post. Even the editor, I think was fired for not asking the right questions. I can't remember his name but Katherine Graham was the publisher of the paper at the time. I wrote a own commentary on that. Dele Giwa eventually redeployed me to Lagos to work under him. That was where I also learnt a lot about the man. In those days, Sunday Concord was like a university; we called ourselves 'Writer's Enclave'. Lewis Obi was there, so many names. Eventually Giwa left to found Newswatch Magazine and his deputy, Adediye, another tough editor took over. If you were going to his meeting and you didn't prepare yourself, be sure to be in trouble.

Then of course I went abroad for the Harry Briton Fellowship; it was a three-month training for Commonwealth journalists. I represented Nigeria. That was when I had my son, Jide, 1985. I was attached to the Sunday Sun of Newcastle. Having worked in a home of tabloid journalism, UK, you came back brimming with confidence. When I came back, I was moved to the features department to be the Features Editor.

MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming

You also wrote a book on features writing

At about that time, me and Dimgba had written a book called The Art of Features Writing. We just asking what should we do for ourselves? We thought, only God knows when we would reach the top, and decided that we'd better start writing to make some money for ourselves. We went round asking journalists what a feature story is, and we discovered that a whole lot of people didn't know. Some knew and they clarified, so we documented it. So when I was appointed Features Editor, armed with the knowledge of that book, I changed the paradigm in National Concord. Their orientation towards features was hard stuffs, analysis and all that; but when I came, I humanised the whole feature thing and turned it into human angle, which is exactly what it is supposed to be - stories that are emotional, stories that evoke pity; that evoked joy... And the little that we did made impact, because people started buying National Concord more than they were. They would buy and pull out the section. So my MD, Doyin Abiola, saw my potentials and said 'Come let's start a Saturday paper. You will be editor, form your team, give me a dummy of how the paper would look.' We wanted to call it Saturday Concord but I called it Weekend Concord. That was how I assembled my team; young, hungry men like Dele Momodu, Femi Adeshina, Shola Osunkeye... a collection of stars. The dream was 'Let's shake the nation. Let's come up with a paper that the nation would not be able to ignore. And the first story that we had then was by Dele Momodu. It was titled 'Soyinka's love life'. He went to interview Soyinka's former wife and that one told the story of how they broke apart.... And Soyinka was so mad, so angry, and I was so happy. News is something that somebody don't want you to publish but which people would like to read. Dele Momodu did not stop at that; for the second edition, he went to speak with Soyinka's son who was then in Ife studying, and the innocent boy spilled. And Soyinka became angrier. There was a time he actually called me; I can't remember what I told him but I begged him. I told him I did all this for your admiration, you are our father, you are our hero, you cannot hide.... (laughs heartily)

There was one about the late Tai Solarin

Yes, when he said he saw something in Ebony Magazine during Babangida's time which he couldn't defend. And then I wrote a column 'abusing' Tai Solarin, 'May Your Road Be Rough', and people came after me. How can you be abuse an old man, such a respected man like that? People didn't understand that it was sarcasm. They attacked me, sending me lots of letters (laughs), and I published all the letters. Next we publish all those that supported me, where they criticised the educational standard, saying it had fallen and pointing out that people couldn't even understand simple satire.

You shook the industry.

We really did, to the point where all other papers started their own Saturday paper - Punch, Vanguard.... I remember when the late Alaafin Lamidi Adeyemi had his problem with drugs and was detained abroad and we were to go to town the following day; I said 'Guys, bring me all Alaafin's photographs'. So they went into the library and dug up all his photos. Those were not the days of digital when you could just punch your computer and photos would jump out. I started going through, and then I saw one where he was Alaafin laughing. Then I said 'Aha this is it'. And then I slammed it and headlined it boldly: 'NOT ALAAFIN MATTER!'. (General laughter and applause.) That is one strong point I have. Headlining. I think it is one gift of inspiration that God gave me. God is the number one headline writer.

Yeah, many who worked with you have testified to that; how does it come to you?

First, you must have it inside you. And then you must develop it, you must train yourself on how make the biggest impact with words, with pictures. Atimes, you don't go for the obvious. If it is the picture of a dog that would have the biggest impact, blow the picture of the dog. It's like when May Ellen Ezekiel died, we didn't just say May Ellen Ezekiel died, we blew her picture - everybody already knew she had died; and we captioned it, 'OOh MEE!'. And at the bottom, we wrote: 'She died vomiting blood' - because the doctor had told me that she died vomiting blood. Gbam! So don't choke the paper with words. Make it a visual beauty, dramatise it. Have a sense of drama. Headline is something you sleep over; it is something you dream over; it is something you think over. Even when there is no news breaking, you must be giving yourself training - assuming this person dies, how will I cast the headline? If his wife dies, what would be her headline?

MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming

Have you considered offering a Masterclass in headline casting, for younger people in the industry?

Yeah, the next book I would want to write is on the art of headline writing. I pray God gives me the energy and the wisdom and insight to be able to put it together.

The peak of your career at Weekend Concord coincided with the peak of military turbulence; how did you manage to practise without getting into trouble with the junta?

The thing is professionalism. Be very professional, balance your story, have your evidence to support whatever you are writing. Follow all the tenets of good journalism. Once you have done your duty, balanced it by hearing from both sides and satisfied your conscience well, you are free. All through, I never had any brush with the law. When I was sued by a professor who plagiarised, we won the case because we had a good lawyer who defended us. And we had evidence. We said this is what the American professor wrote, this is what the Ilorin professor wrote. Oya compare. I think it was Omololu Kassim who wrote the story. The professor was saying it was his jealous colleagues who were trying to bring him down.

Back in the days, Weekend Concord sold 100,000 copies...

(Cuts in) Point of correction, we sold up to 250,000.

Good, but today, no newspaper can boast of selling 50,000 copies. What has changed?

I think it's a global phenomenon. The advent of the internet. Every revolution brings its own casualty. People now prefer to go online to read. Luckily it is also free. When you can punch your gadget and read an article or story for free, why go and buy a hard copy? That is the mindset of many. However, some papers like New York Times let you read a little of their stuff and then lock it up and ask you to subscribe. Poor reading habit may also be part of it.

You lost your friend, Dimgba Igwe. It was a friendship that lasted a lifetime. How did you meet?

We met at Sunday Concord. I was there before him, his senior. He just came in one day with a freelance story he did on the struggle school children went through to go to school. He went on that journey several times, observing and interviewing them, so he came out with the feature for Sunday Concord, which we titled 'Children as they war to go to school in Lagos', capturing how they struggle to board Molue buses with adults. **Dele Giwa** didn't know him from anywhere but once he read it, he said 'Wow! who is this?' The next time he came for his pay, **Dele Giwa** gave him a job. So we did stories together, shared bi-lines; I was humble enough to accommodate him. One of the stories we covered was when Abiola was 50, and we went to Abeokuta to cover it. That was when we started thinking about our future and the idea of writing a book came. We had options like starting a magazine, there was a magazine called Hero then, which we would have modelled it after, but we were thinking of capital. We thought to go and meet Abiola, but Abiola would not give us money to leave his paper to go and start another. So we wrote that book. I think Abiola gave us 73,000 to publish it, which was a big money then. With it, we had money to do other things. It also opened our eyes that we could write books, so during one of the media close downs, we wrote another book, '50 Nigeria's Corporate Strategists', where CEOs shared their experiences about managing business. It was a big sellout and we made money. That was the money we used in building our houses. Like you know, his house is next door. After that, we wrote 'Nigeria's Marketing Memoirs', where marketing directors told stories about the brands they had built. We wrote a book on Orji Kalu; that was how we became friends and he asked us to come and head his newspaper, The Sun. So immediately Dimgba died, the only thing I could do was to write a book that I knew he would like. That's why I wrote, 50 Nigeria's Boardroom Leaders, with him as co-author. My prayer is that all journalists would take interest in writing books, because it's also an extension of journalism and it's more permanent.

Was the proceeds of the last book shared?

Definitely, whatever I give to myself, I give the wife. We have a company that we both co-owned.

Your friendship with Dimgba was so close that some even suggested both of you could be into some queer relationship.

MIKE [email protected]: I'll do journalism again if there's a second coming

Why wouldn't they? We were really close, but God knows I'm not that kind of person. He was a pastor, is it a pastor I would be doing gay with? God forbid, with all the beautiful women in this world.

Speaking of beautiful women, Igwe also called you 'Man of Iniquity'...

Yeah (laughs). In those days, I used to be a very handsome young man. And when you add that to having a name mine and you were a man about town, women would look at you and you would look at them too.

And you were not a pastor.

I was not a pastor, I was an iniquity man (laughs again). In fact, they said Eric Osagie and I used to decide covers of our editions at beer parlous, which was true anyway. The best place is where you are more relaxed.

Not long ago, you also ventured into publishing.

Yes, Entertainment Express. We invested the little money we had to start an entertainment newspaper, but it didn't survive. You need bigger money to publish. It's not a short term vocation. You should be able to have money to project for many years without looking at the revenue, but with the peanuts we put in and the little cover price, we were always running short of money. And adverts weren't coming in too. But it was a good experience. We met young men who learnt from us.

You were MD of The Sun, and then one day the world woke up to hear that you were no longer there.

Well that's capitalism for you. Once you're not the sole owner of a business or brought in the Lion's share in a business, there is a limit to what you can do. The good part for us is that when people see The Sun, they remember that you guys birthed it.

**Load-Date:** July 24, 2022

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## Ita-Giwa tackles ex-DIG Omeben over Dele Giwa's death

Nigerian Tribune

October 31, 2015 Saturday

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Length: 584 words

### **Body**

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Former Special Adviser on National Assembly Matters, Senator Florence Ita-Giwa has tackled former Deputy Inspector General of Police, Christopher Omeben, for remotely linking her with the death of former Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, Mr. Dele Giwa.

Giwa, an ex-husband to Ita-Giwa, was assassinated in 1986 via a parcel bomb.

Omeben, who investigated the killing, had a few days ago in an interview said that Giwa's assassination via a parcel bomb could be remotely connected to his "unhealthy relations with his "estranged wife."

Also, Omeben identified Kayode Soyinka, Dele Giwa's colleague who was the only survivor and eyewitness of the dastardly act as the "prime suspect."

The former Special Adviser on National Assembly Matters, on Friday, while debunking the claim of Omeben, who is now a clergyman, said in a statement made available by her Media Liaison Officer, Mr. Jonathan Eze, that if women in his locality killed their husbands, that was not the case where she came from.

The statement reads in part: "It is very possible that the aged former crime fighter is hallucinating on account of the blemish his shoddy handling of the case had cast on what might have been labeled an illustrious police career.

"Without a doubt the 'estranged wife' referred to by our former police chief is none other than the Distinguished Senator Florence Ita-Giwa, who was once married to the late Dele Giwa.

"At the risk of sounding impetuous, it would appear that the former detective turned clergyman is now clutching at straws in a puerile attempt to cover up his crass incompetence with regard to the case.

"The pendulum of suspicion about the identity of the killers has always swung in one direction and is well known by any one who was around at the time the heinous act occurred.

"Just because Christopher Omeben lacked the courage at the time to pursue the obvious suspects at the time does not give him a right to bandy spurious allegations in the twilight of his life.

"Senator Florence Ita-Giwa was never considered a person of interest in the immediate aftermath of the murder, so for her name to be linked to this most reprehensible crime nearly 30 years after is preposterous, to say the least.

### Ita-Giwa tackles ex-DIG Omeben over Dele Giwa's death

"The Senator categorically denies being with Dele Giwa the night before his death as the senator was in Calabar as a member of a state government empaneled committee.

"Also, the identity of the person who delivered the parcel bomb to the late Dele Giwa's residence is now in the public domain, so to say that the senator's houseboy delivered the parcel now is suggestive of the deterioration of the mental faculties of the former Deputy Inspector General.

"Indeed the senator would like to be put on record that at the time Dele Giwa died, she had no knowledge of the location of his residence and had not met with him for at least one year before.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the separation of the Distinguished Senator and the late Dele Giwa was devoid of any animosity and the Senator would like to know if separating from one's husband means that they ought to become enemies."

"Indeed she has no apologies to make for having a good relationship with Dele Giwa, even after their separation. As a matter of fact, Senator Ita-Giwa maintains very cordial relations with the siblings and children of the late great journalist to this day.

"The elderly former top cop ought to know that women of Nigeria will not take kindly to his denigrating a national icon and role model of thousands of Nigerian women."

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2015

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## Dele Giwa, 29 Years After

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 19, 2015

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Length: 555 words

### **Body**

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Today marked exactly 29 years since ace journalist and founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch, Sumonu Oladele Giwa was gruesomely murdered by a mail bomb, in his residence on 25, Talabi Street, off Adeniyi Jones Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

Dele Giwa as he was fondly called, met his untimely death on Sunday, October 19, 1986, at the House 25 Talabi Street, which has now given way to a hospital. He was killed in his prime at age 39. Had he been alive today, he would be 68 years old.

That Sunday morning, the merchants of death gave the deadly parcel to his then 19-year-old son, Billy, who received it on his behalf.

The assailants had vanished into thin air when he attempted to open the parcel and a blast occurred "tearing open" his lower region.

His colleague, Newswatch's London Bureau Chief, Kayode Soyinka, who was with him at the time of the tragic event, suffered perforated eardrums. Giwa died at the First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja, Lagos, where he was rushed to after the explosion.

Dele Giwa was born on March 16, 1947 to a poor family working in the palace of Oba Adesoji Aderemi, the Ooni of Ife.

He attended local Authority Modern School in Lagere, Ile-Ife.

When his father moved to Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife as a laundry man, he gained admission to that school.

Dele Giwa travelled to the USA for his higher education, earning a BA in English and Communication Arts from Brooklyn College in 1977 and enrolled for a Graduate program at Fordham University.

He worked with the New York Times as a news assistant for four years after which he relocated to Nigeria to work with Daily Times.

Later, in 1984, Dele Giwa and fellow journalists Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed founded Newswatch and the first edition was distributed on 28 January 1985.

## Dele Giwa, 29 Years After

A 1989 description of the magazine said it "changed the format of print journalism in Nigeria [and] introduced bold, investigative formats to news reporting in Nigeria".

However, in the first few months of the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida, who took power in August 1985, the magazine was shamelessly flattering. It printed his face on the cover four times and even criticised "anyone who attempted to make life unpleasant for Babangida."

Later, the paper took a more hostile view of the Babangida regime.

However, so many stories sprung up after his death on who killed him and why he was killed.

One of such stories was his link to Gloria Okon, a lady who was arrested in 1985 for Drug related offenses and who was said to have links to the late wife of IBB

Gloria Okon was said to have died in detention but a couple of months after, Dele Giwa ran into her in London and she poured out her story to him.

It was said that the Government got to know of the meeting and allegedly decided to wipe out Giwa as that remained the only way to keep him off their tracks.

Giwa married an American nurse in 1974.

His second marriage, to Florence Ita Giwa, lasted 10 months.

He later married Olufunmilayo Olaniyan on July 10, 1984, and they were married until his death in 1986.

He was survived by his mother, wives and children.

As Nigeria and the rest of the world seize today, to celebrate, as well as to remember the legacies of this refined journalist, the unanswered question 29 years after remains: Who killed Dele Giwa?

When an answer will come, however, remains unknown for now.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2015

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## Dele Giwa's Mother Dies At 87 - As Community Demands Fresh Probe Into Dele Giwa's Death

Vanguard (Lagos)

January 08, 2013

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**Length:** 563 words

**Byline:** Simon Ebegbulem

**Dateline:** Benin City

### **Body**

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THE mother of Nigeria's foremost ***journalist*** and late Editor in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, ***Dele Giwa***, Madam Elekia Aishat ***Giwa***, 87, is dead.

Madam ***Giwa*** died at the Aruna Ogun Hospital in Ikorodu, Lagos, Tuesday morning, of an undisclosed ailment.

Already the people of Ugbekpe, Ekperi in Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo State, have been thrown in mourning following the death of Madam ***Giwa***.

Before her death at about 5 a.m, she was living with her daughter, Abibat Ronke Aboaba.

Her son, ***Dele***, a celebrated ***journalist*** was murdered by unknown persons via a letter bomb delivered to his house in Ikeja on October 19, 1986. The parcel was marked "From the C-in-C" which raised speculations that the then military government had something to do with his death.

The government then, under Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, however, denied any complicity in the murder and institute a panel to find the killers which was never achieved.

The people of Ugbekpe Ekperi lamented, yesterday, that Madam ***Giwa*** died before the Federal Government could unmasked the killers of ***Dele Giwa*** and called on President Goodluck Jonathan to commence fresh investigation into ***Giwa***'s murder.

Former Chairman of Etsako Central Local Government Council and one of the leaders of Ekperi community, Paschal Ugbome, described the death of Madam ***Giwa*** as another devastating news for the people, particularly as the Federal Government failed to fish out the killers of her son whom he described as a fearless ***journalist*** and a proud son of Ekperi land.

Meanwhile, Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, Lagos State Council, Mr Deji Elumoye, has described the death of late ***Dele Giwa***'s mother as painful.

## Dele Giwa's Mother Dies At 87 - As Community Demands Fresh Probe Into Dele Giwa's Death

In a condolence message to the family over the death of Madam Elekia Giwa, yesterday, Elumoye said the news came as a shock, but "we thank God for the life of mama."

He said: "Mama living till this year showed her strong spirit considering the manner her son, Dele Giwa, was killed."

Also, the Edo State Government, yesterday, described the death of Madam Giwa as shocking and a great loss to the people of the state and regretted that the Federal Government was yet to find the killers of her son, Dele Giwa.

Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Julius Ihonvhere, who reacted to the death, described the deceased as "strong mother" who kept the home front solid despite the "high level conspiracy against the family."

"The governor and the people of Edo State received news of the death with shock and sadness, the passing away of the daughter of our great land whose son and left indelible landmark in the practice of journalism and activism in this country. It is our regret that the custodians of power in this Nigeria state were never able to apprehend the killers of our dear son Dele Giwa.

"As the souls of the mother and son lives in the bosom of the Lord, may they continue to hunt those killers."

Reacting also, former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Rev. Peter Obadan, lamented that "Dele was not alive to mourn his mother."

Obadan said,"It is a shame there is nobody to mourn her. It is also unfortunate that the country is yet to establish those who killed Dele Giwa. Our hearths go to the family because it will bring back the memory of this great son of our land; he was a fearless, not just writer but a progressive developer of young minds and we still miss him. May her gentle soul rest in peace."

**Load-Date:** January 9, 2013

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## Dele Giwa and the Dilemma of a Journalist

This Day (Lagos)

October 19, 2013

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Length: 1839 words

### **Body**

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Fellow Nigerians, today is not one of my happiest days. I'm sorry to start on such a depressing note. But that is the way I usually feel on every October 19, since 1986, when one of Nigeria's finest journalists of all time, Dele Giwa, was blasted into smithereens, by God-knows-who. Dele Giwa and I were brothers who never met, but had our paths steeped in similar upbringing. We were both born in the ancient city of Ile-Ife. Our parents migrated from the old Mid-Western region, now Edo State and settled in Ile-Ife to engage in odd jobs. Though we never met one on one Dele loomed larger than life and we all knew him like the man next door. I studied his life like a textbook, followed his world trajectory, and fantasised regularly about meeting him some day. The other man who had such magnificent effect on me is the one and only Sonala Olumhense who I was privileged to meet and who later gave me the honour of contributing to the birth of Ovation International in London in our exile days.

My God, those gentlemen had such rare gift of the pen. While Dele Giwa was very bubbly and swashbuckling, Sonala was ostensibly reserved and unquestionably cherubic. Dele Giwa was always going to stand out in the crowd. He gave journalism in Nigeria a lease and its practitioners a life. He challenged the stereotype that journalists were poor and scruffy by appearing most of his life like your High Street Banker. Just as Dele was loved by those who idolised him, he was feared by men of power for his ability to expose their foibles and egocentricities in his indomitable style. It was an influential position that made him susceptible to love and hate in almost equal measure. The life of a successful journalist is usually a delicate balance of standing between friends and enemies. And only a thin line separates the two. One negative article is just enough to obliterate 99 positive ones. No one ever remembers to thank you when you write that beautiful story but everyone remember to curse you and your family when you write that one that seems unpalatable.

That is what I call the dilemma of a journalist. My guess is as good as yours. Dele Giwa must have stepped on very powerful but sore toes who felt uncomfortable about his temerity to take on a system that made him who he was. The nation had not attained such level of tolerance to understand the job of a journalist was to write about friends and foes alike. There was always a channel of communication available to the aggrieved. The law courts are essentially there to serve as arbiter and secure rectitude for the victim of yellow journalism in any event.

The problem was not just that Dele died it was the manner of his death. For years, I carried the gory spectre of that bizarre murder in my memory. According to reports at the time, a parcel bomb was delivered at his Ikeja, Lagos home, somewhere off Adeniyi-Jones, in the presence of another accomplished journalist, Kayode Soyinka, now the Publisher of Africa Today. He was luckier to escape with not more than his damaged ear-drums as well as an indefinite sojourn in exile. Dele wasn't that fortunate. He bled to death and his family comprising of an aged mother, relations, wife and children were thrown into perpetual mourning. The whole country was engulfed in utter shock

## Dele Giwa and the Dilemma of a Journalist

while the outside world marvelled at our ability to settle scores in the most deadly manner under the flimsiest provocation.

At the time of his death, **Dele Giwa** was the Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine and easily the most celebrated **journalist** of that period. His former wife, Florence Ita-**Giwa**, recently told me she fell in love with **Dele** because of his effervescent style of writing. By the time they met there was no protocol because she was already head-over-heels in love with awesome diction and rhapsodies. They became inseparable from that moment on. **Dele** was such a debonair writer who brought a lot of razzmatazz into the media industry. He was young, dashing and daring. He was a power-dresser, a fashion icon but above all an intelligent, inspiring writer and analyst.

**Dele Giwa**'s column, Parallax Snaps, was a must read for guys of my generation. It was impossible not to be attracted to the writings of **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, the powerful quartet that founded Newswatch magazine around 1984, shortly after their dramatic exit from Concord newspapers. These were the authentic superstars who titillated us with beautiful prose that dripped with poetic and colourful words. And they lived up to their billing. Newswatch was an instant success and the hottest cake out of the oven. Every issue was a collector's item. It is hoped that under the new management, that glory would be restored no matter how daunting.

I had followed **Dele Giwa** in particular like a true devotee. He was a pen-god who was worshipped at the altar of investigative journalism, and admired irreverently by the high and mighty and the low and meek. His pen was mighty; in fact, mightier than the sword. He was considered a proponent of fairness and justice in governance. Newswatch was a reader's delight any day. Every week, the magazine went behind the scene to bring us hidden stories that were buried beyond our prying eyes. Newswatch did not just tell stories, its daredevil reporters told it in elegant style. The team was simply awesome: Nosa Igiebor, **Dele** Omotunde, Onome Osifo-Whiskey, Dare Babarinsa, **Dele** Olojede, Kola Ilori, May Ellen-Ezekiel and other journalism greats. Kayode Soyinka reported majestically from London. I will never forget his amazing scoops on the Umaru Dikko saga during the Buhari-Idiagbon military era.

Everything was going well for Newswatch, or so it seemed. The dream of the founding fathers of the magazine evaporated one hot afternoon as the powerhouse of the organisation was inflicted with the most iniquitous brutishness ever experienced in our vengeful society. Neither the exact motives nor the particular identity of the perpetrators has ever come to light. At the very best, all we got were conspiracy theories and circumstantial evidence but there was nothing conclusive till this day. A private prosecutor, Gani Fawehinmi, who took it upon himself to unravel the mystery and jigsaw, met brick-walls at every turn. The labyrinth of esoteric cases he filed at different junctures died with Gani without recording any major success or victory.

One could easily have concluded that such a dastardly act occurred because we were living at that time under the jackboots of the military who knew no other way to persuade its critics than shutting up their mouths through cold blooded murder. Its microphone was the gun-nose and the loudspeaker was the barrel. The military knew no other way to offer superior logic and simply did not bother. And we all prayed and hoped that the evil cup would pass over us. Unfortunately, not much has changed.

Even in the democratic dispensation that we have supposedly enjoyed these past 15 years or so the curse of unsolved extra-judicial cold-blooded murders of our critics and activists continues unabated.

More journalists have lost their lives in the line of duty under the civilian dispensation in our strange country. The list is painfully long enough. The politicians and their cronies are getting more and more intolerant. Power has become a matter of life and death. I doubt if that was the purpose of fighting for democracy. What I find sadder is that there is a new crop of young people who are being brainwashed and indoctrinated by desperate politicians to cause mayhem and confusion all over the place. It has become almost impossible to have decent conversation and cerebral debates without resorting to vulgarities and vitriolic attacks. This trend can't continue. If it does, it will certainly portend great dangers for the future of our nation and has the likelihood and potential of descending us all into anarchy.

## Dele Giwa and the Dilemma of a Journalist

As we remember **Dele Giwa** today, let's try to have sober reflections and reach the decision that all disagreements of whatever ilk can be resolved through peaceful, gentlemanly means.

### Of Tony Uranta And His Tricksters

I stumbled on an interesting post on Facebook the other day. It was a link to an outburst that was credited to a Niger Delta activist and ally of our dear President, Tony Ipriye Uranta. I was shocked to read his unequivocal indictment of President Goodluck Jonathan who he accused of surrounding himself with a kitchen cabinet that was incapable of helping him to deliver on his promises to the good people of Nigeria. He described those cabinet members as nothing but rogues and tricksters.

We must thank God for bountiful mercies. I don't know what sparked Tony's anger but it must have been a result of acute frustration about the way the ship of State was floundering aimlessly with the country almost bleeding to death. The manner public officers are splashing scarce resources on luxury items as if all there is to being in power is to indulge in reckless fun should be a cause for concern.

There is nothing new in what Tony said. The only surprise is that he spoke in the way he did. He merely gave fillip to what we've always known and written about. It is reassuring that someone close to the seat of power could be that bold as to tell it as it is. If an outsider had uttered those words, the world won't hear the last of it. Accusations and allegations about the writer's motive rather than a robust critique of the substance and the presentation of a veritable defence on behalf of the Presidency would have been the order of the day from the President's stalwarts. Fortunately, this is coming from a close friend of theirs. They can't in good conscience accuse Tony of working for some disgruntled Governors or opposition parties. Although, in retrospect, I won't be surprised if they do, especially if there has been a parting of ways.

I know it will not go down well with some of Tony's friends who continue to behave as if there is no tomorrow. I pray the President would heed Tony's candid advice and appreciate the fact that it is only those who love him genuinely that would tell him what others are shying away from saying. The sum total of the rising cries of patriots is that our nation is in a bad shape and the President's policies are now working or even helping. It is about time that the President reviews not only the positions of those he has entrusted with assisting him in managing the affairs of state but also the principles and policies that his government is implementing. The groans, pain and anger of our people has become incessant and is fast rising to a crescendo. Something must be done before something gives. The President must understand that when the chips are down, the soldiers of fortune will move on effortlessly to other suitors. He will be left stranded in the sea and will be left to drown like a lonely sailor whose ship has sunk without any life rafts or vests.

We have seen it all before. We pray not to see it again for President Jonathan's sake.

**Load-Date:** October 21, 2013

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## **'How Govt Can Unmask Dele Giwa's Killers'**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 20, 2016

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**Length:** 608 words

**Byline:** Charles Kumolu and David Okpe

### **Body**

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The thirtieth anniversary of the assassination of the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, Mr. Dele Giwa provided an opportunity for Nigerians to urge the Federal Government to declassify the outcome of the various investigations into the matter, noting that doing so would easily unmask those behind the gruesome murder.

It was also an avenue to demand that the case be included among those to be reinvestigated in line with a recent directive by President Muhammadu Buhari for the re-opening of all unresolved high-profile assassinations in Nigeria.

At the event, which was convened, yesterday in Lagos, by the Lagos State chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, attendees unanimously said unravelling Giwa's killers would not be a challenge considering the availability of reports on the issue especially the position of Oputa Panel on human rights violations.

Those at the forum, entitled: 'Safety of Journalists and the Culture of Impunity in Africa', include the Lagos State governor, Mr. Akinwumi Ambode, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Strategy, Mr. Fola Adeyemi; Lagos State Police Commissioner, Mr. Fatai Owoseni; House of Representatives member, Mr. Sani Zoro; President, Nigerian Guild of Editors, NGE, Mrs. Funke Egbemode; General Manager/Editor-in-Chief of Vanguard Newspapers, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye; human rights lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana, SAN, who was represented by Mr. Malachy Ugwumadu and co-founders of Newswatch Magazine, Messrs. Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese.

Others are Mr. Dare Babarinisa; Second Vice President of Nigerian Bar Association, NBA, Mr. Monday Ubani; President of Tell Communications, Mr. Nosa Igiebor; Executive Secretary of Dele Giwa Foundation, Mr. Richard Akinnola; Deputy Managing Director of Thisday Newspapers, Mr. Kayode Komolafe; Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of The Sun Newspapers, Mr. Eric Osagie; wife of the deceased, Mrs. Funmi Giwa; daughter of the deceased, Miss Aisha Giwa and a younger brother of the late journalist, Mr. Tunde Giwa, among others.

#### **Falana tasks media**

In his remarks, Falana, who was the guest speaker, urged journalists to keep the issue on the front burner to enable the police unmask those behind the act which happened on October 19, 1986.

**Dele's death touched our family -- Brother**

## 'How Govt Can Unmask Dele Giwa's Killers'

On his part, **Dele Giwa**'s younger brother, Tunde **Giwa**, said: "It is my belief that keeping his memory alive in this manner would keep the issue alive. That is why we came up with the **Dele Giwa** Foundation. I have to thank Funmi, she is the only one I know as **Dele Giwa**'s wife. The death of **Dele Giwa** touched our family in a negative way because he was the only one we had."

"I want to beg the media not to let the death go like that. We still want justice to be done because we all know the person responsible. I can even mention the person's name. Gani Fawehimi told me that even if it will take 50 years, we must ensure the killer is brought to book."

**FG should reopen case--Ekpu**

On his part, Ekpu said: "We issued a statement indicating that the government should reopen the investigation into the case. We stand by our position. All of us here are collective widows, it is not just Funmi and **Dele**'s brothers who were made widows by that dastardly act of 30 years ago. The perpetrators thought the issue would be quickly done and forgotten but it was quickly done but has not been forgotten. Books have been written on it, positions have been taken, we must not forget that a lot of Nigerians have been killed and the killers have not been brought to justice. That is why we must ensure that the killers are brought to book."

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2016

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## Remembering Dele Giwa [opinion]

Leadership (Abuja)

October 13, 2010 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1092 words

**Byline:** Kunle Somorin

### **Body**

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'All men's souls are immortal, but the souls of the righteous are immortal and divine' - Socrates

Numbed by the twin-explosion near Eagle Square on Independence Day, Nigerians seem to have forgotten that the seed of dastardly bombings was sown 24 years ago. By Tuesday, it will be exactly 24 years when Prof. Wole Soyinka will say, the euphoria of the Nobel Prize, which he won that year, was turned into ashes in our mouths! That day, a substantial part of the house that bore number 25 Talabi Street in Ikeja, was shattered and charred by a bomb explosion. A television set, louvres, chairs, a table, breakfast set, which he was having with his visiting colleague, Kayode Soyinka, and other domestic appurtenances, were blown apart and burnt. His body was mangled and his handsomeness seemed faded for the few hours he spent at the First Foundation Hospital, Opebi, where he eventually gave up the ghost.

That was the end for Nigeria's most celebrated journalist and investigative reporter, Sunmonu Oladele **Giwa**, style-named Dele Giwa. **Giwa** had waded through the drudgery of being a washer-man's son at Ile-Ife. Although, he was originally from Ugbekpe-Ukeperi in Edo State, Dele equipped himself intellectually at home and especially abroad, made his mark at New York Times before heading home an accomplished journalist. His sartorial elegance, cerebral capacity and ambition meant he had consigned poverty to the past. His professional sons, Dele Olojede and Onukuba Adinoyi-Ojo, award winning journalists who are purveyors of the Dele Giwa legacy in a riveting biography, contend that Dele Giwa was born to run.

The children of Dele Giwa's brand of journalism are everywhere. Every decent journalist would want to live, not die like dele Giwa. The league of those journalist-writers of his school of thought keeps increasing. Those who killed Dele Giwa could not kill his essence, his soul. He lives on. His killers must be some cowardly but powerful elements who have 24 years on succeeded in 'covering' their tracks.

In his last days, he got ensconced in the circles of the nobles - men and women of power, some of honour and mostly, the intelligentsia. The best trees don't last in the forest. **Giwa** was only 39 when the agents of hell, sneaked in to snuff life out of the man bristling with fantastic prose and gift of investigative report. Many believe he was above peers in preaching the message of more abundant opportunities for the down-trodden. For one man who was at home having a late breakfast with a colleague when a postman brought a parcel addressed to him, we all are now captive to these Armageddon apostles. The parcel was delivered to his eldest son, Billy (then 19 years old and a student at the University of Jos). Billy handed the parcel over to his father. The latter looked the parcel over

## Remembering Dele Giwa [opinion]

and commented: "this must be from the president", because it bore the insignia of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Two men in a Peugeot car had delivered the instrument of the man's annihilation at his home. He had allegedly received threats from state agents and had been their guest in the previous week. He was accused of gun-running among other 'subversive' offences. As a reporter of prodigious intellect, he had engaged many issues as these issues equally engaged the country and her people. His contacts, which should be a *journalist*'s delight any day, and which on a good day, would have served him in good stead, were his undoing. Three court cases and several inquisitions after 1986 have not conclusively linked anybody fingered by his lawyer, even circumstantially, with his murder.

What followed the delivery of the letter was a sustained agonising refrain: "they have got me!" He shouted as the parcel bomb landed on his laps. Reeling in pains was the eclectic. **Giwa** died and the nation mourns, up till this day. His dastardly murder has neither been avenged nor the mystery of it unearthed. It was the first of its kind in the nation's history and all the accused have maintained innocence. The pervasive 'born AGAINISM' has not pricked one person's conscience to own up to the dastardly act.

Today, **Giwa**'s business associates have had a chill cast 'on their journalistic odyssey'. The Newswatch they co-founded and which peaked at 150,000 circulation figure has become a recluse of its vibrant self. Professionals who understudied **Giwa** have come up with replicas of the magazine and are doing better in line of practice. Dan Agbese, another thorough-bred founding director of Newswatch disclosed in a tribute, quarter of a century after **Giwa**'s death, upon reflection of the circumstances and aftermath of his demise: 'we were tempted to wallow in self-pity...'

The enchanting prose stylist and author of Paralax Snaps made a statement in life and in death. He used journalism for social reformation and changed the face of the reporter. It is one record that **Dele Giwa** and his team drummed into the ears of the bourgeoisies that the labourer deserves his wages. They bargained for and got good remunerations for hardwork. They became Benzyl-journalists without recourse to brown-enveloping. Journalists were never so well treated before then. He did that for the profession.

Unfortunately, the most vociferous of **Giwa**'s backers, the delectable Lagos lawyer, the late Gani Fawehinmi, tried in vain to ensure that a just denouncement was brought into the case, but the principle of 'collateral estoppel' or 'issue preclusion' - a legal jargon which '...preclude(s) relitigation' stopped him, even after the Oputa Panel allowed him to re-open the case when democracy returned to the country after the military years of locust.

All the evidences he gathered had been adjudged 'hearsay' by the regular courts. That is the law of the land. We are consoled that those who thwarted efforts at getting an independent or international inquisition done are still very much around. Some even ridiculously urged that his visitor on the fateful day, Kayode Soyinka be tried since he came in from the United Kingdom where such lethal weapon could have been manufactured. It is all human logic and if that will bring the perpetrators to book, why not?

The courts gave judgements and we are bound to live with them as civilised people. But the death of **Giwa** and the endless list of unresolved murders and resurgence of violence are pointers to the fact that **Dele Giwa** was, indeed, a historic figure. The judgement of God is immutable and not subject to arm-twisting or legalese as it obtains in our world. We shall all get there.

**Load-Date:** October 14, 2010



## **I won't rest until Bakassi people are properly resettled - Ita-Giwa**

The Nation (Nigeria)

February 19, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 275 words

### **Body**

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Former presidential adviser, Senator Florence Ita-Giwa, says she will not rest until the displaced people of Bakassi local government area in Cross River State are properly resettled.

Ita-Giwa, who marked her 75th birthday on Friday, said this was the main reason she was still active on the political scene at her age.

'I am still fighting for my people. We are Nigerians who were suddenly displaced out of no fault of ours. We didn't ask to be ceded. Our ancestral home was just ceded without any consultation and for many years now we have been crying. This is a fight so I would never give up on until proper resettlement is achieved,' she told The Nation on Friday.

Popularly known as Mama Bakassi, Ita-Giwa has been unrelenting in her effort to ensure justice and proper resettlement for the people of Bakassi, who were displaced following the ceding of their land to Cameroon.

She was born in 1946 in Cross River State. Her mother, Beatrice Bassey-Ita was a journalist, who worked for The Guardian Nigeria Newspaper and The West African Pilot.

She was married to the late Dele Giwa, a foremost journalist and the founding editor of Newswatch magazine, who was unfortunately killed in 1986 with a parcel bomb.

She has, among other efforts, organized prestigious media awards aimed at improving the journalism profession.

As part of her many philanthropic efforts, she runs the Bakassi Children Foundation which caters to the needs, including the education, of Bakassi children.

Ita-Giwa has worked against human trafficking and sex slavery.

She has among others, been awarded Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) and The Sun Lifetime Achievement Award.

I won't rest until Bakassi people are properly resettled - Ita-Giwa

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2021

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## **Sunday Igboho declines IGP's invitation via letter**

The Nation (Nigeria)

April 3, 2021 Saturday

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**Length:** 552 words

### **Body**

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Barely a month after a dramatic attempt to arrest the self-acclaimed Yoruba activist, Chief Sunday Adeyemo, a.k.a. Sunday Igboho, by security operatives along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway suffered a setback, the activist again rebuffed an invitation for questioning by the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, on Thursday.

The letter was sent to the activist through a foremost courier firm, DHL. However, it was rejected by the aides of Igboho.

The invitation came a few weeks after Igboho declared and launched the 'Yoruba Nation' campaign, claiming that Southwest states are independent of Nigeria.

Giving reasons for rejecting the invitation letter and the police team that visited his residence, Igboho, who spoke through his media aide, Olayomi Koiki, cited safety reasons.

He explained that the invitation letter and the police team were not received because a lethal letter was responsible for the death of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, at his Ikeja residence in Lagos in 1986.

Olayomi said: 'We would like to tell the international communities and every Nigerian that this morning, 1st of April, 2021, a letter was sent via DHL to Chief Sunday Igboho but the letter was not received by his security operatives.'

'Later around 3 pm of the same day, a team of about six men without uniform arrived in a Corolla car and another nine were in police uniform but all were identified as police officers.'

'They wanted to see Chief Sunday Igboho with a letter said to have been addressed to him by the Inspector General of Police. Again, the letter was not received by Chief Sunday's (Igboho's) security team.'

'Chief Sunday would like to know why a letter was sent to him and for what purpose.'

'If the IG of police wants to invite him, we would like him to first send the same letter to all the bandits and Boko Haram members killing our mothers and farmers and those kidnapping them.'

Sunday Igboho declines IGP's invitation via letter

'Since the IG of police wants to invite him, he should make a public statement addressed to Chief Sunday Igboho.

'We should all remember how letters had been sent to previous Yoruba sons like the late Dele Giwa.'

A team reportedly comprising policemen, soldiers and others had in February failed in their attempt to arrest Igboho on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

In a related development, former Aviation Minister Femi Fani-Kayode has cautioned President Buhari-led administration against purported plot to arrest or detain Igboho.

Fani-Kayode gave the warning yesterday in an open letter to the federal government.

He said that Igboho's agitation for the Oduduwa Republic should not warrant any plot to arrest, detain or eliminate him.

He warned that such arrest would be against the peace and stability of the country.

The letter read in part: "I will say this just once. The biggest threat to the peace and stability of Nigeria today is the plan by some hardliners in the Buhari regime to kill, arrest or detain my friend and brother Chief Sunday Adeyemo (aka Sunday Igboho).

'Arresting, detaining or killing this man will be the biggest mistake that the Buhari Govt. can make.

'I say this because firstly, as far as I am aware, he has not broken any law and secondly because he represents the thoughts and aspirations of over 70 million Yoruba people.

'To every single one of those people, he is the greatest hero of the SW since Oduduwa.'

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2021

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## Eminent journalist Ray Ekpu at 75

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 8, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1294 words

### **Body**

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Ray Ekpu is the reason I'm a *journalist*. I don't think that tribute captures the truth of what Ray actually means to me! Let me try again. A near adequate tribute is that Ray is why I'm still struggling with the craft of writing, in the hope that one day I would be close to the gold standard in modern magazine and feature writing, where Ray currently leads the pack and belongs in the same pantheon of gods with Stanley Macebuh, *Dele Giwa*, Sonala Olumhense, Muhammed Haruna, Niyi Osundare, Sam Omatseye and a few other select prose virtuosos.

For me as a young man there was nothing else that held out the kind of irresistible spell like what Ray was doing. I made up my mind early that I would rather end up as a root crop farmer in my rustic village of Ikot Akpan Ebo in Uruk Otong of Adat Ifang clan in Ukanafun local council area if I could not be a *journalist* like Ray. Ray had made journalism look like the best job in the world, and the *journalist* as a magician, a guy who could walk on water by his sheer prose power. The man had loomed so large in my impressionable imagination that I actually didn't believe he was anything other than a fairy tale, until the day I saw him in person when he came to visit his senior brother, Okoro (of blessed memory), who lived next door. From my guardian's home I peeked at Ray's huge dark frame and was convinced that he was not a fable, and I reasoned that since he was human, just maybe one day I could learn to write well, if not as well as he did.

Ray was an obsession for me back in the day as a high school student. His writing was the best of verdant prose, earthy and full of quotable quotes. His column every Monday in The Nigerian Chronicle was a keepsake. And it was still so, perhaps with more poignancy, when he moved to Lagos where he continued to delight with sonic prose, and rhythmic free verse in the Sunday Times and the National Concord . Ray does not just write for the eye, he writes for the ear as well. He writes to be read; he writes for pleasure reading!

Some of the entries in his column were so vintage Ray that they were unforgettable. I remember, for instance, 'The Snobbish Sage Called Senghor,' an alliterative head for a prosaic delight meant to answer for an alleged snob handed to Nigeria's military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo by the then Senegalese president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, during Obasanjo's visit to Dakar. I also remember 'A Trip to Golgotha,' a pen portrait of the anguish and tribulation that the Newswatch family endured when the magazine was proscribed for six months by the Babangida junta. I equally remember 'Tai,' a tribute at the passing of the legendary Tai Solarin.

### Eminent journalist Ray Ekpu at 75

My affair with Ray as a prose stylist has been a lifelong romance. My final year project in the university-for which I received the maximum point-was a study of Ray's writing, along with that of another legend, Olatunji Dare, now emeritus professor at Bradley University in the US.

Ray has enriched Nigerian journalism with catch phrases that have become the currency of common expression in the popular press. I remember him writing 'where words fail, fist prevails,' a sampler of his pitch for the ear; a phrase that I have adapted for use in one of my poems. I also remember his 'philosophical calmness,' a phrase he used to capture the equanimity with which he bore his vicissitude at the Daily Times .

To use a cliché, Ray has a gift of the gab. He simply makes words behave for him. He is indeed one of the noblest high priests of journalism that the nation is blessed with.

If professional skills have made Ray a living legend, his personality has projected him as a gentleman. Ray is humble. He is a chief priest with a common touch. No airs of prominence about him! I remember the days I struggled in vain with him both at the Ikeja airport and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to help him carry his handbag. On the occasions that I visited him at home in Lagos, Ray served me by himself, clothing me in improbable robes as a VIP guest. Ray reminds me of Dr Ime Umanah (of blessed memory), who was also an epitome of humility, and would personally serve his guests at his Ikoyi home on Bourdillon Road, Lagos. Dr Umanah was at a time the chairman of Newswatch where at the time Ray served as the chief executive of the newspaper. Were the two humble sons of Akwa Ibom brought together by the compatibility of personality types? I think the holy bible seemed to have answered that question 2000 odd years ago: Two cannot work together unless they agree (Amos 3:3).

Ray is generous-with his time and other resources. When I co-founded ProData Limited, a communication company that's engaged in media consultancy, reputation management and provision of market intelligence for paying clients, we needed a powerful brand to chair the board of the company. We did a mental tour of names and settled on Ray, with an outside chance that he would accept to carry our start-up on his sturdy shoulders.

I was assigned the job of contacting Ray for a meeting to broach the request. I put a call through to him and he gave me an appointment. At his home in Ogudu GRA, Lagos, Ray was as personable, as affable as ever. I told him of the request directors of our company asked me to deliver to him. After a meticulous scrutiny and review of our paperwork, Ray agreed to be our chairman. It was a benevolence we have cherished till this day-a five-star international **journalist** chairing the board of our start-up at that time!

Ray is perhaps the best soft-spoken conversationalist around. When you're engaged with Ray, his scalpel-sharp wit and intellect shows through. And also his learning! I understand that just as Wole Soyinka, Ray reads like a magpie. Soyinka once told an interviewer that he reads everything and anything except mathematics.

Besides reading, the Ray essence is mediated by global influences that have percolated through his pores from international travels. Ray has visited more than 50 countries. His urbane personality and international outlook are forged by both a voracious reading habit and the experiences he has had from other civilisations around the world.

After making a roaring success of the road he had taken as a **journalist**, earning wages from employers for his work, Ray, along with his friends-**Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, Nigeria's Journalism Quartet-decided to move upstairs as an employer of labour. He co-founded Newswatch , a trenchant newsmagazine that soon earned unrivalled industry reputation for investigative journalism and inimitable writing. The Quartet was following in the footsteps of John Payne Jackson, Horatio Agedah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sam Amuka Pemu, all of them journalists who at some points in their careers decided to be publishers by founding their own newspapers.

Thus, during his career Ray has been a guru in both the newsroom and the boardroom. When the scorecard is drawn of Ray as a businessman and as a **journalist**, in which part of his duality would he be adjudged an out and out five-star general? The jury is still out, but I would be surprised if Ray the **journalist** would not do better than Ray the businessman.

Eminent journalist Ray Ekpu at 75

The honours Ray has received from home and abroad are well-earned. He has impacted the lives of many through his writing and outreach. Last year he did a yeoman's job to promote the existence and activities of Uyo Book Club, of which he holds a diamond membership.

For Raymond Amos Ekpu, it has been 75 years of impact and relevance. It's my pleasure and delight therefore to join his family and friends to wish him happy birthday anniversary celebrations. I look forward to many more birthday celebrations in good health and social wellbeing for Ray, our Ray of luminous, crunchy and relevant journalism.

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2023

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## **Dele Giwa - 25 Years of Fruitless Search for Killers**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 19, 2011 Wednesday

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Length: 939 words

### **Body**

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TODAY marks exactly 25 years that iconic journalist and one of the founders of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa was parceled out of existence through a parcel bomb, the first of its kind in the history of the country.

Today also marks 25 years of a fruitless search for the mastermind and executors of the deadly deed. In the last two and a half decades, an avalanche of assassinations had followed on the heels of Giwa's murder and each of them, like Giwa's, have remained unresolved raising concerns on the safety of lives and property in the country.

Dele Giwa's murder was like what one saw on high profile movies.

The officer who led the government's investigation of the murder, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, a senior Police officer now retired submitted a signed statement to the Oputa Panel in July, 2001, detailing how the assassination was carried out.

According to him, "On 19th October, 1986 at about 11am two men drove a white Peugeot 504 saloon car with unidentified registration number to No 25, Talabi Street, Ikeja, the residence of Giwa. One of the men wore black French suit while the second wore white long sleeve French suit.

Dele Giwa's watchman Mallam Musa Ladan was away to the market but left the security of his Master's residence to his neighbor, Mallam Musa Zibo. The man with the white French suit alighted from the car and gave Mallam Zibo a padded brown envelope for delivery to Dele Giwa having confirmed from Zibo that Dele Giwa was in.

They immediately drove off without waiting to confirm that the parcel had reached the addressee. The unsuspecting Musa Zibo collected the parcel and pressed the doorbell to Dele Giwa's residence. "In response thereof, Billy Giwa, the deceased's son opened the door and collected the parcel for his father.

According to Billy Giwa, the brown envelope was heavy and had a white sticker on which Dele Giwa's name and address were written. It was marked 'Secret and Confidential' with a warning that it should only be opened by the addressee.

The sticker also had the Nigerian Coat of Arms with the inscription 'From the office of the C-in-C.' Billy Giwa said he... handed over the parcel to his father who was in the study with Kayode Soyinka, the London Bureau Chief of the (Newswatch) Magazine.

## Dele Giwa - 25 Years of Fruitless Search for Killers

He retired to the sitting room to join his stepmother Mrs. Funmi **Giwa**. A few minutes later, he heard an explosion. They rushed to the scene and found the study engulfed in smoke and fire while his father sustained fatal injuries.

With the assistance of sympathizers, they rushed his father to First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja where he later died." With his death, the stage was set for a search for the killers with a section of the polity especially the human right community fingering a former military ruler.

The Police investigated the matter without uncovering the culprits. With the return of civil rule, the matter was taken to the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa-led rights violation investigation panel in 2001, where Tsav tendered the above statements and still no name was pinned down to the murder.

Born on 16 March 16 1947 to a poor family working in the palace of Oba Adesoji Aderemi, the Ooni of Ife, **Dele Giwa** attended local Authority Modern School in Lagere, Ile-Ife. When his father moved to Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife as a washer man, he gained admission to that school.

**Dele Giwa** traveled to the USA for his higher education. After his studies and robust journalism career at the defunct Concord Newspapers owned by late business mogul and politician, Chief M.K.O Abiola, the late **Dele Giwa** and fellow journalists - Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed founded Newswatch in 1984 with the first edition distributed on January 28, 1985.

Having led a move that revolutionised magazine publication in the country, **Dele Giwa**'s murder shook the polity especially the media and human rights community. And so, 25 years after, the recurring question has remained: Who killed **Dele Giwa**?

Failure to resolve **Dele Giwa**'s murder and successfully prosecute the perpetrators seem to have paved the way for the commission of more atrocious killings.

And now journalists are gradually becoming endangered species. The lengthening list of unresolved murders include: Bagauda Kaltho, Sunday Gyang Bwede (The Light Bearer April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State, Nathan S. Dabak (The Light Bearer, April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State), Bayo Ohu (The Guardian, September 20, 2009, in Lagos), Samson Boyi, (The Scope November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State), Sam Nimfa-Jan (Details May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan), Fidelis Ikuebe (Freelancer, April 18, 1999, Anambra), Okezie Amaruben (Newsservice September 2, 1998, in Enugu) and Tunde Oladepo, The Guardian February 26, 1998, Abeokuta).

Others include Edo Sule Ugbagwu (The Nation, April 24, 2010, Lagos), Ephraim Audu (Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service, October 16, 2008, Lafia), Paul Aboyomi Ogundesi (ThisDay, August 16, 2008, Dopemu, Lagos), Godwin Agbroko (ThisDay December 22, 2006, Lagos), Bolade Fasasi (National Association of Women Journalists, March 31, 1999, Ibadan), Chinedu Offoaro (The Guardian, May 1, 1996 and Baguda Kaltho (TheNEWS March 1, 1996).

Other unresolved murders Apart from journalists, countless others including politicians have suffered similar fate. Among those gunned down were former Justice Minister and Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige, Engr Funsho Williams, Chief Alfred Rewane, Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, Dr Harry Marshal, Chief Aminosoari Dikibo, Ogbonnaya Uche, Dipo Dina, Eyo Eyo, Mr and Mrs Barnabas Igwe, Lateef Olaniyan, Bala Mai Haile, Toyin Onagoruwa, Sunday Ugwu and Chief Layi Balogun among others.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2011



## HATS OFF TO UNCLE RAY

This Day

August 11, 2023 Friday

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**Length:** 1253 words

### **Body**

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ETIM ETIM pays tribute to renowned Journalist Ray Ekpu at 75

One of Nigeria's most respected journalists and elder statesmen, Raymond Amos Ekpu, clocked 75, August 6, and I am particularly pleased to send him and his family my felicitations and best wishes. Uncle Ray, as I call him fondly, has been one of my role models for decades. Nationally, he has strong name recognition, and in Akwa Ibom, his home state, he has become a household name and a folk hero. We all grew up reading his articles in The Calabar-based Nigerian Chronicle, a government-owned newspaper, founded in 1971 as a weekly, but became daily the following year. Mr. Moses Ekpo, the immediate past Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State, was its first editor. For us in journalism, Uncle Ray has been as an inspiration, exemplar and standard bearer.

I saw Uncle Ray last in March 2021 at a public function in Port Harcourt. He looked radiant and well. It is gratifying that he's been keeping well since then despite a recent health scare. May Almighty God continue to keep him in good health. Ekpu has had a distinguished career and held almost every conceivable responsibility and position in journalism since his first job as staff writer/reporter in 1974 at the The Nigerian Chronicle. The paper was one of the influential state-owned newspapers in those days that trained some of the best journalists we have today. Others were The Nigerian Observer in Benin; The Renaissance (later renamed Daily Star) in Enugu; The Tide in Port Harcourt; The Statesman in Owerri; The Herald in Ilorin and Daily Sketch in Ibadan. New Nigerian in Kaduna and Daily Times in Lagos, owned by the federal government, circulated nationally. These were all my regular readings every morning as a secondary schoolboy in the 1970s and they shaped my understanding of public affairs and interest in writing. My school library and the public library in Uyo had regular supplies of these newspapers. What are our kids reading now?

In 1977, Ekpu was promoted editor of The Chronicle after passing a competitive examination conducted by the late Prince Tony Momoh who was then the editor of Daily Times. Momoh was brought by the management of Cross River State Newspaper Corporation, publishers of The Chronicle, to help in conducting the selection process. The GM of the newspaper was Chief Efiong Essien, whom I later met at The Guardian when I joined as a reporter in

## HATS OFF TO UNCLE RAY

1988. He was then a member of its Editorial Board. It was from The Chronicle that Ekpu was hired in 1980 to be the editor of Sunday Times, the largest-circulating weekly newspaper in those days. It was a must read for every person in business, government and academia. He joined the Concord Group, owned by the late MKO Abiola, in 1982 as member of the Editorial Board of National Concord, the daily newspaper in the stable. But it was in 1984 when he co-founded Newswatch magazine that the world came to appreciate his quintessence. The first edition of the magazine was published in January 1985.

Born on August 6, 1948, in Ikot Udo Ossiom village in Ukanafun LGA in today's Akwa Ibom State, Ekpu is a recipient of several honours and awards, including International Editor of the Year (1987); Outstanding Young Person of the World (1988), Diamond Award for Media Excellence (DAME) Lifetime Achievement Award (2018) and Lifetime Achievement Award by Vanguard newspapers. A former President of the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Ekpu had also served as Chairman, Editorial Board, Concord Newspapers before partnering with the late **Dele Giwa**, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed to establish Newswatch in 1985.

He was also the President of Commonwealth Journalists Association in the 1990s, and has just been named its President Emeritus in recognition of his contributions to the association. The Nation newspaper of Kenya also honoured Ekpu with Lifetime Achievement Award during its 50th anniversary celebration in 2013. The Department of Mass Communication of Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osura, Ikot Ekpene, has celebrated him by naming its mass communication department after him. It is now called Ray Ekpu Department of Mass Communication. Ray Ekpu is currently a columnist at The Guardian; The Sun and Daily Independent newspapers.

Life gives each person his own lemon. It is up to you to make your own lemonade. Uncle Ray has had his own share of vicissitudes practicing journalism during the dark days of military dictatorships in the country. He was detained six times in different prisons and Newswatch was shut down for over six months by the military junta. But it was the dastardly murder of his business partner and friend, **Dele Giwa**, through a parcel bomb on Sunday, October 19, 1986, during the IBB regime, that shook Ekpu to the core of his being. It is a shame that the military leaders of the time had not been held to account for the heinous crime.

A grandfather with three children and six grandchildren, Uncle Ray is enjoying retirement in peace and absolute gratitude to God. He spends time reading, writing and enjoying quality time at home. He loves playing with his grandchildren and watching football and boxing as well as listening to music. Ekpu is an avid reader. He enjoys reading all sorts of readable stuffs - books, magazines, columns in newspapers, including agony columns, especially the Bunmi column in the Vanguard. For him, books are repository of wisdom and knowledge. He told me recently: 'I am sure that I have up to 10,000 books and pamphlets. These include three sets of general encyclopaedia; computer science encyclopaedia and encyclopaedia of the oceans; science encyclopaedia; social science encyclopaedia and some rare books'. In his library also are about 100 pamphlet boxes where all kinds of pamphlets and leaflets are kept as reference materials.

With advanced age, Uncle Ray has modified his lifestyle. He doesn't drink any longer (cognac was his thing); doesn't take salt in his food (during the civil war when the commodity was so scarce, he used to walk some 30 kilometers to Ikot Abasi from his village to fetch and evaporate sea water to obtain it) and socializes sparingly (parities were his favourite pastime in those days). But his love for journalism, which he studied at the University of Lagos, is undying. I am pleased that Uncle Ray is writing his memoir. I love to read memoires and I'm always disappointed when a newsmaker fails to write one. Ekpu has a lot to tell and I can't wait to read it. As a whet, I asked him to reminisce about journalism of his days and compare it to what we have now. He chuckled gently: 'The practice of journalism today has been improved by advanced technology. With a smart phone you can record interviews and pictures; you can make phone calls and send text messages. Materials could be delivered to your office from long distances in no time. Research is just a click away. But there is the down side. It has made many journalists lazy because they rely on unverified stories in the social media. When this happens, they end up publishing fake stories in their traditional media which ought to be the major source of authentic stories'.

Uncle Ray has some affection for me. He took me under his wings when I joined The Guardian newspaper in January 1988 as a Finance reporter. When I came out of my own three-month detention in November 1988, he sent a reporter from his magazine to interview me. He later received me at his Ikeja home lavishly.

## HATS OFF TO UNCLE RAY

Happy birthday, Uncle Ray!

Etim is a *Journalist*

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

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## **FG Urged to Establish Journalism School in of Honour Dele Giwa**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 20, 2015

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**Length:** 407 words

**Byline:** Kingsley Omonobi

### **Body**

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Twenty nine years after he was killed by a parcel bomb, the Media Law Centre has called on the Federal Government to establish a school of Journalism in of honour of late **Dele Giwa** for his contribution to the nation's democracy.

The late founding Editor-In-Chief of Newswatch Magazine met his death in his home on 19 October 1986 courtesy a letter bomb which was handed over to him in his study.

The call was made yesterday in Abuja by Prof. Matthew Atobe at a capacity building seminar and public presentation of two publications by Mr. Richard Akinola, on the media to commemorate the 29th anniversary of the assassination of **Dele Giwa**.

The event witnessed the presentation of the books; 'the law of defamation and trial by the Media: Saraki's case in perspective' written by a pro-democracy activist and **Journalist**, Richad Akinnola.

Speaking on 'the contributions of investigative Journalism to national development', Prof. Atobe who is a senior partner Beacom Group, Boston, USA, paid glowing tribute to the late **Journalist** even as he extoled his virtues as a fearless, courageous, brave and heroic man.

He said the trace of the history of the nation's democracy cannot be complete without the contributions of **Dele Giwa**, his colleagues and the Newswatch Magazine they founded.

Prof. Atobe called on Nigerian **Journalist** to emulate his "gallantry, fearless and dauntless courage to reject and shun bad journalistic ethics and payment to compromise accurate and truthful reporting."

"In conclusion and without hesitation, I hereby suggest today that the private sector, federal and state governments should join minds together to honour **Dele Giwa** with the establishment of **Dele Giwa** School of Journalism for his contribution to democracy we are all enjoying in Nigeria today.'

In his remarks at the event, former President of Nigerian Union **Journalist**, Lanre Ogundigbe called on practitioners to declare a state of emergency in media as a way of uplifting the dwindling standard and ethics of the profession.

Also speaking at the occasion, incumbent President of the Nigeria Union of **Journalist** [NUJ], Waheed Odusile decried the lack of mentorship as a factor militating against bad journalism in the country.

## FG Urged to Establish Journalism School in Honour Dele Giwa

He called for more training and exposure for not only practicing journalists, but also the gate keepers like the News Editors and Proof readers who are the last port of call before the news gets out to the public to avoid unnecessary mistakes.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2015

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## Ray is the reason I'm in journalism

The Sun (Nigeria)

August 7, 2023 Monday

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**Length:** 1296 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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By Iboro Otongaran

Ray Ekpu is the reason I'm a journalist. I don't think that tribute captures the truth of what Ray actually means to me! Let me try again. A near adequate tribute is that Ray is why I'm still struggling with the craft of writing, in the hope that one day I would be close to the gold standard in modern magazine and feature writing, where Ray currently leads the pack and belongs in the same pantheon of gods with Stanley Macebuh, Dele Giwa, Sonala Olumhense, Muhammed Haruna, Niyi Osundare, Sam Omatseye and a few other select prose virtuosos.

For me as a young man there was nothing else that held out the kind of irresistible spell like what Ray was doing. I made up my mind early that I would rather end up as a root crop farmer in my rustic village of Ikot Akpan Ebo in Uruk Otong of Adat Ifang clan in Ukanafun local council area, if I could not be a journalist like Ray. Ray had made journalism look like the best job in the world, and the journalist as a magician, a guy who could walk on water by his sheer prose power. The man had loomed so large in my impressionable imagination that I actually didn't believe he was anything other than a fairy tale, until the day I saw him in person when he came to visit his senior brother, Okoro (of blessed memory), who lived next door. From my guardian's home I peeked at Ray's huge dark frame and was convinced that he was not a fable, and I reasoned that since he was human, just maybe one day I could learn to write well, if not as well as he did.

Ray was an obsession for me back in the day as a high school student. His writing was the best of verdant prose, earthy and full of quotable quotes. His column every Monday in The Nigerian Chronicle was a keepsake. And it was still so, perhaps with more poignancy, when he moved to Lagos where he continued to delight with sonic prose, and rhythmic free verse in the Sunday Times and the National Concord. Ray does not just write for the eye, he writes for the ear as well. He writes to be read; he writes for pleasure reading!

## Ray is the reason I'm in journalism

Some of the entries in his column were so vintage Ray that they were unforgettable. I remember, for instance, "The Snobbish Sage Called Senghor," an alliterative head for a prosaic delight meant to answer for an alleged snob handed to Nigeria's military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo by the then Senegalese President, Leopold Sedar Senghor, during Obasanjo's visit to Dakar. I also remember "A Trip to Golgotha," a pen portrait of the anguish and tribulation that the Newswatch family endured when the magazine was proscribed for six months by the Babangida junta. I equally remember "Tai," a tribute at the passing of the legendary Tai Solarin.

My affair with Ray as a prose stylist has been a lifelong romance. My final-year project in the university—for which I received maximum points—was a study of Ray's writing, along with that of another legend, Olatunji Dare, now emeritus professor at Bradley University in the US.

Ray has enriched Nigerian journalism with catch phrases that have become the currency of common expression in the popular press. I remember him writing "where words fail, fist prevails," a sampler of his pitch for the ear; a phrase that I have adapted for use in one of my poems. I also remember his "philosophical calmness," a phrase he used to capture the equanimity with which he bore his vicissitudes at the Daily Times.

To use a cliché, Ray has a gift of the gab. He simply makes words behave for him. He is indeed one of the noblest high priests of journalism that the nation is blessed with.

If professional skills have made Ray a living legend, his personality has projected him as a gentleman. Ray is humble. He is a chief priest with a common touch. No airs of prominence about him! I remember the days I struggled in vain with him both at the Ikeja airport and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to help him carry his handbag. On the occasions that I visited him at home in Lagos, Ray served me by himself, clothing me in improbable robes of a VIP guest. Ray reminds me of Dr. Ime Umanah (of blessed memory), who was also an epitome of humility, and would personally serve his guests at his Ikoyi home on Bourdillon Road, Lagos. Dr. Umanah was at a time the chairman of Newswatch, where at the time Ray served as the chief executive of the newspaper. Were the two humble sons of Akwa Ibom brought together by the compatibility of personality types? I think the Holy Bible seemed to have answered that question 2,000 odd years ago: Two cannot work together unless they agree (Amos 3:3).

Ray is generous—with his time and other resources. When I co-founded ProData Limited, a communication company that's engaged in media consultancy, reputation management and provision of market intelligence for paying clients, we needed a powerful brand to chair the board of the company. We did a mental tour of names and settled on Ray, with an outside chance that he would accept to carry our start-up on his sturdy shoulders.

I was assigned the job of contacting Ray for a meeting to broach the request. I put a call through to him and he gave me an appointment. At his home in Ogudu GRA, Lagos, Ray was as personable, as affable as ever. I told him of the request directors of our company asked me to deliver to him. After a meticulous scrutiny and review of our paperwork, Ray agreed to be our chairman. It was a benevolence we have cherished till this day—a five-star international journalist chairing the board of our start-up at that time!

Ray is perhaps the best soft-spoken conversationalist around. When you're engaged with Ray, his scalpel-sharp wit and intellect shows through. And also his learning! I understand that just as Wole Soyinka, Ray reads like a magpie. Soyinka once told an interviewer that he reads everything and anything except mathematics.

Besides reading, the Ray essence is mediated by global influences that have percolated through his pores from international travels. Ray has visited more than 50 countries. His urbane personality and international outlook are forged by both a voracious reading habit and the experiences he has had from other civilisations around the world.

After making a roaring success of the road he had taken as a journalist, earning wages from employers for his work, Ray, along with his friends—Dele Giwa, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, Nigeria's journalism quartet—decided to move upstairs as an employer of labour. He co-founded Newswatch, a trenchant newsmagazine that soon earned unrivalled industry reputation for investigative journalism and inimitable writing. The Quartet was following in the footsteps of John Payne Jackson, Horatio Agedah, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Sam Amuka-Pemu, all of them journalists who at some points in their careers decided to be publishers by founding their own newspapers.

### Ray is the reason I'm in journalism

Thus, during his career, Ray has been a guru in both the newsroom and the boardroom. When the scorecard is drawn of Ray as a businessman and as a journalist, in which part of his duality would he be adjudged an out and out five-star general? The jury is still out, but I would be surprised if Ray the journalist would not do better than Ray the businessman.

The honours Ray has received from home and abroad are well-earned. He has impacted the lives of many through his writing and outreach. Last year he did a yeoman's job to promote the existence and activities of Uyo Book Club, of which he holds a diamond membership.

For Raymond Amos Ekpu, it has been 75 years of impact and relevance. It's my pleasure and delight, therefore, to join his family and friends to wish him happy birthday celebrations. I look forward to many more birthday celebrations for Ray in perfect health and material wellbeing, our Ray of luminous, crunchy and relevant journalism.

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2023

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## **Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism - Iboro Otongaran**

Naija 247 News

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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Length: 1244 words

### **Body**

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Thank you for reading this post, don't forget to subscribe!

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**Load-Date:** August 7, 2023

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## Prologue: A diary of wastage

The Nation (Nigeria)

May 30, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 1001 words

### **Body**

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He was the very symbol of wastage: frail limbs, premature grey hair and a sagging gait. I had put him down as another specimen from our museum of atrocity. He seemed to have understood. As he took his leave, the wasted young man asked me the million dollar question: 'Why do we waste ourselves so much?' he cried.

The metaphor itself, I'm told, originated during our darkest national moment: the civil war. But its sad antecedents, I'm sure, must be located in the bitter and self-destructive post-independence politics of our founding fathers. Like a malignant cancer, it has overtaken every facet of our national life. Wastage has become the dominant metaphor, the all-embracing formula for the tragedy of our collective existence.

Wole Soyinka, ever the troubled prophet, first drew our attention to the creeping cancer in the mid-seventies. In a newspaper piece titled 'Varieties of Wastage,' Soyinka assailed the invasion of our national life by the culture of human wastage. We waste our best and brightest; our best and brightest politicians; our best and brightest soldiers; our best and brightest intellectuals; our best and brightest bankers; our best and brightest journalists etc. The road, taking its cue from the system, completes the carnage for us.

One year this week, a novel and spectacular variety of wastage made its debut on the national scene. **Dele Giwa**, brilliant editor and one of the stars of Nigerian journalism, was bombed out of existence in his study. This writer is often amazed these days when people talk glibly about the Nigerian bomb without first conceding that the real 'McCoy' made its sly and devastating entry several months ahead of the idle speculations.

It is pertinent to add here that nobody can fool history and that if care is not taken, that horrifying spectacle of a gifted and virile young man with shattered limbs may itself become an alternative metaphor for our national condition.

As the first anniversary of **Giwa**'s murder approached, I've been thrown into deep mourning and depression. Some days earlier, a good friend, Deji Adegorioye, who had gone to buy some drugs for his indisposed son had his life snuffed out by a bus belonging to the Celestial Church.

Some weeks before this, another friend, Tunde Okeleye, a Customs official, was battered to death by a danfo bus whose driver had perfected the murderous strategy of overtaking in the night with lights switched off. Death had

## Prologue: A diary of wastage

barely closed in on him before some brave new Nigerians saw it fit to remove his money, his shoes, his wristwatch and the drinks he bought for his kids.

As if all this was not enough burden on the soul, news came of the death by road accident of Professor Iluyomade, Oxford-trained law teacher and Attorney-General of Ondo State. Something always conspires to deny us of even our brief sources of joy, I thought in deep gloom.

I remembered how the **Dele Giwa** murder had put a dampener on the Wole Soyinka Nobel celebration. And now the cultured and lively people of Ondo town will have to share the joy of one of their illustrious sons winning the National Merit Award with the grief of burying another illustrious son.

These cruel tricks of fortune! Three weeks earlier, I was thinking of sending a telegram of congratulations to Chinua Achebe on his return to high form when I learnt of the death of Dambudzo Marechera, the gifted Zimbabwean writer. I had reckoned that Achebe who had survived a thousand literary cudgels after his immensely frank but immensely impolitic put-down of Obafemi Awolowo surely deserved some congratulations. But the death of Marechera, the supreme artist of hunger whose life must serve as a classic example of the dissolution of the flesh by spirit (whisky and co), halted me in my track.

These deaths make my mind to focus on the damage the notorious Ife-Ibadan road might have done to the intellectual development of this country. One now remembers the Bamiduros, the Kola Adenijis, the Taiye Adebanjos, brilliant men who have gone through all the rituals of education only to have their lives tragically terminated on The Road.

I remember now a tall, dashing young man who would have graduated with our class of '75 at Ife. Onome Ibru would have been an invaluable asset not only to the formidable Ibru Empire but to the entire country. His life was cruelly abridged on this monster of a road.

Now consider this. If one were to resurrect all the people we have put through the ceaseless mill of our unedifying history, all the brilliant men and women that our monstrous system has hurried over to the great beyond! What an endless procession of shame and misery would it have been! What a staggering burden of collective guilt for the living!

Let us end this sad piece with a disturbing but profoundly soothing anecdote. In the gloom and misery that enveloped the nation in the wake of **Giwa**'s murder, I had the honour of briefly participating in one of the planning sessions for his burial. In the atmosphere of consuming sadness, I had asked a **journalist** friend whether things would ever be the same again in the country. The man looked at me and said philosophically: 'In forty years' time, **Dele Giwa** will be remembered as a fearless **journalist** of the eighties'.

Then he told me a story about his father. The old man, sensing that he had only a few more months to spare, decided to take his son down the memory lane on a tour of familiar spots on the Lagos Island.

As they crossed from one alley to another, the old man's face would light with memory as they came upon some familiar land mark. 'That is the house of so and so', he would begin, 'he was a socialite who died mysteriously in 1947'. At another spot the old man would look up and remark: 'This is the house of J.K, he died in his prime in 1958'. And so on...

His message was clear. Life will go on. Life must go on. The only honour we, the dazed survivors, can do to the wasted is to resolve to change a system that is responsible for such colossal waste.

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2021



## **30 Years After, Dele Giwa's Pen Remains Mightier**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 18, 2016

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**Length:** 1104 words

**Byline:** Charles Kumolu

### **Body**

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Regrettably brief but inspirationally eventful! This short acclamation best raises the curtain once again on the life of **Dele Giwa**, who has justifiably refused to die after being gruesomely denied the right to live on October 19, 1986.

That **Giwa**, an ace **journalist**, has remained a phenomenon in the Nigerian narrative 30 years after dying via a letter bomb, is an affirmation of the import of his life, times as well as the implication of his kind of exit.

It was a life sojourn, birthed in humility, expended on national good and cut short by man's inhumanity to man-apologies to Robert Burns.

Having attended local Authority Modern School in Lagere, Ile-Ife; Oduduwa College, Ile-Ife; Brooklyn College ,USA; and Fordham University ,USA, he was princely moulded for the profession that earned him stardom, significance, and death.

In his nearly four decades on earth, the late founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine earned himself professional prominence and national significance through the pursuit of professional goals and commitment to societal good.

Through the introduction of bold and investigative approach to journalism in Nigeria, **Giwa** , who was born in 1947 in the palace of the Ooni of Ife, altered social anomalies in manners that held the citizen and the state responsive.

#### **Decrees, edicts, boots on the ground**

Frontally, his pen confronted decrees, edicts, and boots on the ground with the aim of enthroning public good especially in an era that was not guided by the constitution.

These, the late **journalist**, who hailed from Edo State, exhibited as Features Editor of Daily Times, Weekend Concord and Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine-the position he held at the time the angels of death delivered the deadly parcel through his then 19-year-old son, Billy, who received it on his behalf.

Indeed, the major resultant effect of that parcel which was **Giwa**'s death may have dealt a devastating blow to journalism in Nigeria, it interestingly failed to suppress the ability to espouse and seek the truth.

## 30 Years After, Dele Giwa's Pen Remains Mightier

However, the death which took place at the First Foundation Hospital, Ikeja, Lagos, where he was rushed to after the explosion at his No 25, Talabi Crescent, Adeniyi Jones Avenue, Ikeja residence, remains saddening but significant in many ways.

On the one hand, many are still appalled at the failure of requisite institutions at clearing the fog surrounding the death in respective of acclaimed traces, while others see such failure as the absence of capacity by the Nigerian state to protect its citizens.

On the other hand, the incident emboldened the use of free speech as a weapon against societal ills and tyranny to point that the media stood up to the late Gen San Abacha's dictatorship.

That the nation from that moment, has been boldly asking: Who Killed **Dele Giwa**? affirms that his death rather than suppressing the right to free speech fuelled the feelings of fearlessness the more.

And the event which is still believed to be an affront to press freedom has further amplified the voices for press freedom which many would agree is not sufficiently practicable as enshrined in chapter II section 39 subsection (1) of the 1999 constitution.

The constitution highlighted that part thus: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference."

Though some have argued that freedom of expression even with the Freedom of Information Act ,FOIA, does not mean absolute freedom, the fact that journalists perform constitutionally backed duties, qualifies them for state protection.

**Giwa**'s gruesome murder and its unresolved status, testify to the need for that considering that some journalists had also died under questionable circumstances since that incident of October 19, 1986.

Certainly, the attendant implications of his death informed the thrust of a colloquium holding today in Lagos in commemoration of the 30 years of his demise.

The event which is entitled: Safety of Journalists and Culture of Impunity in Africa, seeks to reflect on the life of **Giwa**, his contributions to journalism and the implication of his death to the practice of journalism in Africa.

With participants drawn from the media, armed forces, the executive arm of government, judiciary and civil society, the choice of attendees can't be termed inappropriate considering the role the institutions they represent, played in the aftermath of the death of **Giwa**, who in his time, epitomised excellence and dynamism in Nigerian journalism.

Expectedly, today's exercise may, on the one hand, produce a consensus for an objective investigation of the matter beyond what has been a thirty-year official indifference, just as many would re-echo this three-decade-old question: Who killed **Dele Giwa**?

### **Govt was interested in **Dele Giwa**'s case--Tsav**

Reflecting on **Giwa**'s demise yesterday in an exclusive chat with Vanguard, a retired Police Commissioner, who conducted the initial investigation into the matter, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, urged the media to ensure that such cases are satisfactorily concluded.

He said: "There was gross negligence in the cause of investigating **Dele Giwa**'s death. The negligence was on the part of the instigative authority and the government. I handled the case immediately it happened and sought the permission to search the places I was supposed to but the files left my hand and never came back.

Before then I had already interviewed Soyinka, who was **Dele Giwa** at the time the incident happened, **Dele Giwa**'s wife and Gani Fawehinmi. The claim that Soyinka knew what happened is not true. When the matter got to Omabeni, he started to say that Soyinka was responsible and deviated from my view.

### 30 Years After, Dele Giwa's Pen Remains Mightier

That was the end of that case. Any case that the government is interested in will never see the light of the day. That was what happened. The government was interested in the case of Dele Giwa. We saw that happen in the case of Rewane, Bola Ige, and others. That case like Dele Giwa's case showed that any case that the government has an interest in dies a natural death.

As the media remembers Dele Giwa, they should henceforth insist that any murder case is brought to a logical conclusion even if it is the murder of a beggar, it must be investigated with a view to bringing those responsible to book. I handled the case with enthusiasm so that we could know those responsible because that was the first bomb blast in Nigeria but the government was interested in it. It was after then that we started having cases of bomb last like during the NADECO days when the group was wrongly accused of being behind the blasts."

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2016

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## Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism

The Guardian

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1256 words

## Body

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Ray Ekpu is the reason I'm a journalist. I don't think that tribute captures the truth of what Ray actually means to me! Let me try again. A near adequate tribute is that Ray is why I'm still struggling with the craft of writing, in the hope that one day I would be close to the gold standard in modern magazine and feature writing, where Ray currently leads the pack and belongs in the same pantheon of gods with Stanley Macebuh, Dele Giwa, Sonala Olumhense, Muhammed Haruna, Niyi Osundare, Sam Omatseye and a few other select prose virtuosos.

For me as a young man there was nothing else that held out the kind of irresistible spell like what Ray was doing. I made up my mind early that I would rather end up as a root crop farmer in my rustic village of Ikot Akpan Ebo in Uruk Otong of Adat Ifang clan in Ukanafun local council area if I could not be a journalist like Ray. Ray had made journalism look like the best job in the world, and the journalist as a magician, a guy who could walk on water by his sheer prose power.

The man had loomed so large in my impressionable imagination that I actually didn't believe he was anything other than a fairy tale, until the day I saw him in person when he came to visit his senior brother, Okoro (of blessed memory), who lived next door. From my guardian's home I peeked at Ray's huge dark frame and was convinced that he was not a fable, and I reasoned that since he was human, just maybe one day I could learn to write well, if not as well as he did.

Ray was an obsession for me back in the day as a high school student. His writing was the best of verdant prose, earthy and full of quotable quotes. His column every Monday in The Nigerian Chronicle was a keepsake. And it was still so, perhaps with more poignancy, when he moved to Lagos where he continued to delight with sonic prose, and rhythmic free verse in the Sunday Times and the National Concord. Ray does not just write for the eye, he writes for the ear as well.

He writes to be read; he writes for pleasure reading!

Some of the entries in his column were so vintage Ray that they were unforgettable. I remember, for instance, "The Snobbish Sage Called Senghor," an alliterative head for a prosaic delight meant to answer for an alleged snob handed to Nigeria's military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo by the then Senegalese president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, during Obasanjo's visit to Dakar. I also remember "A Trip to Golgotha," a pen portrait of the anguish and

## Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism

tribulation that the Newswatch family endured when the magazine was proscribed for six months by the Babangida junta. I equally remember "Tai," a tribute at the passing of the legendary Tai Solarin.

My affair with Ray as a prose stylist has been a lifelong romance. My final year project in the university—for which I received the maximum point—was a study of Ray's writing, along with that of another legend, Olatunji Dare, now emeritus professor at Bradley University in the US.

Ray has enriched Nigerian journalism with catch phrases that have become the currency of common expression in the popular press. I remember him writing "where words fail, fist prevails," a sampler of his pitch for the ear; a phrase that I have adapted for use in one of my poems. I also remember his "philosophical calmness," a phrase he used to capture the equanimity with which he bore his vicissitude at the Daily Times.

To use a cliché, Ray has a gift of the gab. He simply makes words behave for him. He is indeed one of the noblest high priests of journalism that the nation is blessed with.

If professional skills have made Ray a living legend, his personality has projected him as a gentleman. Ray is humble. He is a chief priest with a common touch. No airs of prominence about him! I remember the days I struggled in vain with him both at the Ikeja airport and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to help him carry his handbag. On the occasions that I visited him at home in Lagos, Ray served me by himself, clothing me in improbable robes of a VIP guest. Ray reminds me of Dr Ime Umanah (of blessed memory), who was also an epitome of humility, and would personally serve his guests at his Ikoyi home on Bourdillon Road, Lagos.

Dr. Umanah was at a time the chairman of Newswatch where at the time Ray served as the chief executive of the newspaper. Were the two humble sons of Akwa Ibom brought together by the compatibility of personality types? I think the holy bible seemed to have answered that question 2000 odd years ago: Two cannot work together unless they agree (Amos 3:3).

Ray is generous—with his time and other resources. When I co-founded ProData Limited, a communication company that's engaged in media consultancy, reputation management and provision of market intelligence for paying clients, we needed a powerful brand to chair the board of the company. We did a mental tour of names and settled on Ray, with an outside chance that he would accept to carry our start-up on his sturdy shoulders. Ray agreed to be our chairman. It was a benevolence we have cherished till this day—a five-star international **journalist** chairing the board of our start-up at that time!

Ray is perhaps the best soft-spoken conversationalist around. When you're engaged with Ray, his scalpel-sharp wit and intellect shows through. And also his learning! I understand that just as Wole Soyinka, Ray reads like a magpie. Soyinka once told an interviewer that he reads everything and anything except mathematics.

Besides reading, the Ray essence is mediated by global influences that have percolated through his pores from international travels. Ray has visited more than 50 countries. His urbane personality and international outlook are forged by both a voracious reading habit and the experiences he has had from other civilisations around the world.

After making a roaring success of the road he had taken as a **journalist**, earning wages from employers for his work, Ray, along with his friends—**Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, Nigeria's Journalism Quartet—decided to move upstairs as an employer of labour.

He co-founded Newswatch, a trenchant newsmagazine that soon earned unrivalled industry reputation for investigative journalism and inimitable writing. The Quartet was following in the footsteps of John Payne Jackson, Horatio Agedah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sam Amuka-Pemu, all of them journalists who at some points in their careers decided to be publishers by founding their own newspapers.

Thus, during his career Ray has been a guru in both the newsroom and the boardroom. When the scorecard is drawn of Ray as a businessman and as a **journalist**, in which part of his duality would he be adjudged an out and out five-star general? The jury is still out, but I would be surprised if Ray the **journalist** would not do better than Ray the businessman.

### Ray is the reason I'm in Journalism

The honours Ray has received from home and abroad are well-earned. He has impacted the lives of many through his writing and outreach. Last year he did a yeoman's job to promote the existence and activities of Uyo Book Club, of which he holds a diamond membership.

For Raymond Amos Ekpu, it has been 75 years of impact and relevance. It's my pleasure and delight therefore to join his family and friends to wish him happy birthday anniversary celebrations. I look forward to many more birthday celebrations for Ray in perfect health and material wellbeing, our Ray of luminous, crunchy and relevant journalism.

In this article journalism

Ray Ekpu

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2022 GUARDIAN Newspapers.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

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## Who 'Killed' Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru?

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

May 28, 2021 Friday

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Length: 1078 words

### **Body**

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94 views | Ozodinukwe Okenwa | May 28, 2021

When the pioneer investigative journalist in Nigeria, Dele Giwa, was blown to smithereens by a letter-bomb delivered to his residence in Lagos by two Babangida loyalists, ex-SSS Director, Kunle Togun and DMI's Halilu Akilu one of the national dailies in Nigeria had asked repeatedly the question: "Who Killed Dele Giwa?". Though the question was never answered everyone had known all along who masterminded the Dele Giwa assassination and why. Between the dictator in power at that time, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida and the mysterious Ms Gloria Okon's narcotics peddling story the truth lies somewhere in-between. If Giwa had not been brutally taken down and out may be Babangida would have since become history.

State terrorism never started in Nigeria with the Giwa murder. Nor ended with the last October's #EndSARS Lekki Toll-Gate Lagos massacre. During the retired General Olusegun Obasanjo dictatorship, decades ago (following the Murtala Mohammed assassination) the late Afrobeat legend, Fela Kuti, suffered state terrorism culminating in the horrible murder of his beloved mother, Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti. When the so-called 'unknown soldiers' came calling they threw the old woman out from a second-floor window! She later died as a result of that heinous attack.

The late 'Abami Eda' was a thorn in the flesh of the military establishment then just as the late Giwa was about to make history by exposing a state secret involving international narcotics trade and its illicit proceeds and money laundering.

The present Buhari regime has committed a lot of state terrorism with impunity. Under PMB's watch the Shiites were massacred in their hundreds in Zaria, Kaduna state, by trigger-happy soldiers under the command of the former Chief of Army Staff, retired General Tukur Buratai, now an Ambassador. Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo killed hundreds at Zaki-Biam and Odi in Bayelsa state.

The immediate past Chief of Army Staff, (COAS) General Ibrahim Attahiru, along with other military personnel on his entourage and the crew members of an Air Force jet were all recently killed in a fatal air crash in Kaduna. The plane burnt itself to ashes! They were going to Zaria on an official assignment. Their barely-recognisable charred remains were buried in Abuja at the National Military Cemetery.

## Who 'Killed' Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru?

Neither the President, the Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces, Muhammadu Buhari, nor the Vice-President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, were present at the emotional funeral ceremony. The absence of the number one and two citizens sent tongues wagging as to the reason behind it all. Conspiracy theories emerged online as to the cause of the crash and why those at the zenith of power who should ordinarily be there were not there.

The Vice-President, Prof. Osinbajo, could be indisposed hence his conspicuous absence. Days after the burial of the dead military men the VP was seen in Lagos at the premises of Reddington Hospital for his annual medical checkup. While the President often visits London for his medical needs Osinbajo prefers the state of aquatic splendour for his medical evaluations. That is good enough, patronising Nigeria and Nigerian doctors!

For Mallam Garba Shehu, the controversial presidential spokesman, Buhari must have resolved not to pay the last honour to the fallen COAS because "he doesn't like this idea of closing roads, security men molesting people on the road for him to have the right of way". Laughable? And for Ms Lauretta Onochie, another media aide to President Buhari, for the Head of State to be in any national funeral outside the Villa there must be a 48 hours notice ahead of time! Risible?

Though investigation is said to be on-going to unravel the mystery behind the Kaduna air crash that sadly took the life of the COAS and others concerned Nigerians were asking probing questions as to the possible motive behind the crash. Was Gen. Attahiru 'liquidated' by other Generals who saw him as a threat to their Boko Haram 'business' or investments? A whole lot of money is being misappropriated or stolen outright by some high-ranking Army officers in a corrupt web of arms and ammunition purchase contracts.

But given the late COAS professionalism and apparent patriotism the season of the looting spree could have arrived at an abrupt end with him at the helm of the military affairs. As he took over last January he had raised an alarm over the billions of Dollars of military hardware contracts signed and paid for but not accounted for. The arsenal were nowhere to be found!

Besides, the National Security Adviser (NSA), Babagana Monguno, had during an interview with the BBC Hausa service echoed the same missing or undelivered ammunitions only for him to recant after possible pressure from certain quarters. He claimed later that he was quoted out of context on the allegations he made against the immediate past Service Chiefs.

So the crucial question: Was Gen. Attahiru (54) eliminated in order for the embezzlement to be covered up or for it to continue? Was he killed for the prosperous business of the war on terror to continue unabated? Who benefits from his permanent removal from the scene?

Another theory: Was Gen. Attahiru planning a coup against the incumbent President? And flowing from that insinuation and following intelligence reports could it be that he was softly taken out to forestall a manifestation of Abdul Fattah al-Sisi/Mohammed Morsi scenario in Egypt playing out in Nigeria? The late President Mohammed Morsi, it would be recalled, had appointed Gen. al-Sisi as his Army Chief and Defense Minister but the latter overthrew the former and decimated his Muslim Brotherhood group.

Was that the reason President Buhari boycotted the late COAS burial? Nobody knows for sure but there is room for conjecture. Buhari had been beaten before and stabbed in the back by his trusted lieutenants, Generals Ibrahim Babangida and the late Sani Abacha. So he may not want another 'Brutus' to repeat what happened before.

With rumours of coup enveloping the landscape lately could it be that the late General was set up by the cabal running and ruining Nigeria on behalf of President Buhari? There is urgent need for an impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the Kaduna crash.

May the soul of Lt-Gen Ibrahim Attahiru, the newly-wedded pilot, and other gallant officers who died in the air mishap rest in peace!

SOC Okenwa

Who 'Killed' Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru?

[soco\\_abj\\_2006\\_rci@hotmail.fr](mailto:soco_abj_2006_rci@hotmail.fr)

Ibrahim Attahiru

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2021

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## Prologue: A diary of wastage

The Nation (Nigeria)

May 30, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 996 words

### **Body**

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He was the very symbol of wastage: frail limbs, premature grey hair and a sagging gait. I had put him down as another specimen from our museum of atrocity. He seemed to have understood. As he took his leave, the wasted young man asked me the million dollar question: 'Why do we waste ourselves so much?' he cried.

The metaphor itself, I'm told, originated during our darkest national moment: the civil war. But its sad antecedents, I'm sure, must be located in the bitter and self-destructive post-independence politics of our founding fathers. Like a malignant cancer, it has overtaken every facet of our national life. Wastage has become the dominant metaphor, the all-embracing formula for the tragedy of our collective existence.

Wole Soyinka, ever the troubled prophet, first drew our attention to the creeping cancer in the mid-seventies. In a newspaper piece titled 'Varieties of Wastage,' Soyinka assailed the invasion of our national life by the culture of human wastage. We waste our best and brightest; our best and brightest politicians; our best and brightest soldiers; our best and brightest intellectuals; our best and brightest bankers; our best and brightest journalists etc. The road, taking its cue from the system, completes the carnage for us.

One year this week, a novel and spectacular variety of wastage made its debut on the national scene. **Dele Giwa**, brilliant editor and one of the stars of Nigerian journalism, was bombed out of existence in his study. This writer is often amazed these days when people talk glibly about the Nigerian bomb without first conceding that the real 'McCoy' made its sly and devastating entry several months ahead of the idle speculations.

It is pertinent to add here that nobody can fool history and that if care is not taken, that horrifying spectacle of a gifted and virile young man with shattered limbs may itself become an alternative metaphor for our national condition.

As the first anniversary of **Giwa**'s murder approached, I've been thrown into deep mourning and depression. Some days earlier, a good friend, Deji Adegorioye, who had gone to buy some drugs for his indisposed son had his life snuffed out by a bus belonging to the Celestial Church.

Some weeks before this, another friend, Tunde Okeleye, a Customs official, was battered to death by a danfo bus whose driver had perfected the murderous strategy of overtaking in the night with lights switched off. Death had

## Prologue: A diary of wastage

barely closed in on him before some brave new Nigerians saw it fit to remove his money, his shoes, his wristwatch and the drinks he bought for his kids.

As if all this was not enough burden on the soul, news came of the death by road accident of Professor Iluyomade, Oxford-trained law teacher and Attorney-General of Ondo State. Something always conspires to deny us of even our brief sources of joy, I thought in deep gloom.

I remembered how the **Dele Giwa** murder had put a dampener on the Wole Soyinka Nobel celebration. And now the cultured and lively people of Ondo town will have to share the joy of one of their illustrious sons winning the National Merit Award with the grief of burying another illustrious son.

These cruel tricks of fortune! Three weeks earlier, I was thinking of sending a telegram of congratulations to Chinua Achebe on his return to high form when I learnt of the death of Dambudzo Marechera, the gifted Zimbabwean writer. I had reckoned that Achebe who had survived a thousand literary cudgels after his immensely frank but immensely impolitic put-down of Obafemi Awolowo surely deserved some congratulations. But the death of Marechera, the supreme artist of hunger whose life must serve as a classic example of the dissolution of the flesh by spirit (whisky and co), halted me in my track.

These deaths make my mind to focus on the damage the notorious Ife-Ibadan road might have done to the intellectual development of this country. One now remembers the Bamiduros, the Kola Adenijis, the Taiye Adebanjos, brilliant men who have gone through all the rituals of education only to have their lives tragically terminated on The Road.

I remember now a tall, dashing young man who would have graduated with our class of '75 at Ife. Onome Ibru would have been an invaluable asset not only to the formidable Ibru Empire but to the entire country. His life was cruelly abridged on this monster of a road.

Now consider this. If one were to resurrect all the people we have put through the ceaseless mill of our unedifying history, all the brilliant men and women that our monstrous system has hurried over to the great beyond! What an endless procession of shame and misery would it have been! What a staggering burden of collective guilt for the living!

Let us end this sad piece with a disturbing but profoundly soothing anecdote. In the gloom and misery that enveloped the nation in the wake of **Giwa**'s murder, I had the honour of briefly participating in one of the planning sessions for his burial. In the atmosphere of consuming sadness, I had asked a **journalist** friend whether things would ever be the same again in the country. The man looked at me and said philosophically: 'In forty years' time, **Dele Giwa** will be remembered as a fearless **journalist** of the eighties'.

Then he told me a story about his father. The old man, sensing that he had only a few more months to spare, decided to take his son down the memory lane on a tour of familiar spots on the Lagos Island.

As they crossed from one alley to another, the old man's face would light with memory as they came upon some familiar land mark. 'That is the house of so and so', he would begin, 'he was a socialite who died mysteriously in 1947'. At another spot the old man would look up and remark: 'This is the house of J.K, he died in his prime in 1958'. And so on...

His message was clear. Life will go on. Life must go on. The only honour we, the dazed survivors, can do to the wasted is to resolve to change a system that is responsible for such colossal waste.

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2021



## Dele Giwa: Omeben is a liar –Tsav

The Sun (Nigeria)

November 6, 2015 Friday

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**Length:** 1402 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

### **Body**

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■ Ex-Lagos CP blasts former DIG BY TUNDE THOMAS Amid raging controversies over police investigations into the murder of the Founding Editor of NEWS-WATCH Magazine, **Dele Giwa**, a retired Commissioner of Police in Lagos State has described as un-true recent statements credited to a retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Chris Omeben that some top directors [...]

■ Ex-Lagos CP blasts former DIG

BY TUNDE THOMAS

Amid raging controversies over police investigations into the murder of the Founding Editor of NEWS-WATCH Magazine, **Dele Giwa**, a retired Commissioner of Police in Lagos State has described as un-true recent statements credited to a retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Chris Omeben that some top directors of NEWSWATCH prevented him from interrogating the then London Correspondent of the magazine, Mr Kayode Soyinka whom he believed had some questions to answer over the murder.

Omeben had last week in an interview accused two Directors of NEWS-WATCH, Messrs Ray Ekpu and Yaku-bu Muhammed of shielding Soyinka from being quizzed and investigated by the police as he was the only person with **Giwa** when the bomb that killed him exploded. Both men later denied the claims while accusing Omeben of fabricating falsehood.

Speaking with SATURDAY SUN's TUNDE THOMAS over the matter, Tsav who was then an Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of investigations at the time of the incident described Omeben as a liar and a confused old man.

## Dele Giwa: Omeben is a liar –Tsav

According to Tsav, Omeben's recent declaration on Dele Giwa's murder was a mere fallacy. He urged right thinking Nigerians not to take Omeben serious.

"I'm sorry to say this because Omeben happened to be my senior in the Force before both of us retired. But Omeben should be ashamed of himself for purveying falsehood over Giwa's murder. He said nothing but rubbish in his declaration. For a man who called himself a pastor to be lying says a lot about some people who parade themselves as men of God. Omeben should shut up instead of lying all over the place, and accusing others wrongly."

While throwing an open debate challenge to Omeben over the issue, Tsav said: "To set records straight, and for Nigerians to know the truth and nothing but the truth, I'm throwing an open challenge to Omeben over this issue because both of us were involved in investigations into Dele Giwa's murder. But what knowledge of the case does Omeben have than mere supervisory one because then he was an Assistant Inspector General of Police. But I was an Assistant Commissioner of Police then in charge of General Investigations Force CID Ikoyi, Lagos, and was directly and deeply involved in the investigation into Giwa's murder."

While adding that it was much later that Omeben came into the case, Tsav said initial investigation into the murder was carried out by the then Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abdullahi Kaltungo who later handed over to him.

"Kaltungo started the investigation but later handed over to me. But later, the then Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of Force CID, Victor Pam who later became Gwon Jos was transferred. Omeben replaced him, and even when he saw my reports he commended me, and that is why I'm surprised by Omeben's latest outbursts. I still maintain it, I'm personally through this medium requesting an open debate between my humble self and Omeben. The debate can take place in Abuja, Lagos or any place of Omeben's choice," he declared.

While insisting that Kayode Soyinka was not a prime suspect or has questions to answer contrary to Omeben's position, Tsav said: "I fear no human being and that is why I will continue to say nothing but the truth. When the bomb explosion that claimed Dele Giwa's life took place, the police of which I was an integral part then interrogated a lot of people including Kayode Soyinka, Billy, Dele Giwa's son, Florence Ita-Giwa including the gatekeeper at Dele Giwa's house. We also interrogated Dele Giwa's lawyer, late Gani Fawehinmi. We did a thorough job, and in the course of that investigation nothing showed us that Kayode Soyinka had a hand in the explosion. For Omeben to say that Soyinka has questions to answer, to me, is very uncharitable.

"Again, the question Nigerians should ask Omeben is this, if Soyinka has anything to do with the bomb or knows anything about it, would he have agreed to sit down in the same room with Dele Giwa when the deceased wanted to open the letter bomb? Only God knows what Omeben wanted to achieve by fabricating this falsehood. But I will say again that I'm shocked and surprised that Omeben who called himself a man of God can be involved in this kind of mischief."

While accusing Omeben of harbouring a hidden agenda over the issue, Tsav accused the ex-DIG of failing to honour Oputa Panel invitation in 2005 when he was summoned to explain what he knew about Giwa's murder while serving in the police force.

"Omeben shunned Oputa panel. He was summoned but he failed to turn up. But I was there on invitation, and I told the panel all I knew relating to police investigations into Dele Giwa's murder. That is to show you that Omeben is a hypocrite. Nigerians should not take him serious," he said.

Describing his experience while investigating the case as very challenging, Tsav said investigation into the case was complex because that was the first time a case of letter bomb explosion would take place in the country.

"Another aspect of the investigation that posed serious problem to the police was our inability to quiz some top military officers then including Colonel Ali Akilu, and Colonel To-gun. I wrote a letter to higher police authorities seeking permission to have these men quizzed, but I didn't get any reply until I retired from the force," he declared.

## Dele Giwa: Omeben is a liar –Tsav

On the clamour by some lawyers and human rights activists in the country that federal government should re-open investigation into the murder, Tsav said: "There is nothing wrong with that. Although, it is 30 years after now, it is okay if the culprits can be apprehended. Dele Giwa's family will be happy, and not only that many Nigerians will also be happy. But the first thing they should do is to look for the case file, then after that, the file should be handed over or sent to the Office of the Attorney-General of Lagos State for him to look at it and determine what next line of action to take. The Attorney-General of Lagos State should be the one to handle the case because the crime took place in Lagos, and not only that, Lagos State was also the capital of Nigeria at that time."

Imploring Omeben to take it easy as he is gradually ageing, Tsav said: "On a parting note, old age is good and everybody prays to live to attain old age. But old age should not be used to cause confusion, or division. It is better to keep quiet rather than make statements that are not only untrue but also capable of creating problems. Omeben as an active police officer was not well grounded in investigation matters. He was in the Special Branch of the Police Force for many years before he was redeployed to Investigations Department. He should not lay claim to those things he was not part of, and he should learn to give credit to whom it was due."

**Giwa**, a renowned *journalist* and one of the founding editors of NEWSWATCH magazine lost his life through a letter bomb explosion 29 years ago, and the culprits responsible for his untimely death are yet to be apprehended.

Since his gruesome death, members of his family and members of the human rights community have always been expressing the hope that the masterminds would be apprehended one day.

However, renewed public interest in Dele Giwa's murder was triggered two weeks ago following a claim by Omeben that two of the founding editors of NEWSWATCH, Messrs Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Muhammed frustrated his efforts to apprehend the killers following their refusal to release for interrogation, Mr Kayode Soyinka, the London Correspondent of NEWSWATCH magazine, a man he said he considered a prime suspect in the crime.

Omeben who recently turned 80 who spoke with the NEWS AGENCY OF NIGERIA, , accused Ekpu and Muhammed of facilitating Soyinka's escape from Nigeria to London instead of handing him over to the police for interrogation.

However both Ekpu and Soyinka had not only denied Omeben's claims but have also described Omeben as a liar.

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**Load-Date:** November 6, 2015

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## **Ugbekpe-Ekperi - Remembering Dele Giwa 29 Years After**

Leadership (Abuja)

October 31, 2015

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**Length:** 1485 words

**Byline:** Patrick Ochoga

### **Body**

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The people of Ugbekpe-Ekperi, the ancestral home of the late **Dele Giwa**, founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch Magazine who was killed when a parcel bomb was delivered to his home on 19th October, 1986, still mourn his death.

#### **LEADERSHIP Weekend's Patrick Ochoga**

who visited the community recently, writes.

Twenty nine years after the murder one of Nigeria's most iconic journalists and the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch Magazine, **Dele Giwa** through a parcel bomb on October, 19th October 1986 at the young age of 39, the incident still remains a huge loss for the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Also, as circumstances surrounding his untimely death remain a mystery, with the security agencies and government yet to bring the culprits behind the murder to book, family members and his kinsmen of Ugbekpe-Ekperi Kingdom in Etsako Central Local Government Area of Edo State are still hurting 29 years after.

For his kinsmen, the anniversary of his death evokes the stark reality of the many unresolved high profile murders by alleged government agents or their proxies.

When LEADERSHIP Weekend visited late **Dele's Giwa**'s family house in Ugbekpe-Ekperi, the compound appeared devoid of its usual bustle, as only a handful of visitors were sighted coming in and out of it.

It was however gathered that most of the immediate relations of the late **journalist** live in Lagos and overseas. One of the few still living in the compound is a distant relation who identified herself simply as Ramatu. She lamented that despite the failure of government to unmask the killers of **Giwa**, the family is consoled by the fact that God will expose his killers.

"Each time people come here to speak about our brother I feel very sad because it is exactly 29 years now that he was killed with a bomb because he was doing his job, while the culprits are somewhere living their own lives and enjoying themselves. But we are consoled by the fact that God will one day expose those behind his death. We are not happy at all that our benefactor was taken away from us by evil people," she lamented.

## Ugbekpe-Ekperi - Remembering Dele Giwa 29 Years After

When **Giwa** was assassinated, he left behind an aged mother, who is now 84 years old, two younger brothers and three sisters.

The five siblings of the late pioneer editor-in-chief of Newswatch are Tunde and Biodun (both based in the United States), Hauwa Omomohle, Ronke Habibat Aboaba and Fatima Musa.

He is also survived by Funmi, his widow, three sons and two daughters.

Billy, his first son, who was then a student of the University of Jos, was only 19 years old when his father was brutally killed.

Incidentally, Billy, a graduate of English, who has been resident in the United Kingdom for more than a decade, was the person who received the killer parcel bomb from Musa Zibo, the security guard, and handed it over to **Giwa** in the study, unknown to him that it was the harbinger of his father's death. Billy's two other younger brothers whose mother is an American are **Dele** Jnr. and Tunde Jnr., while **Giwa**'s two daughters are Funmi, who is now a lawyer and Ayodele Aishat, who was about a year old when her father was assassinated.

The traditional ruler of the community, the Ijegbai of Ekperi Kingdom, Alhaji Deke Kanoba, while reflecting over the sad incident, said it is only in Nigeria that such a murder could happen without a concerted effort to bring the perpetrators to book, adding "Nigerians know the quarters from which the bomb came from."

Alhaji Kanoba said the late **Giwa** was an icon for the people of Ekperi land owing to his contribution to the profession of journalism.

He recounted "I must say that the Ekperi people are at loss each time we remember our brother. It is sad that we have a very porous justice system in Nigeria. It is not as if people don't know who sent the bomb to kill **Dele Giwa**. This cannot happen in other climes without the relevant agencies getting to root of the matter."

While giving a historical background of the **Giwa**'s family as told by his late father who was the Ijegbai of Ekperi Kingdom, Kanoba stated: "We are at least comforted that the Giwas realised that they are from Ekepri. **Dele**'s father actually grew up in the palace of the Ooni of Ife and that was why they nicknamed the father **Giwa** (the fathers real name was Bagudu). It was in Ife they gave him the name **Giwa**. We not happy that government has not done anything for the community, it is quite unfortunate," The traditional ruler lamented.

He said that the people of Ekperi are always thrown into mourning whenever they remember his tragic demise because they have not been able to fill the gap his death created.

"Though, we do not know the killers, I know God knows them and one day, God will expose them, because there is nothing God cannot do. We still have faith that one day, the killers will face the full wrath of the law," he said.

A community leader, Steve Momodu who hails from Ekperi, described **Giwa** as a pride of the people of Ekperi and Nigeria at large.

"He is somebody that was humble, honest and respectable. **Dele Giwa** meant a lot to us and as we speak now, his person is immortalised in our hearts because he is one of the trailblazers in Ekperi. You cannot write the history of Ugbekpe-Ekperi today without mentioning **Dele Giwa**. In fact, his name would be in history not only in Ekperi but also in Edo, Delta and, of course Nigeria; because you cannot write anything about journalism in Nigerian without mentioning **Dele Giwa**. So, he means so much to us and our people will continue to honour him even now that he is no longer alive," he said.

He however, regretted that the late **Giwa** has been forgotten by those in authority despite the fact that he laid the foundation for the robust journalism practice that has helped enhance democracy in the country today.

"You know that Nigerians hardly celebrate the dead. They are only good at showing sycophancy when you are there but once the person is gone, he will be forgotten.

## Ugbekpe-Ekperi - Remembering Dele Giwa 29 Years After

"To be very candid, I think **Dele Giwa** has not been fairly recognised because he is one of those who promoted the entrenchment of the democracy that we are enjoying today. Part of his drive was to see that there was sanity in the system and that there was political order in the country and that was why his life was terminated. So, I think that the government of the day should begin to look into how to recognise our son who fought and won the democracy we have today, even though he is not alive right now."

On his part, a human rights activist, Aliu Ozioruva, said **Dele Giwa** represents the new face of journalism in Nigeria, adding the late **journalist** "brought a new perspective of boldness, knack for in-depth reports and analysis into the journalism profession. He successfully built on the foundation the likes of Lateef Jakande, Pa Ajose and others of that generation had laid."

"He was able to lift the profession to the level where it actually became the mirror of the society especially with its social responsibility of setting agenda for the authority, regulating the society and ability to speak to truth. He represents what I call the bridge between the old and new in journalism, especially with his training in the United States where freedom and equality was their watchword.

"**Dele Giwa** brought the mentality to the journalism profession where the authority was continuously queried and scrutinised. Though it is believed that such characteristics also contributed to his death, many journalists were also encouraged by that boldness to stand by the truth even in the face of oppression, incarceration, maiming and killings."

He lamented that "the Nigerian state has not been fair to him and his legacies. It is unfortunate that as at today, 29 years after his death, the investigation on the circumstances surrounding his death remain inconclusive.

"All we have heard has been different versions of how the parcel was delivered, how in the process of opening it, it exploded, how **Dele Giwa** had expressed fears few days earlier that his life was in danger.

But indications point to the fact that his death may have been sponsored by the state, considering that fact that as at the time of the events, Nigeria was under a military dictatorship.

"We have had various reports from former serving police officers on how their investigations were truncated abruptly without reasons been given. What the state should do, especially now that we are in democracy, is for the government to re-open the investigation. You will recall that late Gani Fawehinmi tried until his death to ensure justice for **Giwa** and the journalism profession. The last effort was his presentation to the Oputa Panel, the report of which remains one of the various documents available for government to work with. I will also charge the leadership of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to take it as a responsibility to ensure justice for **Dele Giwa**, his family, journalists and journalism," he added.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2015

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## **Return of Newswatch, Victory For Dele Giwa Ray Ekpu**

PM News

October 21, 2014 Tuesday

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Length: 886 words

### **Body**

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Henry Ojelu, Daniel Ekugo

Ray Ekpu

Veteran journalist and one of the founding members of Newswatch publication title, Ray Ekpu has described the court verdict which upturned the takeover of the publication by Barrister Jimoh Ibrahim, as victory for the late founding editor, Dele Giwa.

The purchase deal of the publication by controversial businessman, Jimoh has been a subject of litigation as some minority shareholders of the publication queried his full takeover of the company.

The minority shareholders who filed the suit were Mr. Nuhu Aruwa and Prof. Jibril Aminu while the respondents were Newswatch Communications Limited, Global Media Mirror Limited, Jimoh Ibrahim, Newswatch Newspapers and Corporate Affairs Commission.

Ruling on the suit yesterday, Justice Buba Ibrahim, of the Federal High Court, sitting in Lagos upturned the Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) which transferred ownership of Newswatch Communications Limited to Global Media Mirror Limited owned by businessman, Jimoh Ibrahim.

The court also awarded N15.7 million damages against Jimoh Ibrahim and other co-defendants as well as an order halting further publications of Newswatch Daily among other reliefs sought by the petitioners.

Jimoh Ibrahim

Reacting to the development Ray Ekpu attributed the judgment to the spirit of their late co-founder Dele Giwa whose dead anniversary was celebrated on Sunday, October 19.

The late Dele Giwa was killed via a letter bomb in home Lagos resident on Sunday of October 19, 1986

Ekpu described Jimoh Ibrahim alleged takeover of the Newswatch title as pure fraud and an attempt to destroy the legacy of the publication founders

What Jimoh did was typical 419. And there is nothing to worry about because this judgement, has nullified what ever judgement he had."

## Return of Newswatch , Victory For Dele Giwa Ray Ekpu

Ekpu who further described Jimoh as an insincere person said the businessman had in an advertorial some time last year claimed that he bought The Newswatch 51 per cent share because of the late Dele Giwa.

He said he bought the publication because of Dele Giwa. How could that happen? It's ok for him to lay claims of association with Dele Giwa. But I knew that Dele Giwa would be turning in his grave that this man wasn't what he said he was. We just laughed, because throughout all of those negotiations, he never mentioned Dele Giwa," he said.

Noting that: When we gave our own response it was titled: Mr Jimoh Ibrahim's Litany of Lies which was robust. He chickened out after our response because it was all lies."

Ekpu said he felt sorry for the hundreds of the current Newswatch staff who will be out of job soon as court would soon appoint a receiver manager for the publication.

He has bills to pay to us. Our external auditor said he was making about N5 million per month starting from the October period he shut it down. He is supposed to pay the company, that was part of the judgement," Ekpu stated

In yesterday' judgment, Justice Buba said that the respondents could not prove that they paid up for the shares. The Petitioners gave evidence to show that the second to third Respondents have blatantly failed to pay for the Shares in the Company. They have not showed how and when they paid for the said Shares. Nothing in paragraph 11 and 18A of the Respondents' Statement of Defence shows how they have paid for the Shares. There is no evidence in paragraph 3.0 that the Respondents have paid on or before 5th May, 2011.

The Respondents have only given their interpretation to that paragraph. Whatever monies they spent was spent on Daily Mirror and was confirmed by DW2 during cross examination. The N510million was supposed to be paid for Shares and not for any other purpose, there is no evidence to show that the Shares have been paid for. Besides, it was a company called Global Fleet' that paid the N14million, not any of the respondents who contracted with the first respondent", the judge ruled.

Justice Buba stated that the case of the Petitioners have merits. The court grants all the reliefs as set out on the petition at the inception of this case as follows: an order setting aside the contract entered into between the first and and Respondent Companies by virtue of document titled "Share Purchase Agreement" between Newswatch Communications Limited "Seller" and Global Media Mirror Limited "Buyer" and executed by the parties therein on or about May, 2011.

A Consequential Order setting aside the Form CAC2 Statement of Share Capital and Return of Allotment of Shares of the 1st Respondent company dated the 27th day of August, 2012 presented for filing by one Gloria A. Ukeje.

An Order directing the 2nd and 3rd Respondent jointly and severally to pay special damages in the sum of N15.7million to the 1st Respondent Company being loss of Business profits since August 2012 till October 2012 when the 1st Respondent's operations were unilaterally shut down by the 2nd and 3rd Respondents and to pay an average sum of N5million per month for every month that the 1st Respondent is shut down without production of its weekly magazine until the determination of this Suit."

The court held that it has come to the inevitable conclusion that the petitioners have discharged the burden placed on them and have proved their case while the first to fourth Respondents have failed woefully to discharge the burden placed on them.

**Load-Date:** October 21, 2014



## Dele Giwa: Among Marwa, Amoda and Ogunade

The Sun (Nigeria)

December 20, 2016 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1003 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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By Durotimi Daramola About three weeks ago, I was home in the evening glued to the television to follow

By Durotimi Daramola

About three weeks ago, I was home in the evening glued to the television to follow developments around the globe when my phone beeped. By the time I checked, it was a broadcast on one of the WhatsApp chat platforms that I belong to. Instantly, the caption of the post got my attention: "30 years after, the long-awaited confirmation about Dele Giwa's death."

As someone who has spent years in the intelligence and law enforcement community, I became inquisitive and wanted to read through the post to see if there were hard facts there. At the end, I was not only disappointed but also angry that the post was based on allegations made in an interview by one Dr. Taiyemiwo Ogunade some years ago.

An attempt by me to do a background check on the said Ogunade did not only yield volumes about his person but I was also able to establish through available materials that he was on a vendetta mission when he granted the interview back in 2009. But what manner of bitterness would make a man make two grievous allegations against two eminent Nigerians, respected professor of Political Economy, Muyibi Amoda, and the acclaimed, brilliant, retired General Buba Marwa, who had distinguished himself in the military and governance?

Ogunade had linked both gentlemen to an alleged \$30 million grant deal in New York City College and Marwa to the death of celebrated journalist Dele Giwa, based on a story he claimed he heard from some soldiers several years ago. Both Ogunade and Amoda had worked at New York City College but the institution later sacked Ogunade.

## Dele Giwa: Among Marwa, Amoda and Ogunade

Amoda provided the most profound response to Ogunade's obvious lies and as such I would like to quote a portion here before drawing conclusions:

"Ogunade implies that the negotiation between Brig-General Marwa and the City College was mediated by me; that I persuaded the college to receive the grant; but because of his protests, the college fired him and returned the money to Brig-General Marwa. This aspect of the story I can categorically state as a figment of a pathologically confused imagination. I never met Brig-General Marwa at City College or anywhere as the emissary of President Moses.

"Ogunade asserts that money was received by the college and that presumably would be through me. There was no such giving and receiving of \$30 million at City College; City College returned no such grant, which should have been a grant to the Department of Black Studies of which I was the chair. There was, therefore, no such \$30 million, which was returned to Brig-General Marwa; there was no such money, which was not returned to the treasury of the Nigerian government. "The City College drama in which President Moses, Amoda and Marwa featured was an evil invention of Ogunade. No such thing happened under President Moses and during my tenure as the Chair of Black Studies. If Ogunade could create such a story from his imaginings, can anyone doubt that his story about **Dele Giwa** is no invention?"

The reappearance of the discredited 2009 interview by Ogunade, in a manner that suggests it as new in December 2016 is worrisome. It is clearly a malicious attempt by person(s) to undermine the credibility of the two eminent personalities, assail the psyche of discerning minds and also malign the reputation of well-meaning Nigerians.

As a Nigerian, this obvious, deliberate and calculated attempt to taint the reputation of fellow citizens bothers me, hence my intervention. These falsehoods are malicious and concerning in equal measure.

Besides, memos published by Amoda also confirmed that he exchanged correspondence with General Chris Garuba and not Marwa, who had by then left as Nigeria's Defence Attaché to the UN.

Place the above side by side with this statement issued by Marwa's aide in 2009: "It is on record that, between 1983 and July 1986, Marwa was away in Harvard and University of Pittsburgh, USA, for post-graduate studies. Upon his return to Nigeria, he was posted to take command of the 233 Tank Battalion, Bauchi, in August 1986. That year, the battalion was selected for a test exercise, which is a rigorous military training that took place between August and November 1986.

"So, it is absurd and unimaginable that Ogunade will link Marwa, who was leading a training exercise for his battalion in faraway Bauchi, to the death of **Dele Giwa** in Lagos State. This is a callous story and deliberate falsehood.

"Beside his futile attempt to link Marwa to the death of **Dele Giwa**, Ogunade went ahead to narrate how Marwa signed a \$30 million contract with the City University, New York, on behalf of the Nigerian government.

"Again, for the benefit of Nigerians, Marwa has NEVER met Ogunade anywhere neither did he sign any such contract with this college. As such, there was no basis for sharing any money that never existed. This is absolutely a fabrication."

But Ogunade's interview is not simply a botched, malicious attack on Amoda and Marwa's reputation, it is worse. It is moral obscenity and a malicious hijack of a **Giwa** family tragedy. The facts on the ground include:

Newswatch Magazine, founded by **Dele Giwa**, awarded Marwa "Nigerian Man of the Year, 1997." There was demonstrably no bad blood.

Even if one were to accept the military's involvement, a Lieutenant Colonel (Marwa's rank at the time) would have been too senior to serve as errand boy. In any case, Marwa was already a public figure and would have been easily recognised by the **Giwa** household.

Just as consequential, the lead investigator of **Giwa**'s murder case, former Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Chris Omeben, conducted a lineup of suspects at the time, and none had anything with or resemblance to Marwa. Ogunade actually thinks it believable that Nigerian military officials would travel to New York and share what would be classified information with him. Why, as who, as what?

Dele Giwa: Among Marwa, Amoda and Ogunade

- Daramola sent this piece from Area 3, Abuja

**Load-Date:** December 20, 2016

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## What a murderer said

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 9, 2022 Tuesday

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**Length:** 427 words

### **Body**

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MY Lord, in our country, there are many assassinations, but nobody is doing something about it.' This was an unexpected and thought-provoking remark by Uduak Akpan, following his conviction for murder.

The State High Court in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, on August 4, sentenced him to death by hanging. He had been accused of raping and killing a female job seeker, Iniubong Umoren, in April last year. The judge said the prosecution had proved the charges beyond doubt.

Akpan was accused of raping and killing Umoren on the outskirts of Uyo after he lured her to his family house with a fake job offer. Her remains were buried in a shallow grave at the place.

A report said the judge had asked Akpan if he would like to say 'something' to the court after his conviction. 'My Lord, I am not guilty,' he was reported to have responded. But the judge was said to have told him that the court had passed that stage, adding that the convict should say 'something' related to the case.

Akpan then made an observation on assassinations in the country. It is unclear why he made the remark, and what he expected to achieve by saying what he said.

It is curious that the convicted murderer seemed to have lamented the number of unresolved assassinations in the country. It was an unlikely lamentation from an unlikely source.

: UPDATED: Court sentences job seeker Umoren's murderer to death

But his comment deserves attention. His status as a condemned criminal does not detract from the credibility of his observation. It is true that there have been many unresolved murders in different parts of the country, including assassinations.

Notably, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, in its 2021 Global Assassination Monitor, said no fewer than 184 persons were assassinated by hit men in Nigeria and some other African countries in the period 2019 and 2020.

### What a murderer said

The victims, according to the report, fell into eight target categories: politics and governance; local community; security; illicit markets; media; criminal justice; the private sector and the international community.

In Africa, the report said, 51 persons were killed in the local community; 57 in politics and governance; 28 in security; seven in illicit markets; five in the media; 10 in the criminal justice system; 12 in the private sector; and six in the international community.

Akpan's observation is relevant. Indeed, it can be described as a call to action. Hardball remembers the unresolved assassination of the **journalist Dele Giwa**, in 1986, and the politician Bola Ige, in 2001, for instance.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2022

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## Why I turned down IGP's secret invitation - Sunday Igboho

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 2, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 254 words

**Byline:** Ajiri Daniels

### **Body**

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From Oluseye Ojo, Ibadan

Popular Yoruba activist, Chief Sunday Adeyemo, fondly called Sunday Igboho, has given reasons why he turned down secret invitation sent to him by the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, to the Force Headquarters in Abuja.

The spokesperson for Igboho, Olayomi Koiki, who spoke via a video clip that has gone viral on the social media, said the invitation from IGP was brought to his principal's residence in Ibadan on Thursday, this week, by six police officers.

Koiki explained that the rejection of the letter was predicated on the grounds that prior experiences in the country showed that it's dangerous to receive such letter privately. He recalled a frontline journalist, Dele Giwa, received a letter bomb in 1986 and lost his life to it when he opened it.

He stated further that some months ago, his house was razed by some unknown arsonists and that he was attacked by some men in uniform on his way to Lagos, few weeks ago. He added that his mother's house was also attacked by some suspected herdsmen few weeks ago.

According to him, some men in military uniform allegedly surveying his house were also caught some days ago. But on Thursday, some police officers stormed his house to give him a letter of invitation to Abuja.

Koiki, however, stated that Igboho would honour the invitation if the IGP makes the invitation public so that members of the public would know whatever is going on.

Why I turned down IGP's secret invitation - Sunday Igboho

The post Why I turned down IGP's secret invitation - Sunday Igboho appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2021

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## **'Our history is rotting away': the newspaper archivists preserving Nigeria's past**

The Guardian (London)

August 10, 2023 Thursday 6:00 AM GMT

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# the guardian

**Section:** GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT; Version:1

**Length:** 671 words

**Byline:** Ope Adetayo in Lagos

**Highlight:** Coups, civil wars, dictators, democracy ... all the headlines that tell the country's story since independence in 1960 are to be saved for posterity by an ambitious archive project

### **Body**

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In a quiet office in Lekki, an affluent suburb of Lagos, Nigeria, Boyega Adediran gingerly opens a 1997 copy of [PM News](#) and places a double-page spread on a large flatbed scanner. The newspaper was founded in 1994 but stopped printing physical copies in 2015.

Scans of the fragile pages are quality checked by Grace Abraham and saved to a server that currently holds more than 50,000 pages of what will become Nigeria's first interactive digital newspaper archive.

A nonprofit startup called [Archivi.ng](#) is attempting to digitise every edition of every newspaper – 50 in all – published in Nigeria since 1 January 1960, the year of independence from Britain.

The archive will launch its first tranche of documents in September. Dozens of volunteers have already spent months scouring libraries and meeting with publishers to get copies of old papers.

"Nigerian history is inaccessible online, and the greatest repository of that history is old newspapers," says Fu'ad Lawal, the founder of Archivi.ng. "The newspapers from our history are rotting away in libraries and private archives, and our mission is to stop the erasure and recapture all the history before we lose them for ever."

Allegra Ayida, a Nigerian doctoral researcher in history at Yale University who hopes to use the archive when it launches, says: "This exciting project fills an important gap in both accessibility and centralisation of a large volume of information."

'Our history is rotting away': the newspaper archivists preserving Nigeria's past

"The potential of having a newspaper archive since independence would allow the tracing of Nigerian history across 60 years in a country that has had 15 different leaders, five military coups, a bitter civil war, an annulled election, an interim administration and a brutal dictatorship," she says.

Since independence, history has been removed then reintroduced to the school curriculum, depending on who was in power in Nigeria's revolving door of military dictatorships before democracy was restored in 1999.

In 2009, under President Yar'Adua, history was removed from the curriculum, ostensibly because there were not enough teachers. Last year, the then president, Muhammadu Buhari, [made the subject compulsory again](#).

Lawal has been surprised by the level of detail printed about the military coups and how much resistance there was among editors. Newspaper offices would often be raided or shut down by the government, and journalists faced intimidation, arrest and even death. One celebrated [journalist, Dele Giwa, was killed](#) by a parcel bomb in 1986 during Ibrahim Babangida's presidency.

The best that has happened to us is democracy. There is so much we don't know about the fine details of those times

Fu'ad Lawal, Archivi.ng founder

"The biggest discovery is not a single story. It is a series of events, the zeitgeist," Lawal says. "We know so little about the amount of resistance that the military government met. So when Nigerians say, 'We need someone with strong hands', I say we don't. The best thing that has happened to us is democracy. There is so much we don't know about the fine details of those times, and how they shaped our present."

Lawal believes a lack of publicly accessible historical data contributed to [Buhari's return to power in 2015](#). He previously ruled between 1983 and 1985 following a military coup.

"Without documentation, we have false nostalgia because if you looked at Buhari's eight years [in his second term], it's like entering a deep cryogenic sleep in 1985 and waking up in 2015. He just continued where he stopped in terms of policies and governance," says Lawal.

Archivi.ng raised \$15,000 in public donations for the archive, but needs \$100,000 to complete the project.

The biggest challenge, however, is navigating Nigeria's intellectual property law, which classifies newspapers as "literary works", meaning reproduction of any kind needs the publishers' permission. According to Lawal, some have been reluctant to help.

"We are doing the infrastructural work, we are digging the well [of information] for people to come and fetch," he says.

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2023



## At Babangida's 80th Birthday Lecture, Panelists Address His Challenges

This Day (Lagos)

August 13, 2021

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**Length:** 1204 words

**Byline:** Chuks Okocha

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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Some elder statesmen and eminent Nigerians, many of whom played key roles in the administration of former Military President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, have come out to address some of the age-long thoughts about his leadership, with a view to owning their own narrative.

Those who took the pain to explain away some of the issues that have stigmatised Babangida included a former Head of State, Abdulsalami Abubakar; a member of the defunct Armed Forces Ruling Council, Gen. Haliru Akilu, and a member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees (BoT), Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu.

They addressed issues as the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, the mindless killing of a renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, and the killing of Mamman Vasta in the wake of the foiled 1996 coup.

They all spoke at the maiden edition of IBB legacy dialogue, which is one of the products of the IBB and Maryam Babangida Presidential Library. The colloquium was designed as part of events to mark Babangida's 80th birthday coming up next Tuesday, August 17.

Generally, the speakers called on leaders across the country to emulate the inclusive leadership qualities of the former military president in managing Nigeria's multi-ethnic polity and raised concern over the retrogression of intellectualism in governance.

They also expressed concern about poor handling of Nigeria's multi-ethnic nature, and set the agenda for the future. They said future leaders of the country should have a broad network of friends across the country in order to ascertain the true situation of things across Nigeria.

Reflecting on his relationship with Babangida, Iwuanyanwu, who echoed the need for inclusive government, however, defended IBB over June 12 annulment and described the news that he killed Dele Giwa as fake.

Iwuanyanwu stated, "I am not worried about the stories about IBB. A leader must be swift to respond to false comments about him. That story on Dele Giwa is fake news. not properly responded to."

"On the cancellation of the June 12 election, none of the council members protested or resigned, because of the cancellation of the result. Maybe after this, the narrative will improve."

## At Babangida's 80th Birthday Lecture, Panelists Address His Challenges

Iwuanyanwu, who said IBB impressed him as a friend and leader in many dimensions, hailed his inclusive leadership abilities in a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria.

While appreciating his leadership qualities, Iwuanyanwu said, "When you assume leadership of a multi-ethnic country, you must carry everybody along."

He urged secessionist groups to desist from stoking the embers of war, noting that having experienced war just like Babangida, it was not a tea party.

Iwuanyanwu said, "We are warning the younger ones causing trouble, it is not a tea party. I fought in the war and he (Babangida) fought and we suffered injuries." He added that when Babangida came to power, he assured those who fought the war on the side of Biafra of inclusion and "he made it real."

Iwuanyanwu explained, "He (Babangida) had people of all parts working for him. It is an example other leaders must learn. He didn't neglect any ethnic group; he carried them all along. To have confidence in a people called rebels is why Igbos have confidence in IBB. He married our daughter. He gave us respect."

The PDP BoT member recalled that Babangida founded the Raw Materials Development Council in order to address the way foreigners were exporting raw materials from the country.

Recalling how the former president spent the whole day at his hometown in Imo State, when he buried his father, Iwuanyanwu said, "He is an excellent leader. He is being misrepresented. All leaders are misrepresented. But it is for the leader to tell his story if he does not tell it others will tell it for him. He should say with joy that I came, saw and conquered."

Akilu, on his part, defended IBB over the killing of Vasta.

He said, "As for those bringing the case of Vasta, they should go and dig deeper and find out what happened. We were there and we had a tribunal that looked into the case. If Gen Vasta were innocent, nobody would have convicted him. Unfortunately, he was the most senior officer behind the attempted coup in 1986. So, people should not jump to conclusions."

Akilu said he was attracted to Babangida during the civil war, when Babangida, as a young military officer, defended a junior officer from a bully military officer.

"There was an incident that attracted me to him. He stood up for a junior officer, who was being bullied. He cared for the junior officers working under him," he said.

He described Babangida as a gifted person, who is kind to a fault. Akilu recalled how the former military president gave out his only car to a friend, who needed it.

Akilu said, "His loyalty to his friends is legendary. He will never betray you no matter what. He will never forsake his friends. If you are his friend, he will never abandon you."

He lamented the failure of successive administrations to follow in the steps of Babangida in building more barracks for the military so that the military will have comfort.

"I thought that successive administrations would build more barracks but no additional barracks have been built for the military."

Akilu decried the lack of maintenance of the federal secretariat, which was built by the Babangida regime.

On the relocation of the federal capital territory from Lagos to Abuja, Akilu said, "He was courageous to take the right decision at the right place and time even when many of us were saying it was not the right time."

In his contribution on "how he built his tribe", Abubakar, extolled the virtues of the former military president and underscored the need for leaders in the country to carry everybody along in a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria.

### At Babangida's 80th Birthday Lecture, Panelists Address His Challenges

Abubakar, while underscoring the leadership qualities that endeared Babangida to many Nigerians, said, "Once you are a leader, everybody is yours. You are supposed to look after the welfare of all of them."

Abubakar, who recalled his early childhood years with Babangida, said the former military president displayed leadership qualities from a young age, serving as class monitor in primary school and later as head boy in secondary school.

Regretting that the Babangida was one of the most misunderstood Nigerians, Abubakar noted that Babangida has the love of Nigeria at heart.

He reflected on the institutions established under the Babangida administration, adding that Nigerians are now reaping the fruits of the numerous agencies created under his watch.

The former head of state said, "IBB has the love of the country in his heart. He is one of the most misunderstood Nigerians but by and large, you can see that what he has established over the years; we are seeing the benefits. Abuja is one of the greatest and fastest growing capitals in the world. He is quite accommodating and generous to a fault. He can deprive himself to make sure someone is okay."

Other dignitaries at the event included former governor of Niger State, Babangida Aliyu; former Senate President David Mark; former Minister of Information, Prof. Jerry Gana; former Minister of Education, Prof Tunde Adeniran; media mogul and Chairman of Daar Communication Group, Raymond Dopkesi; and Gen Olagunsoye Oyinlola.

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2021

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## Kaleidoscope: an artist's rite of passage

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 30, 2022 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1151 words

### **Body**

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July 27. Like a general being pulled out after eons on the battle front, Toni Anthony Ogunde began the first stage of his exit from the Yaba Art front, at 65, in 2023.

The curators dubbed the show 'Kaleidoscope: An exhibition and discourse on the practice of Toni Anthony Ogunde'. It was at the Yusuf Grillo Art Gallery, Yaba College of Technology (Yabatech), Nigeria's first-ever tertiary institution.

Kaleidoscope was, indeed, an art exhibition of history, trends, culture, evolution and well, deep and punishing thinking, though expressed in strokes of all moods: colourful and bright; dark and dank.

But on the day, another epic irony played out: a regal custodian of African tradition was a victim of 'African time' - a contemporary vice, though blamed on Africa's past.

Indeed, in Camara Laye's *The Raddiance of the King*, the author tried to romanticize the flexible African concept of time, in the Euro-African culture clash of that novel.

But here, an African King, real life, chaffed at that notoriety of non-punctuality, which the modern elite nevertheless blithely blame on their 'African' past. On that, they expect everyone to understand.

Well, Oba Adebisi Okubanjo, the Obiri of Ayepe-Ijebu, in Ogun State, didn't - and he showed it with dignified royal unease. To honour the celebrator, a boyhood friend and classmate at the Odogbolu Grammar School, Odogbolu (OGS), he had left his kingdom at around 6:30 am, for an event slated for 11 am.

When Ripples breezed into the venue, roughly around 11 am, the Kabiyesi was already seated. Light music was on; and guests were already filling up the space. Yet, the event was nowhere near starting - the lateness blamed on some clash of meetings.

Oba Okubanjo was billed to attend a 1 pm meeting at the palace of the Awujale of Ijebu Ode, the paramount ruler of the Ijebu. But to accommodate his Lagos Kaleidoscope engagement, he had asked that the meeting be pushed to 3 pm.

## Kaleidoscope: an artist's rite of passage

Yet, it was well-nigh 1 pm - almost two hours late - and the Kabiyesi still patiently waited. Meanwhile, Alaba Olusoga and Ripples, made up the OGS early birds. Deji Cole, another old mate, would breeze in much later.

Mercifully, the event started around 1 pm, after Obafemi Omokungbe, an engineer and Yabatech Rector, strode in. It was the sole dark patch on an otherwise glorious day.

But even as the wait wore on, a video clip served the guests what would pass for Toni Anthony's answer to James Joyce's alter-ego biography: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

As soft music played, the clips beamed the many landmarks, personal and career, of the artist and dress non-conformist - the bohemian ethos of the artists' commune.

Even then, one clip stood out: the artist's meeting with the Great Alhaji Lateef Jakande, iconic journalist and visionary 2nd Republic Lagos Governor.

It was ode to glorious symbiosis - the artist impacting his environment as much as the environment had impacted him. That, of course, was the 'meat' of the rich visual exhibition to shortly follow.

From the starting point, though late, Kaleidoscope offered nothing but sumptuous and filling visual feast.

For starters, the exhibitor's many monikers were as kaleidoscopic as his bewildering oeuvre of cross-media art: Ogunde. Otunba. Comrade. King of boys. Toni Anthony. Salt of the soil ... all endearing terms.

To be sure, Ogunde is no alias. That's his real name: Anthony Bandele Ogunde. But perhaps only the Oko-Oke boys, his old classmates, would call him that: just Ogunde.

Not Dele, his first name. Never Anthony, his baptismal - who even knew that, at the bloom of boyhood; at the cusp of teens: the age of questioning and experimentation; the epoch of rebellion?

The monikers belonged to a latter era: the Yaba years. Ogunde's elder brother testified at the event that 'King of Boys' might have dated back to his sibling's student days, when he lived in the boys' quarters of an uncle's official quarters, on the Yabatech campus - a facility the free and feisty soul threw open to all and sundry.

Otunba. Salt of the soil. Toni Anthony would later segue into the artist's large presence, on Yaba Art's very wide canvas, in the unending dialogue between the Gown, from where Toni Anthony's strokes jutted out; and the Town, the community that the painter moulded into endless experimentations and improvisations, as decreed by his creative muse, in bouts after bouts of creative perspiration.

That much was clear from the pieces of audacious art on display.

The very first, 'Kuru pa kuru', beams ram fighting, a sporty yet dangerous treat on the Lagos landscape - cultural kaleidoscope? - each time the Ileya Muslim festival was in the air.

Now, that could be lethal sports! Many a youth preened and crowed over their champion ram, which somehow had out-butted and subdued others. But other youths sometimes turned their festive homes into grief when it all turned fatal - and their ill-fated ram, near-fatally butted, is rushed to the slaughter, with life seeping out of it!

The artist captured that grim, bitter-sweet drama in simple black-and-white strokes.

But perhaps the most densely poetic, yet ultra-simple in colourful strokes, is 'Dele-Cases' - the tragedy of three 'Deles', as creatively captured by another Dele, from his artistic observatory.

He pushed the linguistic pun of: 'Dele' for 'daily', to tell a grim but simple tale: many of Nigeria's daily tragedies need not happen! That remarkable piece of telling symbolism birthed in 1989.

### Kaleidoscope: an artist's rite of passage

In 'Dele-Cases', the academic cap symbolized the late Prof. Dele Awojobi, the University of Lagos mechanical engineering whiz, who practically cut short his illustrious life, by 'over-thinking' the Nigerian quagmire, during the 2nd Republic (1979-1983).

The fountain pen symbolized that avant-garde journalist, Dele Giwa, among the quad that introduced weekly newsmagazine journalism into the Nigerian market, with the flagship Newswatch, now defunct. Dele Giwa was parcel-bombed, during the Ibrahim Babaginda junta (1985-1993) - a brazen murder yet to be resolved.

The third symbol, an athlete's spike shoe, sunk in blood-stained grass, belonged to Dele Udoh, a patriot and star athlete, cut short by rogue police bullets!

The three were yoked together in common but avoidable tragedy! But they were lucky to have another 'Dele' sketch out their odyssey in sombre yet brilliant art - 'Dele-Cases'!

'Otunba's flair for crowdedness is brought to bear in the harvest brush strokes of colours,' wrote Pius Ehita Egiolamhen, PhD, Dean, School of Art Design and Printing, Yabatech, in a special commemorative brochure, 'which are composed into a visual language to provoke, instigate and inspire ...'

Kaleidoscope delivered on all these fronts - and more. Toni Anthony proved that he indeed learnt at the feet of Prof. Yusuf Grillo, Dr. Kolade Oshinowo and the very best of Yaba School of Art. But Gown or Town, the artistic feast goes on.

**Load-Date:** August 31, 2022

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## A Rare Ray

Sunday Trust

August 13, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1501 words

### **Body**

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One is cocksure that just like the rays of the sun, this incomparable Ray from the sleepy backwoods of Ikot Udo Osiom in Ukanafun local Government Area of Akwa Ibom doesn't know that his deep piercing stories broke down some relationships especially those who were unaware of his existence and contributions as a public intellectual spanning half a century since he first happened on the scene in 1974.

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**Coup:** PDP warns FG on war with Niger

The Inimitable Columnist is one of the few professionals in his field who straddled the different models of ownership in the media industry. He started out in the dangerous industry during the first military rule ; an equally precarious season for those who work in the sector. His sojourn in the Nigerian Chronicle, government owned, published by then South Eastern State government where he rose to become an Editor caught the sustained attention of consumers of his frank interventions and they invited him over to Lagos, the heartbeat of Nigeria and the media sector. He was to sit at the helm of Sunday Times , then , arguably the most respectable medium in Africa. Those who tapped him had thought he was wasting his sweetness in the 'desert air' of Calabar. His now bigger weekly platform churned out mind-stimulating and satisfying menus every Sunday and helped make readers to look forward to the publication. Circulation rose and the Audit Bureau of Circulation reported sales figures of five hundred thousand copies every week ! The nonpareil Editor felt fulfilled that his ink dripped honey and attracted readers as moths to light. However, his non-conformity soon rubbed off on the wrong side of his employers who sent him 'downstairs' to 'Business Times', perhaps, to teach him a lesson but if that was a lesson, his articles boosted the fortunes of the Business weekly and did not diminish his stature a bit.

Given that it is difficult to ignore the sun at its brilliant best, an invitation to join the National Concord stable, a privately owned chain liberated him from bowing to the expectations of politicians of the ruling Party who wanted lap dogs as Editors. The son of a village Court messenger even at The Nigerian Chronicle whose proprietor was a military Governor was not one to bless the mess of authority figures, their surrogates, dependants and accomplices. And that again, led to his departure, with his friends: **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed to team up with Dan Agbese to establish and run Newswatch , perhaps the first experiment by a group of former Editors in Nigeria venturing into and trying to walk the tight rope of the business of journalism. They became Editor Publishers.

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Born on August 6, 1948, Ray Ekpu, the former Chief Executive Officer of Newswatch Communications Ltd, now of May 5 Media, is a recipient of several honours and awards, including that of International Editor of the Year ( 1987), Outstanding Young Person of the World (1988), Diamond Award for Media Excellence (DAME) Lifetime Achievement Award ( 2018) and Vanguard Man of the Year Award (2022).

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On this day of the rare Ray of Journalism, one wishes a happy birthday to an amazing 'pen pusher' who caught national and global attention and for whom the world beat a bush path to find.

Shine steadily, and Happy 75th birthday, Raymond Amos Ekpu.

DR UDEME NANA, a Media Scholar is the FOUNDER, UYO BOOK CLUB.

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2023

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## A Rare Ray

This Day

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1482 words

### **Body**

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By Udeme Nana

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\*Dr. Udeme Nana, a media scholar, is the founder of Uyo Book Club

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

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## A Rare Ray

Weekly Trust

August 12, 2023 Saturday

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**Length:** 1501 words

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**Load-Date:** August 12, 2023

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## Why I Couldn't Investigate Dele Giwa's Death--Ex-DIG

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 27, 2015

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**Length:** 253 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned **journalist, Dele Giwa**, a retired police chief, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation, said the unresolved assassination was the most frustrating case he handled in his career.

**Giwa**, Founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, was killed through a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on October 19, 1986.

Omeben, a former Deputy Inspector-General of Police, DIG, who turns 80 on October 27, said, yesterday, that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places."

The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

Omeben, now an Archbishop at Jesus Families Ministries, Iyana Ipaja, Lagos, said **Giwa** was also careless in maintaining a relationship with his estranged wife.

He said: "They said somebody brought a parcel and his son, Billy, received the parcel and took it to his father (**Dele Giwa**), who was having his breakfast that morning.

"On the breakfast table with **Dele** was a man called Kayode Soyinka. I heard that when Billy handed over the parcel, Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. **Dele** was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed.

"Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what happened to Soyinka Nobo

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015



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October 27, 2015 Tuesday

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**Load-Date:** October 28, 2015

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## A Rare Ray!

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1479 words

**Byline:** UDEME NANA

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UDEME NANA

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**Load-Date:** August 6, 2023

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## How Dele Giwa's mum died, by daughter

The Sun (Nigeria)

January 9, 2013 Wednesday

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Length: 590 words

### **Body**

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... Says mama forgave his killers before she passed on

By WOLE BALOGUN

Elekia Ayisat **Giwa**, mother of the veteran **journalist** and founder/editor, Newswatch magazine who was gruesomely murdered via a letter bomb on October 19, 1986, is dead. **Giwa** died at about 5a.m yesterday in a private hospital during a brief illness.

Born on July 7, 1927 in Ugbekpe-Ekperi village in Auchi, Edo State, the late **Giwa** trained as a tailor and got married to **Dele**'s father, the late Pa **Giwa**, to whom she bore six children. **Dele Giwa** was her first born. After her marriage to Pa **Giwa**, she moved to Ile-Ife in Osun State and there she had all her six children.

However, when her husband died in 1977, she relocated to her village and lived there until **Dele** was killed. According to Madam **Giwa**'s last child, Mrs. Ronke Abibat **Giwa** Aboaba, she was devastated when the news of **Dele**'s death was broken to her in 1986. The shock was so terrible that she (Aboaba) had to take the old woman with her: "My mother was a great woman, loving, caring and had a large heart for everyone."

She was a great encouragement to all her children. It was the gruesome murder of her first son, **Dele Giwa**, that punctured her joy, and since that unfortunate incident, she had become a very sad woman." Aboaba recalled in a chat with Daily Sun yesterday. "I took her with me when I discovered how bad she was feeling."

It was like she had lost everything because she loved everyone of us so greatly and she never wished or thought of losing any of us. So, for the past 13 years I have made her stay with me. As the lastborn and a daughter, we were very close. I always look forward to seeing her whenever I am returning home from anywhere I go and now I can't even imagine not seeing her when I get back home today," Aboaba said, fighting back tears.

### How Dele Giwa's mum died, by daughter

Daily Sun wanted to know what Madam **Giwa**'s greatest wish was before she passed on and Aboaba said: "Our mother's greatest wish was to know the killers of her son, **Dele Giwa**, before she died. She also wished to see that **Dele**'s killers were brought to book. But before she eventually gave up the ghost, on her death bed, she prayed fervently for Nigeria and said that she has forgiven Babangida and whoever has hand in the death of her son.

She told us, her children, that she has handed **Dele**'s killers over to God." Daily Sun also wanted to know Madam **Giwa**'s happiest moment while on earth, and Aboaba said: "Our mother lived a fulfilled life. Her happiest moments were seeing her children and grand children doing well. She was always glad that God kept the rest of her children and more importantly, many of her grand children alive and that gave her enormous joy." Aboaba said she would miss her mother more than any of the other children: "I will miss her so much. She has been part of me as we were very close and dear to each other.

She was gentle, very tolerant even with neighbours. We all did our best for her. At a point, we moved her from the general hospital to a private hospital for proper treatment. She just had a brief illness before she passed on. We all love her and wish her perfect rest in the Lord's bosom." Aboaba said. **Dele Giwa**'s deputy, Mr. Ray Ekpu, also expressed his condolence to the Giwas. He told Daily Sun in a telephone chat: "I have got the news and we are really saddened by it. I have also called one of her daughters, Abibat, and sent her my condolences when I spoke to her this morning. And we are wishing her soul a peaceful rest in the Lord's bosom. She was a compassionate woman, somebody who loved children."

**Load-Date:** January 22, 2013

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## A Rare Ray

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1481 words

**Byline:** Udeme Nana

### **Body**

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## A rare Ray

The Guardian

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1495 words

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The Inimitable Columnist is one of the few professionals in his field who straddled the different models of ownership in the media industry. He started out in the dangerous industry during the first military rule; an equally precarious season for those who work in the sector.

His sojourn in the Nigerian Chronicle, government owned, published by then South Eastern State government where he rose to become an Editor caught the sustained attention of consumers of his frank interventions and they invited him over to Lagos, the heartbeat of Nigeria and the media sector. He was to sit at the helm of Sunday Times, then, arguably the most respectable medium in Africa. Those who tapped him had thought he was wasting his sweetness in the 'desert air' of Calabar. His now bigger weekly platform churned out mind-stimulating and satisfying menus every Sunday and helped make readers to look forward to the publication.

Circulation rose and the Audit Bureau of Circulation reported sales figures of five hundred thousand copies every week!

The nonpareil Editor felt fulfilled that his ink dripped honey and attracted readers as moths to light. However, his non-conformity soon rubbed off on the wrong side of his employers who sent him 'downstairs' to "Business Times", perhaps, to teach him a lesson but if that was a lesson, his articles boosted the fortunes of the Business weekly and did not diminish his stature a bit.

Given that it is difficult to ignore the sun at its brilliant best, an invitation to join the National Concord stable, a privately owned chain liberated him from bowing to the expectations of politicians of the ruling Party who wanted lap dogs as Editors.

The son of a village Court messenger even at The Nigerian Chronicle whose proprietor was a military Governor was not one to bless the mess of authority figures, their surrogates, dependants and accomplices. And that again, led to his departure, with his friends: **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed to team up with Dan Agbese to establish and run Newswatch, perhaps the first experiment by a group of former Editors in Nigeria venturing into and trying to walk the tight rope of the business of journalism.

They became Editor Publishers.

Newswatch served to open his eyes and those of his friends that they were 'jogging in the jungle': in and out of prison, in and out of Court rooms, being trailed by agents of government and proscription. In fact, the man still lives in shock of any thundering sound - the effect and scar of the parcel bomb blast which sent his comrade in arms, the equally legendary **Dele Giwa** to early death.

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## A rare Ray

Born on August 6, 1948, Ray Ekpu, the former Chief Executive Officer of Newswatch Communications Ltd, now of May 5 Media, is a recipient of several honours and awards, including that of International Editor of the Year (1987), Outstanding Young Person of the World (1988), Diamond Award for Media Excellence (DAME) Lifetime Achievement Award (2018) and Vanguard Man of the Year Award (2022).

He is also a former President of the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria, NPAN. However, the quintessential man of letters is enthused about two honours done him in his home State. The first being the offer to name the Department of Mass Communication of the State owned Polytechnic at Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene after him and the most recent institution by one of his admirers, Mr Udom Inoyo, of the Annual Ray Ekpu prize for investigative journalism worth five hundred thousand Naira for journalists practicing in Akwa Ibom State. This last award seems to embody Ray's lifetime commitment to promote excellence and ethics in media practice. He loves it because of its currency.

Previous honours belong in the past. The award on investigative journalism is in perpetuity, a sustainable legacy to his strides and stripes in the field.

The odyssey of this rare ray that pierced through the sleepy backwoods of Ukanafun, shone through Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene, illuminated the Department of Mass Communication of the University of Lagos, lit up the pages of the Newspapers in the Chronicle stable and who captured the imagination of an entire nation is a story of heroes. Although his country still moves "in circles", Ray Ekpu should be satisfied that he has done his bit in the best way possible.

If Ray Ekpu were to be a bird, methinks he would have been a nightingale - 'the bird with the most number of powerful and sweet songs'. Ray has written several thousands of deep, inspiring, enjoyable but serious, scathing and interesting interventions on critical issues of the season and times. The bold activist **journalist** is a survivor. Although bereft of the flamboyant lifestyle of those who have compromised the high ideals of his chosen profession, his trail still glows and cannot be extinguished.

On this day of the rare Ray of Journalism, one wishes a happy birthday to an amazing 'pen pusher' who caught national and global attention and for whom the world beat a bush path to find.

Shine steadily, and Happy 75th birthday, Raymond Amos Ekpu.

•Dr Udeme Nana, a Media Scholar is the Founder, Uyo Book Club.

In this article A rare ray

Ray Ekpu

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2022 GUARDIAN Newspapers.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023



## **Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry**

Naija 247 News

January 10, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1438 words

### **Body**

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What is the story of Nigeria's failure as a nation? It is the the story of the failure of journalism which refused to watch over the power players but rather watch over the pockets of the journalists.

By Tunde Akande

My friend and workmate, Professor Jimi Kayode, now of Lagos State University, teaching mass communication but formerly director of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism in Lagos where we worked together told me a story about the decadence that has become of journalism and journalists in Nigeria. He was somewhere on the Lekki Ajah axis in Lagos standing at a bus stop waiting for public transport, usually bone shakers; he had no car. After waiting for some time under the intense heat he got tired but then a state-of-the-art car parked at the bus stop and the driver beckoned to him. The driver of the beautiful car happens to be a student he had trained. Jimi Kayode hopped in but was amazed at the speed of things happening in Nigeria. The student was just a few years out of the NIJ, and now he rode one of the best car models in town. 'How did you get this car?' he asked the former student. 'What do you do? Aren't you a journalist?' By that last question, Jimi was sounding the training he had received which he had also given to generations of his students; if you want money go to business, don't come to journalism but if you want fame, journalism should be your forte. If you want power, go to the civil service.

In his well-cooled car, the former student took a look at his old teacher and giggled. 'Oga,' Yoruba word for boss, he replied in a very soft tone, 'journalism has changed from your time. Today, journalism is cash and carry. Those who need the services of the journalist pay him or her in cash and kind.' He reeled out names of his editors who have landed properties in choice parts of Lagos, the nation's commercial capital, and Abuja, the nation's political capital. 'When editors collect houses and money and are sponsored on holidays abroad, what sir, do you expect the reporters to do?' Professor Jimi Kayode was dumbfounded; poverty was written all over him; he graduated in 1980 and with his donkey years as both practitioner and teacher, he was still not anywhere near his student of just a few years on the job. He was not complaining but he wondered what will happen to the profession and the society it serves.

'Journalism has become cash and carry.' That is the story of the current public spat between the journalists of Nduka Obaigbena of the ThisDay and Arise media and the journalists of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential candidates of the APC. You wonder why they are described as journalists of Obaigbena and journalists of Bola Tinubu. It is because with their money these humans have bought these journalists and they use the organs not for the public good but for the private and selfish interest of the slave merchants. The story of journalism and journalists reflect the sad story of the decline of Nigeria. It should be like that. Journalists and journalism are very important

## Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry

factors in the development of nations. Journalism was the major instrument that scared the colonial power out of Nigeria. Journalists are purveyors of information. They are to make the comfortable uncomfortable and to comfort the uncomfortable. The **journalist** is involved in the class war between the poor and the rich, the haves and the have not. His duty is to publish what power holders try to hide and to give voice to the voiceless in society. Journalism is very important to democracy. Democracy is about the free choice of the people. The people must constitute the government and even after that constitution, the people must hold those who form the government to account for how they manage the commonwealth. In Nigeria especially, where the law is either nonexistent or made weak to suit the power holders who made them or interpreted in the courts to pander to the power holders, the men and women of means have found a way to control the massive power of the media. They employ them and they bribe them.

Bayo Onanuga and **Dele** Alake in the stable of Bola Tinubu are fantastic journalists. Their first buyer was the late MKO Abiola, the late president of Nigeria that was not allowed to be by the power holders. Abiola won a popular election which was scuttled by a self-proclaimed military president, Ibrahim Babangida. The story of why IBB annulled the election of his friend is still a not fully known secret, some allege that Abiola had a drug issue in the US that made the Americans pressure IBB not to allow the richest black man then in the world to be president of Nigeria. But when Abiola had his eyes on the presidency, he procured the best journalists in the country and gave them very good salaries and good working tools. For the first time a flamboyant **journalist**, the late **Dele Giwa** rode a Mercedes Benz 200 and wore designer shirts and suits. **Dele Giwa** was a fine writer, and he became a model for all journalists in the country. **Dele** Alake, Bayo Onanuga, and a host of others joined Abiola's Concord train. They were so fierce in their duty that the Concord newspapers became the enemy of the military with whom Abiola was friendly. The journalists looked like they were fighting for the downtrodden but in real terms, they were fighting for the interest of Abiola. Bayo Onanuga refused to apologize to the military over a story and he and his team resigned from Concord to set up their own media empire, The News which became a torn in the flesh of the military.

But while The News was firing from all cylinders, it was the money of Bola Tinubu that was oiling the engine. A friend who is a **journalist** and a close friend of Onanuga and his team told me that constantly Tinubu was giving out cars and a huge chunk of money at different times to Bayo Onanuga and his team at The News. **Dele** Alake who had become Tinubu's commissioner for communication and strategy in Lagos is said to be the intermediary between Tinubu and Bayo Onanuga and his team. The truth of this relationship was brought out plainly when Onanuga and The News refused to publish anything on the story of Tinubu's drug deal allegations. In an interview, Bayo said frontally that they did not because 'we have a relationship with Tinubu'. Bayo Onanuga and his team are said to be proud owners of houses in Abuja and Lagos. Today, The News is dead, but Bayo is surviving playing a big role in Tinubu's quest to become the next president of Nigeria. Why did The News die? It had served the purpose of promoting Bayo into wealth and prominence and was not needed again. Babafemi Ojodu, one of the Bayo Onanuga's team parted ways with Tinubu and was the chief promoter of the failed Yemi Osinbajo presidency. Ojodu is a special assistant at the presidency.

Coincidentally, it is the story of the alleged drug dealing of Tinubu which The News refused to publish that is now causing a public spat between the Tinubu journalists and the Nduka Obaigbena journalists. Nduka Obaigbena came to the country with a big bang from the US, he set up a magazine, This Week, and became a big player in the media industry. But the journalists of This Week, many of them very good professionals and ethical were not smiling. Salaries may not be paid for months while with the same money earned by the sweat of these journalists, Obaigbena junketed all over the world. The story of unpaid salaries, inglorious and expensive lifestyle, and blackmailing with which the Tinubu journalists are now pinning down Nduka Obaigbena did not start with the ThisDay Arise media, they were so much talked about even in the days of This Week. This Week eventually died; some say because of these unethical behaviors. It gave rise first to ThisDay, then Arise, still with the character of This Week.

What then is the story of Nigeria's failure as a nation? It is the story of the failure of journalism which refused to watch over the power players but rather watch over the pockets of the journalists. It is the story of a Tinubu, an MKO Abiola, a Michael Ibru, an Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, a Nduka Obaigbena, an Orji Kalu, all of them rent seekers who discovered that the souls of Nigerian journalists can be bought; bought them and derailed the dream of Nigeria using their massive media power. Let the Tinubu - Obaigbena public spat continue so the Nigerian public will know

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Tunde Akande is both a *journalist* and pastor. He obtained a Master's degree in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2023

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## **Boko Haram Started With Bombing of Dele Giwa - - Prof Odinkalu**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 20, 2014

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**Length:** 249 words

**Byline:** Luka Binniyat

### **Body**

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KADUNA--The Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, Professor Anselem Odinkalu, said yesterday that the violence that led to the current insurgent activities of Boko Haram Islamic sect in the country actually started in 1986 with killing of the renowned ***journalist***, Mr ***Dele Giwa*** with a parcel bomb, just as he lamented over what he described as democratisation of violence since the return to civil rule in 1999.

Odinkalu spoke during the commissioning of Moluma Loma Centre for Medical Law, and the MIVE Legals Matrimonial Centre, Kaduna.

In his keynote address on the occasion Odinkalu said, "Contrary to what people think, the phenomenon that has now become Boko Haram actually started in an Ikeja Street, on October 18, 1986. That day the first Improvised Explosive Device, IED, was used to blow up ***Dele Giwa***. Everyone knew that it was a state-sponsored murder. That was the first time that an IED went off on Nigerian soil.

"Series of events would later lead to Boko Haram today. At that time, late Gani Fawehinmi had the courage to challenge the state on that murder. But he was in turn persecuted until his death.

"The Police officer who was investigating the murder was also killed in an un-explained circumstances in Mokwa, Niger State. He was the immediate younger brother of the celebrated writer and critic of government, Tunji Dare.

"When a state sponsors the illegal murder of its citizens, it loses its legitimacy as a government. So today's terrorism started as state sponsored.

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2014



## Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry

Naija 247 News

January 8, 2023 Sunday

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Length: 1438 words

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**Load-Date:** January 9, 2023

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## A Rare Ray at 75

This Day

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1548 words

### **Body**

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Ray Ekpu, an inimitable columnist, held sway as a *journalist* during the military rule, a precarious period for those who work in the media industry. As one of the few professionals in field who straddled different models of ownership, he has written thousands of deep, inspiring, incisive, but scathing and interesting interventions on critical issues of the season and times. As Ekpu marks his 75th birthday today,

Udeme Nana says his trail still glows and refuses to be extinguished

some days could be bleak, cloudy, depressing, dull, sad, traumatic all at once, but once a rare ray of brilliance shines through, the whole atmosphere changes into brightness and joy. This is exactly what happens when one grabs the work of one of the few standing apostles of outstanding journalism in Nigeria at present. As a field marshal in the pen wielding forces of the world, Ray has had an impact far beyond his imagination. At least two men I know have testified publicly that Ray, by the sheer hold he has had on his readers, has disrupted relationships involving them which may or may not have become successful in the long run due to incompatibility or irreconcilable differences.

The first man, a medical doctor, poet and the author of 'The Crumbs Eaters,' a novel, confessed how his beautiful fiancee, then a final year student of Mass Communication in a Nigerian university, lost him. She was on a visit and during their small talk, he had asked casually if she had read the latest column written by Ray in Newswatch and the young lady blurted out "Ray? What's that?" The man reportedly responded, "It's not what but who!" The girl retorted, "So, who is that? Who is this Ray?" She had asked in majestic ignorance. She had thought it was a huge joke but her man could not understand why a student at that level didn't just know the name. When she drew blank on a question whether she had seen a copy of Newswatch ever, the young man lost his cool and appetite for all the endowments of a young lady who had nearly become his life partner. The physician had wondered how on earth a final year student 'studying' to earn a degree in a discipline which Ray was famous for globally didn't know him by repute nor ever read his incisive, enlightening and oftentimes mind-blowing articles. The doctor walked the girl out of

## A Rare Ray at 75

his house and walked out of the relationship for good. Today, he lives happily married to a delectable woman who is a voracious reader of books, newspapers and news magazines like him.

"This one knew who Ray was instantly without long talk or arguments," the medical doctor would say gleefully like a young man who just fell in love. "We can engage intellectually on events and ideas about any subject matter under the sun."

The second told me about how he had exchanged blows with his room mate in the university when that mate angrily snatched a piece of paper used in wrapping groundnut which he had picked along the street and kept in the room. The piece of newspaper carried a column written by Ray Ekpu and the mast head had 'The Nigerian Chronicle' and the year was 1976. The friend had wondered what his mate had found so interesting in an old 'waste paper' which was only useful to groundnut and Akara ball sellers. That is how tight the grip one of Nigeria's most outstanding journalists had and still has on his readers.

One is cocksure that just like the rays of the sun, this incomparable Ray from the sleepy backwoods of Ikot Udo Osiom in Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom doesn't know that his deep piercing stories broke down some relationships especially those who were unaware of his existence and contributions as a public intellectual spanning half a century since he first happened on the scene in 1974.

The inimitable columnist is one of the few professionals in his field who straddled the different models of ownership in the media industry. He started out in the dangerous industry during the first military rule; an equally precarious season for those who work in the sector. His sojourn in the Nigerian Chronicle, government-owned, published by then South Eastern State government where he rose to become an editor caught the sustained attention of consumers of his frank interventions and they invited him over to Lagos, the heartbeat of Nigeria and the media sector. He was to sit at the helm of Sunday Times, then, arguably the most respectable medium in Africa. Those who tapped him had thought he was wasting his sweetness in the 'desert air' of Calabar. His now bigger weekly platform churned out mind-stimulating and satisfying menus every Sunday and helped make forward to the publication. Circulation rose and the Audit Bureau of Circulation reported sales figures of five hundred thousand copies every week! The nonpareil Editor felt fulfilled that his ink dripped honey and attracted readers as moths to light. However, his nonconformity soon rubbed off on the wrong side of his employers who sent him 'downstairs' to "Business Times", perhaps, to teach him a lesson but if that was a lesson, his articles boosted the fortunes of the Business weekly and did not diminish his stature a bit.

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Shine steadily and Happy 75th birthday, Raymond Amos Ekpu.

Dr. Nana, a media scholar, is the Founder, Uyo Book Club

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2023

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## NMMA honours PUNCH, others - Punch Newspapers

The Punch

September 22, 2022 Thursday

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**Length:** 508 words

### **Body**

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The PUNCH newspaper has been honoured by the Nigeria Media Merit Award for endowing the Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter in support of media development in the country.

The newspaper was honoured at the NMMA's 30th anniversary flag-off and corporate recognition dinner, attended by media experts, captains of industry and other dignitaries in Lagos on Tuesday.

The award was received by the newspaper's General Manager, Digitals and Publications, Mr Ademola Oni; General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Mrs Olufolakemi Gbemuotor; and the Editor, Weekend Titles, Mr Olusola Fabiyi.

The Chief Host of the event was the governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Olumide Shogunle.

The event was flagged off by the Chairman of the NMMA Board of Trustees, Dr Haroun Adamu, while NMMA Trustee and Administrator, Samuel Akeju, thanked God for how far the organisation had come since its inception.

The keynote speech was delivered by the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Communications Commission, Umar Danbatta, who spoke on "Current Issues in the Telecommunications Industry in Nigeria".

He was represented at the event by the commission's Director of Public Affairs, Reuben Muoka.

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According to the NCC boss, the commission is proud of the NMMA and would appreciate more collaboration between the media and the commission towards achieving Nigeria's communication goals.

## NMMA honours PUNCH, others - Punch Newspapers

He said, "There is no gainsaying that the quality of our society's media system is significant to its ability to harness and harvest its resources for growth and development. That explains why the NCC guards its relationship with the media very jealously.

"In other words, our relationship with the media is a partnership that is both collaborative and strategic. This relationship is not underlined by the fact that the media is a constitutionally recognised social institution in all societies; it is underscored by the fact that the Nigerian media's systems of communications have lived up to other responsibilities as special enablers of Nigerians' aspirations and development.

"So, the NCC has never taken the media for granted, and the commitment to nurturing the relationship is the reason the commission has dedicatedly honoured the request by the media for engagement towards nation building and development."

Special recognition was given to a veteran broadcast journalist, Mohammed Ibrahim, who was also celebrating his 82nd birthday on the same day.

Also, the founder of Arise Television, Nduka Obaigbena, was recognised by the NMMA for his over 30 years of commitment to the media industry.

The Guardian and ThisDay Newspapers were honoured for endowing the Alex Ibru Prize for Investigative Reporter and the Dele Giwa Prize for Editor Reporter, respectively.

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## Ex-Police Chief Opens Up On Dele Giwa Assassination

Daily Trust (Abuja)

October 26, 2015

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Length: 322 words

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, a retired police chief, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation says the unresolved assassination is the most frustrating case he handled in his career.

Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, was killed through a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on October 19, 1986.

Omeben, a former Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG), who turns 80 today, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places."

The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

"They said somebody brought a parcel and his son Billy received the parcel and took it to his father (Dele Giwa), who was having his breakfast that morning.

"On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there; Dele was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel.

"And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. Dele was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed.

"Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what of human flesh, what happened to Soyinka? Nobody could give me an answer.

"My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall.

"I took note of all these, went back to conduct an identification parade. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by the day watch.

"Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not.

NAN

## Ex-Police Chief Opens Up On Dele Giwa Assassination

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015

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## A master-reporter on top of his game

The Nation (Nigeria)

February 28, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 2370 words

### **Body**

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In *Born into Journalism: Memoir of a Newspaper Reporter*, Kayode Soyinka has penned a memorable and unforgettable memoir, destined to become a classic of its genre. The great memoir requires three vital ingredients: excellent writing skills, a vivid imagination and fantastic memory. This memoir boasts of all the three qualities. Arguably Nigeria's best known and best-connected international *journalist*, Soyinka can now be said to have joined its pantheon of remarkable writers.

Written in crisp, lucid prose and with the fastidious elegance of a man who cannot afford to make mistakes, this is the moving story of growing up and maturing in full public glare. Having started out as a boy-reporter, barely eighteen years of age, Soyinka has become an elder-statesman of Nigerian journalism and himself a grandfather to boot.

How time flies, we may say. But flying time also carries storms and biting dunes. The journey has not been easy. It requires hard work, persistence and integrity. Soyinka is an epitome of all these. Despite his perpetual boyish looks and spontaneous affability, he can be as tough and hard as a palm kernel. At the appropriate time, the hardy no-nonsense Owu man in him always comes to the fore hinting the unwary that this is not a person to needlessly or heedlessly toy or tangle with.

The road to excellence and human distinction always requires hard work and unremitting toil. From humble beginnings, Soyinka has clawed his way up to the summit of his profession. He has collected a few scars along the way. But then, the road to stardom and distinction is not for the weak, the feeble and the faint-hearted. As this rich memoir unfolds, you have a sense of destiny and inexorable fate and of a career guided by providence.

So racy is the pace of this book, so riveting are the revelations of the intrigue-soaked nature of contemporary Nigerian journalism, and such is the remarkable clarity of exposition, that it was after a first reading that a reader drew the this writer's attention to the copious praises of admiration and appreciation heaped upon him by the author.

Soyinka was not born with a golden spoon. Although his parents could not be described as dirt poor, they were far from affluent. Life began in a room and parlour apartment of a garrison-like block belonging to Alhaja Humani

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Alaga, the famed Ibadan women leader and staunch Action Group supporter. The occupants of each apartment were identified by the number. The Soyinkas were known to the co-denizens as No2.

Even when they moved to their own buildings at the low-keyed suburbs of Odo Ona, things were far from rosy. The father was mid-ranking storekeeper at the Nigerian Tobacco Company while the mother was a dutiful and devoted seamstress.

Like many members of the southern educated class thrown up by colonial intervention, the Soyinka parents subsumed their own ambition in the ambition of their children selflessly giving up whatever aspirations they had for the sustenance and upbringing of their offspring. Soyinka's mother made sure that her children stood out from the crowd and were always elegantly turned out while the father made sure they never lacked anything within what his meagre resources could afford.

It was a childhood of happiness and contentment. An extant picture of the time shows a swankily suited Kayode and his older brother, Adesina, flanking their equally comely mother. Another shows the two brothers finely attired like royal princes peering at the outside world in satisfaction and unruffled delight.

It was a confidence and capacity-boosting upbringing. Kayode grew up a confident and self-assured person. This began to show right from primary school. It was as if the young boy was marked by a star quality. In 1967 at the age of nine he was chosen to lead the entire Western state's troops of the Boys' Scout to welcome to their camp the military governor of the state, the then Brigadier-General Adeyinka Adebayo.

He had followed up on this star performance at the Primary School with an equally impressive string of laurels in Secondary School. The famous Baptist Boys High School was his father's alma mater and he felt very much at home in the Egba ambience. Soyinka was an organist, a soprano and a champion debater for the school. At this point, any lingering doubt that the young man was marked out for greater things would have been dispelled.

But no one knew where and how the pendulum would swing. The young Soyinka had wanted to be a lawyer, a journalist or a political scientist. In the event, a combination of totally unforeseen developments conspired to push him in the direction of journalism. A friend of his uncle and a power broker in the old Sketch establishment had come visiting and had encouraged him to apply to the organization whenever they advertised for the job of a reporter.

One thing led to another and shortly afterwards, Soyinka found himself ensconced as a cub reporter at the head office of the Sketch Publishing Company in Ibadan. As usual, he proved himself a fast and diligent learner. His courtroom reports from Iyaganku soon attracted the attention of the authorities and he was celebrated as a young man of great promise. Some of the lowly staff began hailing him as editor in the making.

There can be no doubt that given the remarkable flair he had shown for the job within a short period and his outstanding competence, Kayode would eventually have made the editorship cadre of the newspaper. But that was only if things had remained stable and events had remained constant and unchanging.

But in human affairs the only constant thing is the sheer inconstancy of events and the random contingencies of life itself. What seemed like an open door could lead to a cul de sac while a cul de sac could suddenly become a wide thoroughfare. Impressed by Soyinka's star performance, the authorities at Sketch Publishing Company decided to send him for further training at the famous Fleet Street College of Journalism in London.

The deal was that after his training, the budding journalist would be bonded to the company for the number of years. To cap it all, soon after he arrived in London, Soyinka was appointed as the London correspondent of the newspaper. In effect, he had become the overall head of the London Bureau of the newspaper, a very big post for a young man of twenty three.

For the young man what appeared to be a glittering entrée into the powerful world of global opinion brokers actually turned out to be a gruelling rite of initiation into the often paranoid, cloak and dagger milieu of journalism .Six

### A master-reporter on top of his game

months before he could finish his course both his appointment as London correspondent and his sponsorship got the big boot.

After the installation of the new civilian administrator in Oyo state and the emergence of Segun Osoba, the veteran journalist and administrator, as the new helmsman, a gale of furious recriminations and terminations of appointment swept through the newspaper. According to his memoir, Osoba himself had been at the receiving end of the intrigues and high-wire politics even before his appointment.

But now that he was in charge, it was obvious that he was not going to allow people of unsure and divided loyalty to sabotage his efforts at rebuilding and repositioning the paper. Despite his excellent performance on the job, Soyinka must have been fingered as a protégé and beneficiary of Dayo Duyile who was Osoba's principal rival for the job and a known sympathiser of the NPN, a party that had been resoundingly trounced at the polls.

All entreaties that Soyinka was a neutral and independent player fell on deaf ears. Even the hint that the Sketch Publishing Company was legally bound to fulfil its side of the contract to sponsor the young journalist cut no ice with the authorities. Rather than going back to Sketch in an atmosphere of hostility and humiliation, Soyinka was faced with no alternative than to resign his position and seek his fortunes elsewhere.

His next port of call was the Concord Group under Henry Odukomaiya who appointed him as the London correspondent of the newspaper owned by the business magnate, MKO Abiola. It was a very rewarding time professionally for the young journalist. He was to serve under the tutelage of some of the best editors the country had thrown up as at that time: Doyin Abiola, Yakubu Mohammed, Ray Ekpu, Duro Onabule and Dele Giwa who took to the young journalist as if he was a blood relation.

But MKO Abiola's management style was as eccentric as it was unpredictable. He could hire and fire with remorseless alacrity, depending on which side of the bed he had woken up. He once ordered Kayode through a phone call from Lagos to fire his own blood brother as Financial Director of the company. Sule Abiola was on holiday in London and was staying with the newly wedded Soyinkas.

It was an unmistakable sign of inevitable mishap and it came sooner than later. What began as a chummy father and son relationship in which Abiola ceded to Kayode the right to sign cheques on his behalf and the authority to disburse enormous sums of money without any clearance eventually degenerated into a traumatic tiff with the young foreign correspondent shortly after his wedding.

When Abiola could not get any of his top management team to fire Soyinka, he undertook to write and sign the letter of dismissal himself. This was after a tense faceoff. The newly wedded journalist whose wife was expecting their first baby had appeared tardy and reluctant to comply with an earlier instruction to report forthwith to the Lagos Headquarters on the legitimate ground that he was not recruited from Nigeria.

After a brief stint with Peter Enahoro's Africa Now, Soyinka was appointed the founding London Bureau Chief of the newly established trendsetting Newswatch magazine. It was a reunion of professional soul mates. The trio of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Mohammed finally got their own comeuppance from the implacable business mogul after a celebrated public spat.

It was at Newswatch that fate played its cruellest joke on Soyinka. On the morning of October 19, 1986, Dele Giwa was blown out of existence after a huge envelope which turned out to be a parcel bomb was handed over to him in his study by Soyinka having been delivered by some mysterious people who were said to have come on a motor bike. It was a novel and daring method of elimination which sent shock waves through the nation.

Soyinka was in Lagos on routine consultation with his bosses at Newswatch. As anybody who knew him well enough would attest, Dele Giwa lived virtually in his study where he loved to have his meals and hold intense intellectual conversations while showing off his rich collections of books, records and other memorabilia. As the first non-staff columnist of Newswatch, had yours sincerely been in Lagos on one of those trips, he would certainly have been in the study.

### A master-reporter on top of his game

In order to obliterate traces of the heinous crime and fob off genuine investigations, Soyinka became a victim of a cruel and vicious game of disinformation so beloved of the intelligence community. Despite the fact that he lay critically wounded with concussions and perforated eardrums next room to where Dele Giwa's shattered body was laid out, he was fingered as a prime suspect in the dastardly murder.

As Soyinka himself puts the absurdity of the development in this gripping memoir: 'This could only have happened if I was a suicide bomber. Otherwise, how could anyone explain someone carrying a parcel bomb and knowingly detonating it in his own presence?' (p296) Yet this notwithstanding, a rogue organization actually took him to court on the ground of being the principal suspect and for years his name was fed into all entry and exit points as an assassin on the loose. Nigeria had become an Orwellian nightmare.

After being smuggled out of Nigeria in a disoriented and dishevelled heap, Kayode Soyinka was to give the country a wide berth for six years until the Babangida military junta fell in utter disgrace and terminal disorientation as a result of the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election emphatically won by MKO Abiola, Soyinka's old boss. Soyinka was later to team up with Abiola in London in the battle to reverse the annulment of the election.

For Soyinka, it was the hour of gold as well as the hour of lead. While the spectacular success of Newswatch magazine brought him considerable international attention, the even more spectacular despatch of its charismatic founding editor in his presence brought him global name recognition. Fate had once again played a cruel card. This was not the kind of immortality anyone would crave and it concentrated his mind about securing his own lasting legacy.

After almost two decades of tumultuous apprenticeship, Soyinka decided to strike out on his own. In May, 1995, the international magazine, Africa Today, debuted with Soyinka as publisher and editor in chief to much hoopla and considerable attention. It had carried a rare full interview with the iconic Nelson Mandela who also graced the cover. The boy from Odo Ona has come into his own.

This was where fate conjoined the two of us once again. Yours sincerely was designated columnist and editor at large, a relationship which subsists till the moment. Our first piece was an October 1st survey of Nigeria, titled: A Giant Toddler At Thirty Five. It is left to morbid anatomists to conclude whether twenty six years after Nigeria remains a toddler or a monster man-child.

It is a tribute to Soyinka's courage and audacity that Africa Today is still standing where many others have faltered and fallen. The magazine has weathered some severe storms including two seizures by the Abacha junta over articles written by yours sincerely. At a point, the exasperated dark goggled tyrant was known to have exploded: 'Who is .....?' (Name withheld) But that is a story for another day.

This is a moving story of quiet heroism and dignified generosity of spirit. At every turn, Soyinka heaps effusive praises on his comely and personable wife, Titilope. Born into Journalism is the work of a master journalist at the very summit of his trade. Kayode Soyinka has come a long way indeed.

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## How Nzeribe helped IBB annul Abiola's election

PM News

May 8, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 1128 words

### **Body**

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One major atrocity credited to Arthur Nzeribe who died Sunday was the formation of the Association for Better Nigeria, used to annul Nigeria's best election held June 1993.

Nzeribe, born in Oguta Imo State was the mastermind of the group, which was not in anyway a mass movement.

It was set up by the military intelligence to perpetuate General Ibrahim Babangida's rule till 1997.

Nzeribe's ABN came in handy in 1993, when it was used to scuttle the June 12, 1993 election won overwhelmingly by Chief MKO Abiola's.

P.M. News found an essay by Michael Orodare of Neusroom in June 2021 a fair account of the somewhat treasonable role of the ABN, with Nzeribe as the mastermind.

Read all:

Classified in many reports as a shadowy group and a willing tool in the hands of Nigeria's former military head of state General Ibrahim Babangida, the role played by the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) in the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election remains indelible.

Although the personality of Babangida may have dwarfed the many atrocities of ABN and its promoters, the group prepared the ground for the declaration that scuttled what has been described as the most credible election in Nigeria's history: The presidential contest between MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC).

How ABN was formed.

ABN was formed after the Babangida regime abolished all political parties and created two national parties - NRC and SDP in 1991.

## How Nzeribe helped IBB annul Abiola's election

The New York Times described ABN as 'a lobbying group of wealthy businessmen, politicians and military officers who had led a highly visible campaign urging General Babangida to remain in office at least four more years'.

Although it claimed it had millions of members, ABN's only known leaders were Arthur Nzeribe, Brigadier Haliru Akilu and Abimbola Davies.

'The primary objective of the ABN was to keep Ibrahim Babangida in power and maintain the military administration that has governed Nigeria for so long,' a report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada says.

To achieve its objective, the ABN put up billboards in Abuja with the message 'Four More Years', implying that Babangida should stay in power for another four year term.

'The intensity of the ABN's pro-government campaigns led many observers to conclude that the federal military government was behind the activities of the association,' another report says.

ABN and the 1993 Election.

After years of military rule, Babangida promised to hand over power to a civilian president on August 27, 1993. He set up the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and appointed a Professor, Humphrey Nwosu as Chairman..

The Presidential election between Abiola and Tofa was billed for June 12, 1993. Two days before the election, members of the ABN filed a suit before the Abuja High Court asking NEC not to hold the election.

On the eve of the election (June 11) Justice Bassey Ikpeme ordered the suspension of the election but NEC ignored the order and went ahead citing Decree 13 of 1993 which ousted the courts' jurisdiction with regard to creating impediments to the transition to civil rule programme.

### Related News

[Arthur Nzeribe will forever be remembered - Uzodimma](#)

[Maverick politician Arthur Nzeribe is dead](#)

While the results were trickling in, ABN members approached an Abuja High Court again asking it to stop the announcement of results.

'Justice Dahiru Saleh was around to handle it, he didn't assign it to any other judge. He decided to hear the matter himself,' ***journalist*** Richard Akinnola wrote in his book 'A Mandate Buried Alive'. 'Though the suit filed was Motion on Notice, where the other party, that is, NEC would be heard, Saleh decided to hear the matter ex parte in Chambers, stopping further announcements of the results.'

Saleh ordered NEC to halt the release of the election results on the grounds that the election ought not to have been held in the first place. NEC complied with the ruling but headed for the Court of Appeal to challenge the order.

'In that appeal, we attached all the results of the election...showing that Abiola overwhelmingly won the election,' Nwosu wrote in his book 'Laying the Foundation for Nigeria's Democracy: My Account of June 12, 1993, Presidential Election and Its Annulment'.

On June 23, 1993, a day after NEC filed its appeal, Babangida nullified the election, and suspended NEC.

'These steps were taken to save our judiciary from being ridiculed and politicized locally and internationally,' Babangida said.

The ABN suit was the foundation upon which Babangida's annulment of the election was based.

The promoters of ABN.

## How Nzeribe helped IBB annul Abiola's election

Arthur Nzeribe, a former Senator from Imo state, was the leader of ABN. He was Senator from October 1983 to December 1983. After the transition to democracy in 1999, Nzeribe contested as Senator again and spent eight years at the Senate from 1999-2007.

'I am proud that we cancelled the election. I wanted the election cancelled and it was cancelled,' Nzeribe, 82, told the New Telegraph newspaper in 2014 when asked about his role in the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election.

Abimbola Davies - ABN's National Director of Organisation, was 36 years old in 1993 when he played an active role in the annulment of the election.

In a 2018 article, **Dele** Momodu who is regarded as one of Abiola's confidants revealed that Davies later dumped the group and fled the country after addressing a press conference renouncing his membership of ABN and exposing some of its activities.

'Nigerians, we are guilty, but forgive us! Pride will not allow some of us to come out, but this I am doing on behalf of myself and other States,' Davies, now 63, reportedly said at the press conference.

Hamisu Gambo - in his July 1994 press conference, Davies named Gambo as one of ABN promoters. Gambo, a former lawmaker, is a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Katsina state.

He contested for the Senate under the PDP in 2019 but lost to the APC.

Haliru Akilu was a Director at the Directorate of Military Intelligence under the Babangida regime. He is a very close ally of Babangida and his wife and Maryam Babangida (Babangida's late wife) are cousins.

He is believed to have given the ABN all the support that emboldened its members including influencing the controversial court orders that scuttled the election.

In 2003, the Oputa Panel accused him of having a hand in the death of **journalist Dele Giwa**.

'On General Ibrahim Babangida, we are of the view that there is evidence to suggest that he and the two security chiefs, Brigadier General Halilu Akilu and Col. A. K. Togun, are accountable for the death of **Dele Giwa** by a letter bomb. We recommend that this case be re-open for further investigation in the public interest,' the panel said in its rep

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## **Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry**

Naija 247 News

December 21, 2022 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1438 words

### **Body**

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What is the story of Nigeria's failure as a nation? It is the the story of the failure of journalism which refused to watch over the power players but rather watch over the pockets of the journalists.

By Tunde Akande

My friend and workmate, Professor Jimi Kayode, now of Lagos State University, teaching mass communication but formerly director of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism in Lagos where we worked together told me a story about the decadence that has become of journalism and journalists in Nigeria. He was somewhere on the Lekki Ajah axis in Lagos standing at a bus stop waiting for public transport, usually bone shakers; he had no car. After waiting for some time under the intense heat he got tired but then a state-of-the-art car parked at the bus stop and the driver beckoned to him. The driver of the beautiful car happens to be a student he had trained. Jimi Kayode hopped in but was amazed at the speed of things happening in Nigeria. The student was just a few years out of the NIJ, and now he rode one of the best car models in town. 'How did you get this car?' he asked the former student. 'What do you do? Aren't you a journalist?' By that last question, Jimi was sounding the training he had received which he had also given to generations of his students; if you want money go to business, don't come to journalism but if you want fame, journalism should be your forte. If you want power, go to the civil service.

In his well-cooled car, the former student took a look at his old teacher and giggled. 'Oga,' Yoruba word for boss, he replied in a very soft tone, 'journalism has changed from your time. Today, journalism is cash and carry. Those who need the services of the journalist pay him or her in cash and kind.' He reeled out names of his editors who have landed properties in choice parts of Lagos, the nation's commercial capital, and Abuja, the nation's political capital. 'When editors collect houses and money and are sponsored on holidays abroad, what sir, do you expect the reporters to do?' Professor Jimi Kayode was dumbfounded; poverty was written all over him; he graduated in 1980 and with his donkey years as both practitioner and teacher, he was still not anywhere near his student of just a few years on the job. He was not complaining but he wondered what will happen to the profession and the society it serves.

'Journalism has become cash and carry.' That is the story of the current public spat between the journalists of Nduka Obaigbena of the ThisDay and Arise media and the journalists of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential candidates of the APC. You wonder why they are described as journalists of Obaigbena and journalists of Bola Tinubu. It is because with their money these humans have bought these journalists and they use the organs not for the public good but for the private and selfish interest of the slave merchants. The story of journalism and journalists reflect the sad story of the decline of Nigeria. It should be like that. Journalists and journalism are very important

## Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry

factors in the development of nations. Journalism was the major instrument that scared the colonial power out of Nigeria. Journalists are purveyors of information. They are to make the comfortable uncomfortable and to comfort the uncomfortable. The **journalist** is involved in the class war between the poor and the rich, the haves and the have not. His duty is to publish what power holders try to hide and to give voice to the voiceless in society. Journalism is very important to democracy. Democracy is about the free choice of the people. The people must constitute the government and even after that constitution, the people must hold those who form the government to account for how they manage the commonwealth. In Nigeria especially, where the law is either nonexistent or made weak to suit the power holders who made them or interpreted in the courts to pander to the power holders, the men and women of means have found a way to control the massive power of the media. They employ them and they bribe them.

Bayo Onanuga and **Dele** Alake in the stable of Bola Tinubu are fantastic journalists. Their first buyer was the late MKO Abiola, the late president of Nigeria that was not allowed to be by the power holders. Abiola won a popular election which was scuttled by a self-proclaimed military president, Ibrahim Babangida. The story of why IBB annulled the election of his friend is still a not fully known secret, some allege that Abiola had a drug issue in the US that made the Americans pressure IBB not to allow the richest black man then in the world to be president of Nigeria. But when Abiola had his eyes on the presidency, he procured the best journalists in the country and gave them very good salaries and good working tools. For the first time a flamboyant **journalist**, the late **Dele Giwa** rode a Mercedes Benz 200 and wore designer shirts and suits. **Dele Giwa** was a fine writer, and he became a model for all journalists in the country. **Dele** Alake, Bayo Onanuga, and a host of others joined Abiola's Concord train. They were so fierce in their duty that the Concord newspapers became the enemy of the military with whom Abiola was friendly. The journalists looked like they were fighting for the downtrodden but in real terms, they were fighting for the interest of Abiola. Bayo Onanuga refused to apologize to the military over a story and he and his team resigned from Concord to set up their own media empire, The News which became a torn in the flesh of the military.

But while The News was firing from all cylinders, it was the money of Bola Tinubu that was oiling the engine. A friend who is a **journalist** and a close friend of Onanuga and his team told me that constantly Tinubu was giving out cars and a huge chunk of money at different times to Bayo Onanuga and his team at The News. **Dele** Alake who had become Tinubu's commissioner for communication and strategy in Lagos is said to be the intermediary between Tinubu and Bayo Onanuga and his team. The truth of this relationship was brought out plainly when Onanuga and The News refused to publish anything on the story of Tinubu's drug deal allegations. In an interview, Bayo said frontally that they did not because 'we have a relationship with Tinubu'. Bayo Onanuga and his team are said to be proud owners of houses in Abuja and Lagos. Today, The News is dead, but Bayo is surviving playing a big role in Tinubu's quest to become the next president of Nigeria. Why did The News die? It had served the purpose of promoting Bayo into wealth and prominence and was not needed again. Babafemi Ojodu, one of the Bayo Onanuga's team parted ways with Tinubu and was the chief promoter of the failed Yemi Osinbajo presidency. Ojodu is a special assistant at the presidency.

Coincidentally, it is the story of the alleged drug dealing of Tinubu which The News refused to publish that is now causing a public spat between the Tinubu journalists and the Nduka Obaigbena journalists. Nduka Obaigbena came to the country with a big bang from the US, he set up a magazine, This Week, and became a big player in the media industry. But the journalists of This Week, many of them very good professionals and ethical were not smiling. Salaries may not be paid for months while with the same money earned by the sweat of these journalists, Obaigbena junketed all over the world. The story of unpaid salaries, inglorious and expensive lifestyle, and blackmailing with which the Tinubu journalists are now pinning down Nduka Obaigbena did not start with the ThisDay Arise media, they were so much talked about even in the days of This Week. This Week eventually died; some say because of these unethical behaviors. It gave rise first to ThisDay, then Arise, still with the character of This Week.

What then is the story of Nigeria's failure as a nation? It is the story of the failure of journalism which refused to watch over the power players but rather watch over the pockets of the journalists. It is the story of a Tinubu, an MKO Abiola, a Michael Ibru, an Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, a Nduka Obaigbena, an Orji Kalu, all of them rent seekers who discovered that the souls of Nigerian journalists can be bought; bought them and derailed the dream of Nigeria using their massive media power. Let the Tinubu - Obaigbena public spat continue so the Nigerian public will know

## Journalism Is Now Cash And Carry

what has happened in the secret that has affected their lives for the worse. Perhaps the public might change their voting behavior.

Tunde Akande is both a journalist and pastor. He obtained a Master's degree in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos

**Load-Date:** December 22, 2022

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## **Who Replaces Adedayo Among Nigerian Journalists?**

Nigerian Tribune

June 26, 2019 Wednesday

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**Length:** 216 words

### **Body**

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Last week, it was widely reported that the Senate President, Senator Ahmad Lawan had withdrawn the appointment earlier given to Dr. Festus Adedayo as his Senior Media and Publicity Adviser following the reactions from critics on Social Media that Dr. Adedayo was Anti-Buhari.

Over the years, Dr. Adedayo has been using his pen to inform those in position of authority to put the right pegs in the right holes and to do good. I know Dr. Adedayo very well as a fearless veteran and brilliant journalist. This is what impressed Senator Lawan to appoint him as his media adviser. Dr. Adedayo should thank Allah for this. This a great moment in his life. After all, you are still alive. It is the appointment given to you that your critics came out on social media to take from you, not your life.

Dr. Adedayo, you and I were alive when the evil men sent a letter bomb to Mr. Dele Giwa and he lost his life in the process of opening the letter. God will not give them your life to take. Be assured that better days are coming when Allah in His infinite mercy will take you to the seat of vice president of Nigeria when your enemies will come around to beg for food Insha Allah.

Senator Lawan has proven to be a true democrat by giving you an appointment. I wish Senator Lawan a successful tenure in office.

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2019

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## **Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]**

This Day (Lagos)

December 11, 2015

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**Length:** 3300 words

**Byline:** Godwin Etakibuebu

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Mustafa Adebayo Balogun, more known as Tafa Balogun, was appointed Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Force on 6th of March 2002, from the rank of Assistant Inspector General of Police (Zone One in Kano), shortly after the brutal assassination of an incumbent Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Nigeria; Chief Bola Ige, on December 23, 2001. Tafa Balogun, in his first public address to the Media as IGP, vowed to "fish out those who killed Chief Bola Ige". Many Nigerians believed him, maybe because Muhammadu Gambo (a feared and smart former inspector general of police) brought Tafa Balogun up in the Police Force or just because Musiliu Smith; the non-performing Inspector General of Police Balogun succeeded, could not do anything tangible throughout his tenure, including the killing of Bola Ige.

I was not one of those Nigerians that believed Tafa, not because he could not do what he vowed he would do but because he would not be allowed to do it even if he were to throw all he had into the investigation. So, when I got him on phone to congratulate him on his appointment as IGP, I asked him a pertinent question. "Oga IG, I read about your vow to 'fish out killers of Bola Ige', will you really be able to fish them out, arrest them and prosecute them with whatever evidence to secure conviction in the Nigerian courts of law if the killers are the same people that appointed you as IGP?". Whatever the answer was and the discussion that followed cannot be menu on the table of this work.

Above preamble is chosen deliberately to help us secure better understanding to the subject-matter on the quality of investigations that took place when **Dele Giwa**; a Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Newswatch Magazine, was killed on 19th October 1986, through parcel-bomb in his house on No. 25 Talabi Street, off Adeniyi Jones Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos. The **Dele Giwa** matter has proved further the fact that truth is very hard to kill. Or, how else can it be justified that almost 30 years after blowing the **journalist** out of life, with the first-ever parcel-bomb manifestation in Nigeria, the argument on the path-way of the investigation is suddenly taking a front-burner? It is because, the truth, like smoke of any type, cannot be covered forever. Yet the present debate is not anything about identifying and arresting the killer (or killers) of **Dele Giwa** but what we have instead is dramatics and furious noises of accusations and counter-accusations among the 'so-called' personae dramatis of investigators and close associates/relations of the victim.

## Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]

Chris Omoben; a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, now a Pastor and eighty years of age, opened the can of worn recently when he gave reasons for his failure; as the most top police officer in charge of the **Dele Giwa** investigation in 1986, in getting to the root of the matter, inclusive of not being able to apprehend the killers of **Dele Giwa**. There was no doubt that the old retired police officer exaggerated his story.

Yes, he did, mostly in his claim about how he was "frustrated by the Newswatch leadership for not being able to interrogate Kayode Soyinka". He also might not have used the proper language when he painted the "not-too-good relationship" between "**Dele Giwa** and his estranged wife" but that is not to say that a former wife of **Dele Giwa**'s role in the "instrument that delivered the parcel to the victim's house that fateful day" did not come under scrutiny while the investigation lasted. I shall come to this later. Let us understand a fact clearly here that Chris Omoben, in his revelation, did not mention Senator Florence Ita-**Giwa** as the "estranged" former wife and it could not have been fait accompli on the respected Senator, who was married to **Giwa** for only ten months or even less, because **Dele Giwa** had more than "one ex-wife".

Another point that needed to be quickly established before we move ahead is that as much as the retired DIG did not present all the "facts" of the case, which he had (or could it be he has forgotten most of those facts due to old age?), all those antagonising and calling him unworthy names today are as guilty as the old man because they are holding back more facts of events that happened then than they knew. Most of these **Dele Giwa**'s "friends, colleagues and relations" plus some of these "vocal and fearless police investigators" are being economical with truth of events on the case. I happened to know "very little" about a "few things" around the episode of **Dele Giwa**'s death. How did I know what I knew need to be established quickly if this presentation is to be judiciously evaluated and accepted as narration of "someone with limited knowledge" of the issue.

I was then reporting and writing for the Punch Newspapers in two major fields of Maritime and Crime, with very good contacts and connections in both sectors. In addition to reporting, I maintained regular columns; Maritime on every Tuesday and on Current Affairs every Wednesdays (OPED page). It may be in appreciation of my knowledge of the Nigerian crime community and the Nigerian Security Agencies (especially the Police Organisation) probably, that the Editor of Punch Newspapers (Daily); Najeem Jimoh, made me "Head of Crime Bureau" for the Punch. I must admit that the title itself was strange to me but nevertheless, in that capacity, I anchored most of the first-generation stories on Cocaine and other related hard drugs for the Punch Newspapers than any other Nigerian newspapers and magazines. And all those reports were as result of directly meeting and interviewing those involved - both police officers and arrested suspected couriers.

Sometimes I spoke to hard crime promoters, including drug barons, whom I cultivated during the course of my active practise as a Crime reporter and these were influential people within the Nigerian society - people who understood the game-play of "gentlemen agreement". One of those barons introduced me to Gloria Okon (her real names are different) in Lagos, long before the alleged arrest and death of this beautiful woman in Kano was announced by the security agency. Let us look at few of my encounters to appreciate the level of my involvement cum the derivable knowledge from the (my) participation.

With the explicit permission of the Police Authority, I sat with the first three Nigerians ever executed for drug (cocaine) pushing in Nigerian history, namely: Lawal Ojuolape, Bernard Ogedengbe and Bartholomew Owoh for comprehensive interview that lasted four days, while we played the game of draft, at Alagbon Close's office of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). They told me all they knew about the "business" and how it would be "foolish for the government to talk of death in a business that we are all involved" - these were their words. This took place while they were waiting for trial and during the trial itself because they were kept in Alagbon all through the trial and only transferred to Kirikiri Maximum prison after death sentence was passed on them and the Punch Newspaper was the only media in the country that reported this detailed account.

Punch Newspapers published three centre-spread on Gladys Iyamah; the first female cocaine trafficker sentenced to death by firing squad in 1985 (but was never executed, not at least publicly), after this writer conducted a seven-day exclusive interview with her at Alagbon (again by the authorisation of the Police Force], an exercise that included visiting her husband (name with-held) in his CMS-Marina's First Bank office before meeting with her two midget sons (Gladys claimed that she did not know the substance she was caught with at the airport was cocaine

## Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]

but was misled to believing that it was a medicine substance she was to deliver to a doctor in London for the treatment of her two midgets sons) I took pictures of the midgets in their house in Ketu, Lagos, and these were published in the Punch Newspaper along the story.

When the story of Gloria Okon; the alleged drug courier arrested in Kano and said to have died in Police custody happened, it was the Punch Newspapers that broke the story on the first day and yours sincerely travelled to Kano to "verify things". I also knew that the dead body presented in Kano was not that of the beautiful Gloria Okon I have always known and whom I later met and had drink with in London at a later date. But unlike **Dele Giwa** who discussed(as alleged) his meeting with the same Gloria Okon in London with some people in government, I remained mute on neither knowing any Gloria Okon nor meeting with her till this write-up.

The Bible says "wisdom is profitable to direct" in the book of Proverbs. I am saying this to highlight a fact that one's knowledge of the crime industry, albeit cocaine movement per se, does not kill. Instead, it is in trying to make money through "some unholy alliances" of what one knows about the industry that was a sure way of signing one's death warrant, as it was then. I don't know what the rules entail now.

I need to say this as it may help in deepening our understanding of the subject-matter more so when the suspected basis of killing **Dele Giwa**, as mostly rumoured and accepted generally, was "his knowledge of cocaine and some highly placed couriers of the product", mostly the Gloria Okon angle. This may be true but there could be extension beyond just the knowledge for the conspiracy of "killing him" to have been enacted and prosecuted. Even in the crime world there are respected rules of engagement. Let us now go to the death and investigation of **Dele Giwa**.

I saw the mutilated (at the upper part of his two legs, just before the torso) body of **Dele** 'raw', as he laid on that stretcher naked, at the First Foundation Hospital on Opebi Road in Ikeja, Lagos, at about noon of that Sunday. Dr Tosin conducted four of us, Najeem Jimoh (Punch Editor), Umoren (Punch Chief Photographer), Titi Oshodi (Concord Crime Reporter) and me, into the room where **Dele** breathed his last. Looking at the face of a man I had drink with some days back in the house of David Isang (David Isang, a commissioner of Police in charge of Police Public Relations Department, hosted a few trusted **journalist**-friends of his), I was over-whelmed by anger against the killers because what I saw was a brutal and heinous way to terminate life.

I was in **Dele**'s residence on 25, Talabi Street, off Adeniyi Jones Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos, in the evening of the same day, 19th October, at about 5pm and to my greatest joy, I met a very senior police officer in the person of CT Duwon. Duwon; a personal friend and ally (we had collaborated on many crime investigations in the past), then a Deputy Commissioner of Police at the CID in Alagbon, undoubtedly was the most accomplished police detective of his time, by all standard of rating, well respected both at 'home and abroad' for his uncommon efficiency in crime investigation.

Though he was the first most senior police officer to visit the "scene of crime" with his other colleague-officers and men, the situation he met was not palatable as there were more of personnel from the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) and State Security Services (SSS) on ground and these two groups started, without announcing it, dictating the path of investigation, even on that very first day. We (Duwon and me) moved to a corner and discussed the matter for about five minutes before I left to the Punch office. Permit me to add quickly that this thorough officer, who was an authority on crime issues, was later to be 'killed' in his office at Force Headquarters when he was processing final details on cocaine report through "capsule detonation" by some "gentlemen visitors" - a fact the Police Authority would rather consign to oblivion.

The Crime Reporters' Association of Nigeria, had an office at the second floor of the Kam Salem Police Headquarters building on Molony Street, Lagos, (a facility I facilitated and so approved by the Inspector General of Police late in 1984) where we met weekly on Wednesdays but on Monday 21st, a day after the killing, we met there to peruse the tragic situation and adopt a methodology of fully being involved in the investigation.

My colleagues assigned me the responsibility of "coordinating" with the security agencies; we however gave responsibility of covering the military to a female colleague (not mentioning her name is deliberate in her own interest) who had such commanding influence of most top military of officers of that era, while we agreed that "no individual of us would go to press until total clearance is obtained". Our finding, as we were to discover earlier,

## Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]

could not help much in getting to the bottom of the investigation or assist in getting to "home of justice" as long as some individuals remained alive in the country. Yet, we continued on it until many things happened, which cautioned us to "do other things" - and here are few of them.

One, the man who drove the Peugeot 404 car; the very car that brought the parcel-bomb, with three other occupants in the car, to Dele Giwa's residence was arrested by the police and brought to Alagbon and the man (driver of the car) was alleged to be a driver of "a former wife of Dele Giwa". I did not know which of the "former wife of Dele Giwa" this particular influential woman was but what I did know was that "pressure from above" compelled police investigators to release the man (the driver) within twenty four hours without taking his written statement - what he verbatim confessed earlier was thrown into the dustbin of history.

Two, on the day when the driver (of the Peugeot 404) was picked up by the police, Lieutenant Colonel AK Togun, then Assistant Director with the SSS, visited one very influential woman who was "very close to Dele Giwa" and spent almost "three hours" with this woman somewhere in Lagos. Investigators believed that the purpose of that visit "was to blackmail the woman to compromise as regards the participation of the driver in delivering the parcel-bomb" because the involvement of the driver as regards the part he played was never in doubt.

Three, the closest that our (Crime Reporters' Association of Nigeria) investigation went was that "two serving Nigerian Army Majors" participated in putting the parcel-bomb together and there was another back-up car behind the Peugeot 404 on the journey to deliver the parcel-bomb and this back-up car had four occupants, three Nigerians and one foreigner. One of these four occupants (a serving officer of the Nigerian Army) was to die few months later, allegedly of "heart attack" while driving with his wife somewhere in Kaduna. Too many dirty things happened in the military then - these were captured vividly and factually by the female colleague in the Crime Reporters' Association of Nigeria I earlier mentioned.

Chris Omoben sent for me, after the release of the "big madam's driver", and I met him in his office Alagbon. He jokingly accused me of not "coming around to say hello to me, yet I know you are always around". I replied him saying, "you are now a very big man with higher responsibility before this Dele matter, hence I must not be seen as disturbing you sir". I had known him closely for many years before his movement to Federal Investigation & Intelligence Bureau as a DIG. He wanted to know how much I could help him, "it is me, your brother and friend, and not the police, that you are helping Godwin", were his exact words.

I told him that the Crime Reporters' Association had even mandated me to secure an interview appointment with him on this Dele Giwa matter. He objected vehemently to the request yet, we spoke lengthily, off record though, on the investigation. In concluding, he demanded of me not to "report all you hear or know about this case because it is more complicated than any individual can handle". I accepted his advice because I related with him as my senior brother and as I left his office after thanking him preciously, I knew that investigation to the death of Dele Giwa shall remain a closed case perpetually. I told my colleagues in the Crime Reporters' Association of Nigeria this that afternoon and I told my Editor same in the evening.

The question of who killed Dele Giwa shall never be in contention as retired Major Debo Bashorun (Military Press Secretary to President Ibrahim Babangida between 1985 and 1988) has made that task of identification easier in his book - Honour for sale: an inside account of the murder of Dele Giwa -where he accused his boss (IBB) of killing Dele. His failure to itemise the methodology, process and ingredients of execution of the crime removed glamour from his story. In addition, he waited for twenty seven years before blowing his whistle, and only after he had been aggrieved by his principal; the same suspected killer of Dele. His testimony might be truthful and totally dependable but for two reasons.

Yes, he was a press secretary to IBB from 1985 to 1988 but that did not make him one of the most trusted inner caucus loyalists of the dictator. If he had been, he would have either participated in the plan or have the details of those two Majors. Two, for waiting until he was aggrieved before speaking out has nothing to do with his "clean conscience" as he would make us believe in his narration, except again, he had told us "those few dirty assignments" he prosecuted for IBB. Finally, retired Major Debo Bashorun's "collaboration in silence" for twenty seven years adds no beauty to his revelation.

## Dele Giwa's Death and Investigation - Why the Truth Cannot Be Told [opinion]

Why did Ibrahim Babangida and his men kill **Dele Giwa** therefore? The answer to this question was in the hands of Lieutenant Colonel AK Togun and he gave it to some selected journalists he spoke with at Ikeja airport on the 27th or thereabout of October, 1986. Listen to him. "One person cannot come out to blackmail us. I am an expert in blackmail. I can blackmail very well. I studied propaganda, so no one person can come and blackmail us after agreement".

The man told you here that there was an agreement on "forbidden area" of a particular discussion he and some people reached with **Dele Giwa** and that **Dele** did not respect the "gentleman" agreement. Either non-respect for that "agreement - whatever the agreement was - was enough to kill him should be a subject for another exercise of another day. The deducible fact of intention to commit the crime - to wit killing **Dele Giwa**, going by Lt-Col Togun evidence-in-chief, was "going back on agreement reached" or attempting making gains, either in monetary form or in patronage form, from "the road agreed not pass". He simply but indirectly admitted to the killing to the extent of giving reason, albeit blackmail.

Final question would be why using such most sophisticated and unconventional instrument of parcel-bomb, which was new to Nigeria, with its attendant's expected suspicion and curiosity when the same job could have been done with simple and non-questionable method of "road accident or even robbery attack"? The answer to this question is simple, and it was for the same reason that Lt-Col AK Togun announced it with all audacity at the airport interview quoted above that "one person cannot come out to blackmail us . . . I am an expert in blackmail".

The use of an unprecedented parcel-bomb and the public admission of "being expert in blackmail", are the mafia way of sending the message clearer to those who might want to dare in the future that "life is the I.O.U of the loser" in that "particular game". May God forgive **Dele Giwa** whatever sins (if there were any) that were accounted to him by his killers so that his soul can rest in perfect peace, while God should please; give us leaders and helpers in place of dealers and killers. Amen!

Godwin Etakibuebu, a commentator on current affairs, wrote from Lagos

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2015

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## Uncle Ray is 75

PM News

August 6, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1612 words

### **Body**

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By Sam Akpe Sylvanus Ukaafia, a medical doctor and pastor, has fun memories of his first encounter with Ray Ekpu. His father, the late Owen Ukaafia, an accomplished journalist in his own right, worked at the once bubbling Nigerian Chronicle in Calabar, where Ekpu started his journalism career.

The senior Ukaafia kept feeding his son daily with juicy stories of excellent journalism, exemplified by the man we love to call Uncle Ray. Meanwhile, Sylvanus took to reading Ray's stories and weekly column in the Nigerian Chronicle avidly, hoping to, one day, meet him in flesh.

Then it happened, unexpectedly. Although he told me the full story years back, I cannot recall the exact circumstances, except that Sylvanus had attended an event as a student, and Uncle Ray was there.

When Sylvanus introduced himself, Ray took interest, because the surname sounded familiar. He stretched his arm and Sylvanus eagerly grabbed the hand.

It was a historic handshake. On reaching home, Sylvanus kept his right hand in his pocket.

He refused to either shake anybody, wash the hand or engage in any domestic chores. Concerned about the strange behaviour, his father asked what could have happened to him.

The answer stunned the old man: "I met Ray Ekpu today. We had a handshake, and I'm not washing this hand."

" Well, he couldn't keep it that way forever. That's the kind of magnetic impact Uncle Ray and his journalism have had on people.

William Michael, in his book, Secrets of Personal Magnetism, states that potential charm or magnetism is the heritage of every human. Through it, people can accomplish missions which would otherwise be impossible.

However, only a few know about it. You just cannot encounter Uncle Ray -- either physically or through his writings -- and walk away non-confiscated by the aura of his persona.

## Uncle Ray is 75

Something will either turn you on towards him or make you feel like saying: who the heck does he think he is! Whichever way your impression goes, you must notice him. On meeting Uncle Ray, even for the first time, you will either get mesmerised by his uncommon baritone, be captivated by his unhindered, gripping, friendly and mentoring smile, or be stupefied by his blunt responses to issues.

I find him to be simple and humble. He demonstrated this with regard to me twice -- in 2014 and 2022. In 2014, he was a delegate to the National Conference called by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

I was part of the administrative structure of the Conference, courtesy of my boss, Akpandem James, who was a principal officer there. After being drafted in as a rapporteur and later given the glorified title of media advisor to James, I met Uncle Ray just after the inauguration of the Conference.

I boldly walked up to him and introduced myself. Suddenly, he turned on his trademark charisma.

It still remains difficult to know whether he recalled my previous casual encounters with him or he was just his usual friendly self towards total strangers. With a hand on my shoulder, he pulled me aside with a fatherly smile and a conversation started.

Uncle Ray has a way with words. I have dreamt of being his remote journalism student.

Several decades later, I am yet to secure admission into his exclusive journalism school of bold expressions; smooth language full of metaphors and euphemisms; impeccable, factual presentations; and audacious short sentences and punchy words, pulled from his inexhaustible store-house of rich vocabulary. Both of us sat in James' office for over an hour.

The Conference was yet to kick-off fully, so he had all the time for this curious small boy. I mentioned to him my internship at the Nigerian Chronicle in 1985 -- a place he cut his journalism teeth in.

I told him how I loved to read his weekly column, and reminded him of an article he wrote entitled, "Enter Col. Ahmadu Adah Ali.

" This ignited a big laughter from him. He opened up.

I asked questions about his exploits in journalism. He responded.

He talked about his brotherhood with **Dele Giwa** and the impact of **Dele**'s death on him personally; his (Ray's) journalism exploits at the Nigerian Chronicle, the Sunday Times, Business Times and how he joined and left the National Concord. Then he spoke about an idea that became Newswatch.

All along, I kept asking myself: is this the fire-spitting legend himself so humble, so accommodating talking to an ordinary me? It was a dream privilege. Then someone far above my level came and dragged him away.

In June 2022, I had another privileged opportunity of sitting down with Uncle Ray for a brief chat. James and I had just completed a book: The National Conversation: Intrigues and Interests that Shaped the 2014 National Conference.

Before its public presentation, I was in Lagos to deliver a copy of the book to two people. Uncle Ray was one of them.

**Related News** On arriving at his apartment, he was at the gate to receive me personally. I felt humbled by this gesture.

He ushered me into his modest dwelling place with such eagerness and undisguised attention that renewed my positive impression of him. For the next 40 minutes or so, we chatted like old friends.

He created such an atmosphere that made me long for a repeat visit. Uncle Ray has a way with words.

## Uncle Ray is 75

I have dreamt of being his remote journalism student. Several decades later, I am yet to secure admission into his exclusive journalism school of bold expressions; smooth language full of metaphors and euphemisms; impeccable, factual presentations; and audacious short sentences and punchy words, pulled from his inexhaustible store-house of rich vocabulary.

As I write this tribute, I am again looking at that article on Ahmadu Ali, published in the Nigerian Chronicle style book as an example of what a feature story should look like -- full of lucid, seasoned, non-abusive, authoritative, non-libelous and instructive language. At that time, Colonel Ali, a medical doctor, was Education Minister.

As early as then (1978), Uncle Ray had developed a writing style that has remained everlasting -- witty and bold. This is one of the paragraphs with a description of Ali: "A short stumpy man, always spotting a full-stop moustache, pipe-puffing, Col Ali has a round boyish face that tells a lie about his age.

Col. A.

A. A.

was 42 last March 1." Another paragraph: "I do not know whether Ali is a soldier or a physician, a soldier-physician or a physician-soldier.

His ambivalence is that of a man whose vocation teaches the preservation of life, but whose occupation teaches how to destroy it. It's the ambivalence of a man who is trying to make his psyche obey two sets of laws, two sets of ethics, two sets of behavioural norms, and to foster two images in one person.

It cannot be easy." Uncle Ray could be quite picturesque in his writing.

Recalling the death of Giwa in a column published in Newswatch of 17 November, 1986, he captured in prose the picture of a shirt that was ironed for Giwa to wear that day, but which would never be worn because the bomber arrived just before noon, when Giwa would have put on the shirt: "The shirt hangs there, doing a gentle dance whenever the breeze blows its little flute. The shirt hangs there, mute and isolated like an orphan" Talk about style, here is the first paragraph of a column he wrote in Newswatch magazine on 4 February, 1985, entitled, "Snorters, Swiggers, Shooters.

" He states: "Oil boom. The big contracts.

Billions. Billions.

Then millions. Then a burst.

And the contracts vanished. Since Nigeria abhors a vacuum in the money-making business, the coke man came along.

At first slowly, imperceptibly, then furiously. A new life had happened, a style of drugs' smuggling and sniffing.

" Uncle Ray could be quite picturesque in his writing. Recalling the death of Giwa in a column published in Newswatch of 17 November, 1986, he captured in prose the picture of a shirt that was ironed for Giwa to wear that day, but which would never be worn because the bomber arrived just before noon, when Giwa would have put on the shirt: "The shirt hangs there, doing a gentle dance whenever the breeze blows its little flute.

The shirt hangs there, mute and isolated like an orphan" Ray Ekpu undoubtedly remains one of the revered high priests of the practice of journalism, both within and outside Africa. He practices the profession with a consistent touch of excellence.

Most of the times, it is not what he writes that thrills; but how he writes it. Sometimes, it is both.

Unfortunately, it is the same cherished, bold style that has put him in and out of jail several times -- without a conviction. It was unquestionably based on these bold strides in journalism that an award on investigative reporting

### Uncle Ray is 75

was instituted for Akwa Ibom-based journalists in July 2021 by Udom Inoyo, a former executive vice chairman of ExxonMobil, in honour of Uncle Ray.

The award, which comes with a princely N500,000 prize, has already been won twice. It is administered by an independent body of tested journalists, headed by Nsikak Essien, former editor of the defunct National Concord.

The body also has as members Kayode Komolafe (KK), a columnist and deputy managing director of ThisDay newspaper; Akpandem James, an old boy of Concord, Punch and Daily Independent; Professor Ini Uko of the University of Uyo; Amos Etuk, the NUJ chairman and Mrs Emem Nkereuwem, from Inoyo Toro Foundation. My mission today is simply to say happy birthday to Uncle Ray.

Pardon me for taking you on a journey. It is difficult to say anything about Uncle Ray without a little x-ray on his writing style.

Ray Ekpu is journalism and journalism is him. Happy Birthday, Sir.

(To be continued). Sam Akpe is a journalist and editor.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2023

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## **Vanguard Reporter: Police Must Produce Killers Of Tordue Salem, Says Omo-Agege**

Nigerian Tribune

November 12, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 426 words

### **Body**

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The Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege has tasked the Nigerian Police and other security agencies to conduct a thorough investigation that would expose the individuals behind the killing of Vanguard reporter, Tordue Henry Salem.

Tordue, who was last seen last month was found dead in Abuja in the late hours of Thursday, after allegedly being knocked down by a hit-and-run vehicle.

Before the unfortunate incident, he was a reporter with Vanguard Newspaper covering the House of Representatives.

Reacting to the development in a statement signed by Yomi Odunuga, Special Adviser, Media and Publicity

the Deputy President of the Senate, the Senator representing Delta Central called 'for conclusive investigations that'll unmask all those involved in Tordue's death.'

While he acknowledged that a suspect

Itoro Clement - a commercial driver who allegedly knocked down and killed the journalist has been paraded by the police, Senator Omo Agege however noted that the development has raised further questions on the circumstances leading to his demise.

The Delta Central lawmaker noted that providing the missing puzzle is the only way to bring closure on the matter, adding that anything short of this would add to the list of unresolved murders of journalists carrying out their constitutional duties.

'The news of the killing of Mr Tordue Henry Salem came to me as a rude shock, especially as it came barely 48-hours after the Senate and House of Representatives passed separate resolutions tasking security agencies to intensify efforts to find him and reunite him with his family.

### Vanguard Reporter: Police Must Produce Killers Of Tordue Salem, Says Omo-Agege

'I am particularly worried that this is happening at the heart of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Reports abound of kidnappings and other security breaches in the nation's capital.

'While we await further briefing from the police on who deposited Tordue's corpse in the morgue and when it was deposited, the sad development has added to the list of unresolved killings of journalists like Dele Giwa, founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine; Godwin Agbroko of ThisDay; Bagauda Kaltho of (The News); Bayo Ohu (The Guardian); Edo Sule Ugbagwu (The Nation) and Abayomi Ogundeleji (ThisDay), who were all murdered in the course of discharging their constitutional duties.

'I extend my condolences to the family, friends and associates of the deceased, the government and people of Benue State, the Vanguard family, House of Representatives Press Corps, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and pray God to give them the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.'

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2021

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## Ex-DIG Omeben Opens Up On Stalled Dele Giwa Assassination Investigation

Daily Trust (Abuja)

October 26, 2015

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Length: 688 words

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, a retired police chief, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation says the unresolved assassination is the most frustrating case he handled in his career.

Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, was killed through a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on Oct. 19, 1986.

Omeben, a former Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG), who turns 80 on Oct. 27, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places".

The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

"They said somebody brought a parcel and his son Billy received the parcel and took it to his father (Dele Giwa), who was having his breakfast that morning.

"On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there; Dele was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel.

"And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. Dele was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed.

"Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what of human flesh, what happened to Soyinka? Nobody could give me an answer.

"My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall.

"I took note of all these, went back to conduct an identification parade. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by the day watch.

"Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not.

"Because interference now came from high places to protect the man.

## Ex-DIG Omeben Opens Up On Stalled Dele Giwa Assassination Investigation

"The man was said to be related to the wife of a governor at that time and as a result of his connection we came to a dead end on that lead," the former police chief, who was in charge of the research department of the police CID, when Giwa was killed, said.

Omeben told NAN that the setback did not in any way deter him from using the evidence he had to follow the lead on Soyinka, and that he called on the Newswatch authorities to produce Soyinka.

"I have enough evidence to quiz Soyinka now. Please, Ray Ekpu can I have Soyinka now?

"They resisted up till today. Up till today Soyinka never appeared before the police.

"They started to insinuate that the assassination was masterminded by Babangida, Akilu etc.

"They said that Akilu ought to have been investigated.

"As a matter of fact, I had interrogated Akilu and he told me that yes they had invited Dele Giwa some few days before the assassination over a negative statement he made about Nigeria in a New York newspaper.

"He said that they had to invite him to tell him that he was wrong for portraying the country in bad light in the international press.

"Akilu insisted that the invitation was not enough to accuse the government of complicity in the assassination of Dele Giwa.

"He satisfied me with his explanation.

"Togun also absolved himself with his own explanation.

"The parcel bomb was said to have the Federal Government logo on it, which to me was not enough evidence.

"It was more of a circumstantial evidence. I can prove it!

"Go to any printing press if you are a "good" criminal and you are planning well, they can print it for you and place it on the parcel, and it will look as if it came from the government.

"But for me to satisfy myself, I said please gentlemen, can I have Soyinka?

"Nobody! Soyinka ran away to London that was my principal suspect!

"He did not appear until eventually I left the CID. I was retired from the police in 1989 and what happened after that I don't know,"

Omeben, now an Archbishop of the Jesus Families Ministries at Iyana Ipaja, near Lagos added.

He said that Giwa was also careless in maintaining a relationship with his estranged wife.

NAN

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015



## **NUJ Calls for End to Impunity, Crimes Against Journalists**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 03, 2021

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**Length:** 499 words

**Byline:** Innocent Anaba

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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THE Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, yesterday, urged the Federal Government to prevail on security agents across the country to stop allowing themselves to be used to suppress, oppress and intimidate journalists in the country.

The call came at an event organised by Safety and Security Watch, in collaboration with the NUJ, Lagos Council, in Lagos, to mark this year's World Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

The Lagos Council Chairman of the union, Mr. Adeleye Ajayi, through the Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Abiola Beckley, at the event, said: "Cases of killed and missing journalists are becoming more worrisome.

"A few days ago, the NUJ in the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, staged a peaceful protest at the Force Headquarters for the safe return of the missing journalist, Tordue Henry Salem of Vanguard Newspapers.

"The journalists urged the Inspector General of Police, IGP, to ensure that the journalist, who has been missing since October 13, is returned alive to his family.

"They urged the IGP to step up intelligence and investigation to unravel the mysterious disappearance of Salem.

"We are also calling on the Federal Government to reopen the investigation of journalists killed in the past, and to look into cases of journalists that were killed, attacked, kidnapped and detained, as well as make concrete efforts to apprehend the perpetrators of the acts.

They paid with their lives

"We remember Bayo Ohu of The Guardian, Godwin Agboroko of This Day, Dele Giwa of Newswatch magazine, Edo Ugbagwu of The Nation.

"We also remember Abdul Ganiyu Lawal, a Freelance Broadcast Journalist, Ikechukwu Onubogu, a Cameraman with the Anambra Broadcasting Services. Lawrence Okojie of the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, in Edo State, and Famous Giobaro, a Desk Editor with Glory FM in Bayelsa State, among others.

"Other journalists murdered are, Enenche Akogwu, Fidelis Ikwuebe, Nathan Dabak.

NUJ Calls for End to Impunity, Crimes Against Journalists

"Okezie Amaruben, Onifade Pelumi, Precious Owolabi, Sam Nimfa-Jan, Samson Boyi, Sunday Gyang Bwede, Tunde Oladepo and Zakariya Isa."

"As people who have a closely observed government in the last 21 years, we have come to appreciate all the more how important it is to protect our 'fourth estate'.

"Imposition of fines on media establishment by the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, is tantamount to gagging the press and is a threat to freedom of the press.

"The fines come at a time when media houses' ad takings are dwindling and other sources of revenue contracting in the wake of the economic recession.

"Many media houses are already worried about paying salaries.

"On this World Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, we call on all security agents across the country to stop allowing themselves to be used in suppressing, oppressing and intimidating journalists.

"Journalists are the ones who can shed light on the growth of the country and also the shortcomings and as well the mouthpiece of the masses hence should be allowed to do their jobs."

Vanguard News Nigeria

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

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## **Stanley Macebu... 10 years in mind**

The Sun (Nigeria)

March 21, 2020 Saturday

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**Length:** 1108 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Amma Ogan

It was my first job after university in 1978, and that first meeting was like a session with my college tutor. As it turned out he had attended the same institution in England, which seemed serendipitous.

There was nothing remotely aesthetic about the famous Kakawa Street office in Lagos. It was essentially a grey concrete behemoth squeezed between the more refined tower blocks of Nigeria's central business district, which served as an outer shell for the giant iron printers that churned out Africa's largest circulating newspapers, the Daily Times and its Sunday Times sister. This behemoth also had cooped inside it, the other tentacles that completed the Leviathan known as the Daily Times of Nigeria Empire, packaging real estate and other sundry titles.

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It was huge, it was ugly, it was noisy, it had no female toilet for senior staff, I had to borrow Editor Tony Momoh's keys. Its grey offices were concrete floored cubicles with single windows in the inner office where the oga sat, and artificially lit anterooms where the minions reigned. There was secretary Fidelis who truly lived up to his name, a messenger who should have been named Constant, and me, at a desk with my back to the door.

He would stride in every morning, this dapper man in a dark suit, a cigarette holder in his hand, tossing a curt greeting with a quick backward turn of the head, sometimes it sounded more like a grunt, open the door to his office and close it. The secretary would be half way out of his seat ready with the coffee, anticipating the sharp 'Fidelis!' that would come through seconds later.

## Stanley Macebuh... 10 years in mind

Ever faithful, Fidelis was. He had an innate ability to decipher Stanley's handwriting. This was the pre-computer age and reporters wrote in long hand and gave their articles to a crew of supposed school leaving certificate-qualified copy typists, who banged it out on machines that were as old as the building.

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**Dele Giwa** was completely horrified when he landed at Kakawa in 1979 as DTN Features Editor, after Stanley's inspiring spiel, to discover that reporters not only did not type their stories but were not expected to do so. He changed that immediately. For a man whose syntax had the effortless drape of silk, Macebuh's handwriting was a cramped, square lettered, hieroglyphic. If he is reading this now he should be chuckling. "You sef!"

His hands pressed through the off cuts, full stops piercing through to the sheets underneath, with angular shaped letters. He used every inch of the paper, economizing the space but imbuing every letter with an eloquence that wasted no words, was fluid and cerebral.

His appearance was always, neat conservative, compact. He was a small man, but only in that. His complexities were well hidden. There was almost fastidiousness about some of his mannerisms. If he scratched his hair mid-phrase he would do so discretely and then force it back down to remove any evidence that he had done so. He had that cigarette holder which he would chew on and insist that it was not an affectation but something to do with cutting down the number of cigarettes and probably, also, keeping the stain of nicotine off his fingers Old style **journalist** he wasn't.

I will always remember that Stanley observed the correct boundaries. This is not as common a trait as it should be. He had an honour code where people were concerned, his friends especially. He found a mission in journalism in Nigeria, which after the success of revitalizing the Daily Times, only to be met with the crassness of the political class that inhabited the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, made the move to set up The Guardian inevitable.

There is a constant tension between the men of ideas and our realist denizens of "timber and caliber", the dreamers and the moneybags, the professionals and the investors. It is more than two differing worlds; it is also a clash of cultures and in many ways at the root of the Nigerian dilemma. We are losing the ability to articulate the values we once had because we are in danger of forgetting the language and practice of how to live well, materially and morally.

Patrick **Dele** Cole, **Dele Giwa** and Stanley Macebuh are three men and three friends, whose interventions redefined and refined the best of Nigerian journalism in the last three decades. Of the three, PD Cole epitomizes a successful balance of the tensions that Stanley was sometimes unable to resolve, while **Giwa** remained a skilled journeyman and a feisty and perceptive realist till he was assassinated under the military fist of a man who now thinks he can become president, again.

Those who Stanley brought to The Guardian, and they include a host of venerable names, were also enablers, inspired by the values he adhered to, intellectually and professionally, the success he achieved and the possibilities he promised.

Stanley Macebuh was not a "politician", a euphemism for the set of 'skills' you need to navigate our social system. He sometimes trusted too easily and too much. But he was a bigger man than many of the rascals he had to deal with, and as far as a mind was concerned, his towered above them all.

- Amma Ogan, veteran **journalist**, lives in South Africa

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Stanley Macebu... 10 years in mind

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The post Stanley Macebu... 10 years in mind appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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**Load-Date:** May 21, 2020

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## **The Controversial Lekki Conundrum**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

November 2, 2020 Monday

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**Length:** 1084 words

**Byline:** Ayodeji Ajayi

### **Body**

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Apart from the months they gladly celebrate their birthdays annually amidst pomp and pageantry with galaxy of eminent personalities from far and near in attendance, in addition to thanking the Almighty for the invaluable gifts of life and livelihood, one seemingly unique month many Nigerians, irrespective of political, religious, ethnic, cultural or occupational differences, profusely and unwaveringly cherish so dearly every year, is October \_\_\_\_ the 10th month. It was on October 1, 1960 that our beloved country, Nigeria and Black Africa's most populous nation, formally gained political independence from its age-long colonial master – Britain. Interestingly too, Nigeria became a Republic on October 1, 1963. Therefore, it is no surprise that since then, the country and its citizens who are mostly profoundly impoverished despite abundant oil and gas resources, as well as vast human and other natural resources largely due to successive years of bad governance by selfish, incompetent, clueless, insensitive and corrupt military and civilian leaders, have been observing October 1 every year as not only national public holiday but also with mixed feelings even if they are visibly angry, hungry and poverty-stricken.

Going down memory lane, the month of October in Nigeria, over the years, has been associated with the good, the bad and the ugly. It is those that are directly deeply affected, especially negatively, that actually know where the shoes pinch them painfully. This, in particular, concerns those that due to unforeseen circumstances arising from consequences of visionless leadership, had at one time or the other, lost loved ones, as well as invaluable properties in the month of October in such a way that the irreparable losses could if care is not taken, have life-long incalculable indelible emotional, psychological and mental causalities on affected individuals, families, friends, groups and even countries.

A typical disastrous occurrence of historic importance that also attracted condemnation, controversy and public outrage from both within and outside Nigeria was the widely reported assassination of one of the country's highly celebrated and successful journalists of international repute, **Dele Giwa**. The manner in which the handsome, enterprising and adventurous pioneer Editor-In-Chief of NEWWATCH Magazine was wickedly killed in his Ikeja, Lagos residence while taking what obviously turned out to be his last breakfast on earth that black Sunday, was not only ingenious but also unprecedented in Nigeria. This is especially why perpetrators of the novel dastardly act that

## The Controversial Lekki Conundrum

occurred on Sunday, October 19, 1986 and has since robbed our dear country and the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) of one of the shining stars in the noble profession of Journalism are yet to be found and brought to book to serve as a deterrent to others with blood-thirsty intentions in their warped minds.

**ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW OVER 2,000 NIGERIAN MEN ARE NOW NATURALLY OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!**

Many Nigerians, including members of the international community must have observed with the usual surprise and regret that on Monday, October 19, 2020 which coincidentally, marked exactly 34 years since life was snuffed out of defenceless Giwa on that ill-fated day which inevitably culminated in the unending question – Who Killed Dele Giwa? , the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is yet to find his killers who are probably still freely roaming the streets. The assassination of the brave journalist on October 19, 1986 via parcel bomb which reportedly shattered his body beyond recognition was executed professionally in such a way that he would never come out of the gruesome act alive. The black Sunday was a day Nigeria joined the list of countries with unenviable record of human fatalities due largely to use of parcel bomb purposely meant to kill. This was why when Giwa was killed, sad news concerning the unfortunate incident swept across the country and beyond with volcanic speed, thereby leading to repeated requests that those that were directly or indirectly associated with the heinous act be made to face full wrath of the law. Unfortunately, 34 years afterwards, these genuine requests from members of the public, as well as the global community seem to have fallen on deaf ears under successive administrations. On October 19, 2021, it would be exactly 35 years since brilliant, lively and caring Giwa – an illustrious citizen of Nigeria who hailed from Edo State had his glorious star-studded professional accomplishments abruptly aborted and precious life terminated untimely at a relatively young age of only 39.Sadly, the unending catalogue of avoidable loss of lives and property, especially in the month of October resurfaced recently following reported killings, lootings and maimings across the country. Angry youths, in their millions, had for almost three weeks, staged peaceful protests in parts of the country demanding immediate disbandment of the infamous blood-thirsty, trigger-happy and killer-Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), as well as holistic reform of the corruption-ridden Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Unfortunately, as usual, the largely peaceful and well organised and co-ordinated protests were later infiltrated by hoodlums that reportedly killed and maimed innocent and unarmed citizens, as well as looted and destroyed public and private properties in various parts of the country. The most topical issue continuously generating heated controversies and outrage within and outside Nigeria is the ill-fated conundrum or mayhem that occurred at the famous strategically located Lekki Toll Gate Plaza in high-brow part of Lagos State – Nigeria's fast-growing commercial capital. The saddening development there on black Tuesday, October 20, 2020, during which soldiers were alleged to have descended heavily on unarmed youths on ENDSARS peaceful protests, resulting in claims and counter-claims concerning numbers of those allegedly injured or killed, could have been averted if our political leaders had responded promptly to yearnings of the citizenry for good governance while the military and other security agencies had performed their statutory duties responsibly and professionally.

**HOW A CHINESE DOCTOR DISCOVERED AN ANCIENT AND BRILLIANT CURE FOR ANY SORT OF EYE PROBLEM. I THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE... CLICK TO LEARN MORE!!!**

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/69/160436238062.jpeg>

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2020

My good friend Ojeagbase gone for good



## **My good friend Ojeagbase gone for good**

The Sun (Nigeria)

March 5, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 1201 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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My plan this week was to write on the David-and-Goliath fight playing out horrifically on the world scene between the underdogs of Ukraine led by a Churchillian wartime leader, President Zelensky versus Vladimir Putin, the ruthless Russian oligarch.

I was about writing on Ukraine and Russia when the saddest of all news came announcing the death of my good friend Dr. Sunny Ojeagbase, the doyen and the pillar of sports journalism in Nigeria. The visionary ex-soldier, journalist and entrepreneur who single-handedly created a newspaper that became the template for future sports journalism in Nigeria. Last year when he was 70, I wrote a piece on him titled "70 YEARS OF OJEAGBASEISM." It's so sad that he died so early at 71. But it isn't how long you lived but the impact you made. Dr. Ojeagbase was a great man who left his imprints on sports journalism. For his 70th birthday, I sent Dr. Ojeagbase a birthday greeting on WhatsApp:

"To God be the glory. Happy 70th birthday to a great man of God and a great man of Journalism. I rejoice with you on reaching this landmark age. My prayer is that you will see more and more years in good health and prosperity. You are a survivor because the Lord is in your corner. Continually, you will be a winner to the glory of He who sent you. Happy birthday."

He replied: "Thank you, my brother, Mike. Thank you for ALWAYS being there. I thank GOD for letting our paths cross. May GOD continue to bless you and your wonderful family every day of your life. Love you!"

So, how did our paths cross such that we became "neighbours" sharing the upper floors of two three-bedroom flats in Egbeda area of Lagos, in those days of humble beginnings? It's a long story which started from Kaduna where I was the Chief Correspondent of Chief MKO Abiola's Concord newspaper group and I wrote for the legendary editor of the then Sunday Concord the late Dele Giwa compelling articles which dazzled him, such that he created for me

### My good friend Ojeagbase gone for good

a column called "Reporter's Notebook" where I started as a columnist. For Sunny Ojeagbase who was the Sports Editor of Sunday Concord, I also wrote a piece on Diego Maradona that impressed him and got it published. From Kaduna, **Dele Giwa** brought me to Lagos to work directly under him. There I became close to Ojeagbase, living next door to each other along Akowonjo Road, Egbeda. From Concord, he moved to The Guardian as Sports Editor.

At that Egbeda flat in 1984, we witnessed the births of our children. Then one day, Ojeagbase had this divine call to start Nigeria's first sports newspaper. It was the great motivational speaker Ubong King who said: "A man with a vision is a mad man until the vision comes to pass." Ubong King did not live to see 2021. He died on December 26, 2020 at the age of 48. May his soul rest in perfect peace. And may the souls of all the millions who died last year rest in peace.

When Ojeagbase had this vision, this burning zeal to start a sports newspaper, I was the first person he approached. He came into my room with a letter of resignation which he asked me to go and drop at The Guardian. I was hesitant. I was thinking: Is he thinking right? Does this guy want to commit suicide?

For the typical **journalist** who is used to being paid a monthly salary, who hadn't imbibed the spirit of entrepreneurship, leaving paid employment was akin to suicide. I was a bit hesitant in going to drop the resignation letter. The whole episode reminded me of when King Arthur in his dying days asked Sir Bedivere to go and throw his sword, Excalibur, into the lake but he declined. As a kid, I was fond of reading Arthurian legends. Like Sir Bedivere, I resisted but eventually submitted the resignation letter and the rest is history. Ojeagbase, armed with nothing, went to start Sports Souvenir, Nigeria's first sports newspaper which he was selling with his wife and children at the National Stadium, Surulere, during big matches. From there, God blessed him and the business grew, leading to Complete Sports and the array of international sports magazines and newspapers, making him the undisputed King of Nigeria's Sport Journalism.

Ojeagbase wrote in his memoirs: "The first time I deliberately took a faith-based, life-altering decision, knowing I was depending solely on GOD in taking the step, was when I boldly decided to start our sports publishing business without a single penny in my bank account. Before then, I had tried every method I knew to raise capital for the business. But none of them worked. Then, in October 1984, I was confronted with a big hurdle...a hard choice. The choice was that I either kept my sports editor job and adjusted to receiving lesser pay, or I quit the job and launched the sports publishing business without seed capital. I opted for the latter, putting my faith in GOD to see me through. It was a risky decision, no doubt. And I almost lost everything because of that single action, including social standing, prestige and self-worth. But in the end, the GOD I trust proved Himself to be dependable! The publishing business endured all the initial hardship that came its way. This business has been existing for more than 30 years now. And it is going very strong to the glory of Almighty GOD, our Sustainer and Great Provider."

The story of Dr. Ojeagbase goes beyond sports. It is the story of a survivor. If you read his book, "Testimony of a Kidney Failure Survivor," you will read about the "Secrets That Helped Me Overcome Sure Death and Prove the Faithfulness of GOD!"

His story is like the story of Job – a man who battled Satan and won. A man of God afflicted with life-threatening illnesses like diabetes and kidney failure but survived them all to write about his experiences. Trusting in faith healing, Dr. Ojeagbase one day, without telling his trusted wife, decided audaciously to do away with all his diabetes drugs. He writes: "There is a bridge linking Amuwo to Okota. As we approached the bridge, I told the driver to park the car at the foot of the bridge to discharge my 'cargo' without telling anyone what it was. As I threw away the cellophane bag containing my diabetes medication in the stream running under that bridge, I reaffirmed my trust in GOD that what He said in the Bible that I believe, will come to pass in my life."

That action nearly cost him his life, but for God. Many years after, a doctor forced him to return to his diabetes drugs. From kidney transplant in India to dialysis treatment in Lagos and Atlanta USA, God has miraculously rescued Dr. Ojeagbase from the shadows of death. And God has blessed him with a faithful wife Pastor (Mrs.) Esther Ojeagbase who is a big part of the Ojeagbase story. That he lived to see 70 years is by God's love, goodness and mercy to a servant who has trusted in Him. A man whose story will take many books to write. A

My good friend Ojeagbase gone for good

man who has mentored many. A quintessential self-made man who survived death as a teenage soldier during the Nigeria Civil War to a legendary sports **journalist**, to a motivator, to the progenitor of information marketing and internet entrepreneurship in Nigeria, to a kidney survivor, to an evangelist preaching the Good News of salvation.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

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## **Dele Giwa Assassination - Investigation Was Marred By Interferences From'high Places' - Ex-DIG**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 26, 2015

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**Length:** 686 words

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, a retired police chief, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation says the unresolved assassination is the most frustrating case he handled in his career. Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, was killed through a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on Oct. 19, 1986.

Omeben, a former Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG), who turns 80 on Oct. 27, told NAN on Monday that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places". The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

"They said somebody brought a parcel and his son Billy received the parcel and took it to his father (Dele Giwa), who was having his breakfast that morning. "On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there; Dele was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel. "And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. Dele was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed. "Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what of human flesh, what happened to Soyinka? Nobody could give me an answer.

"My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall. "I took note of all these, went back to conduct an identification parade. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by the day watch. "Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not.

"Because interference now came from high places to protect the man. "The man was said to be related to the wife of a governor at that time and as a result of his connection we came to a dead end on that lead," the former police chief, who was in charge of the research department of the police CID, when Giwa was killed, said.

## Dele Giwa Assassination - Investigation Was Marred By Interferences From 'high Places' - Ex-DIG

Omeben told NAN that the setback did not in any way deter him from using the evidence he had to follow the lead on Soyinka, and that he called on the Newswatch authorities to produce Soyinka. "I have enough evidence to quiz Soyinka now. Please, Ray Ekpu can I have Soyinka now?

"They resisted up till today. Up till today Soyinka never appeared before the police. "They started to insinuate that the assassination was masterminded by Babangida, Akilu etc. "They said that Akilu ought to have been investigated. "As a matter of fact, I had interrogated Akilu and he told me that yes they had invited Dele Giwa some few days before the assassination over a negative statement he made about Nigeria in a New York newspaper.

"He said that they had to invite him to tell him that he was wrong for portraying the country in bad light in the international press. "Akilu insisted that the invitation was not enough to accuse the government of complicity in the assassination of Dele Giwa.

"He satisfied me with his explanation. "Togun also absolved himself with his own explanation. "The parcel bomb was said to have the Federal Government logo on it, which to me was not enough evidence. "It was more of a circumstantial evidence. I can prove it!

"Go to any printing press if you are a "good" criminal and you are planning well, they can print it for you and place it on the parcel, and it will look as if it came from the government. "But for me to satisfy myself, I said please gentlemen, can I have Soyinka?

"Nobody! Soyinka ran away to London that was my principal suspect! "He did not appear until eventually I left the CID. I was retired from the police in 1989 and what happened after that I don't know," Omeben, now an Archbishop of the Jesus Families Ministries at Iyana Ipaja, near Lagos added. He said that Giwa was also careless in maintaining a relationship with his estranged wife.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015

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## **Ihedioha Breaks Silence, Says God Will Render Ultimate Judgment**

This Day (Lagos)

March 09, 2020

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**Length:** 772 words

**Byline:** Ejiofor Alike

### **Body**

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The immediate past Governor of Imo State, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, has broken his silence on the refusal of the Supreme Court to reverse his removal as the governor of the state, insisting that whatever might be the personal injury he suffered as a result of the miscarriage of justice, his main concern has always been the implications of the judgment on the future of Nigeria's democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count.

In his message to the people of the state yesterday, Ihedioha told those who are rejoicing about what he called their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people that: "We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment."

He also took solace in the words of the late **Dele Giwa** that: "No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary.'

Ihedioha argued that if the institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of the rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, the future of democracy is uncertain.

He noted that the well-articulated dissenting judgment delivered by Justice Centus Nweze, had vindicated his stand, adding that history and posterity would be kind to the Supreme Court justice.

"To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late **journalist, Dele Giwa**: "No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary.' We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands," he said.

He said the ruling by the Supreme Court rejecting the application to set aside its earlier judgment of January 14, 2020, was not the outcome his team worked so hard for and informed the people of the state that he knew how disappointed they felt.

"While it is disheartening to note that your desire to introduce good governance has been halted, at least for now, it is also gratifying that our modest efforts have not gone unnoticed. I, therefore, feel a sense of pride and gratitude for

## Ihedioha Breaks Silence, Says God Will Render Ultimate Judgment

the wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us," he added.

He thanked all those who played one role or another in this historic quest for justice and truth.

Ihedioha also thanked members of the diplomatic community for voicing their concerns for the stability of the country.

Ihedioha commended the chairman and members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for their vanguard role and leadership during this period.

He also thanked all Imo citizens for their uncommon support, solidarity, and collective outrage, saying never have a people been so united and committed to a cause.

"You prayed, fasted, marched, protested and even cried. You sacrificed your time, resources, and endeavour for this just cause. On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand justice and fairness. Imo people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice. Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice, and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power," he added.

He also added that he would forever be indebted to Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of good conscience, who added their voices to condemn the injustice done in his case.

"These are people unknown to me personally but who could not bear the illogic of turning number four to number one on the basis of a fraudulently procured result, and appealed to the Supreme Court to save itself and our judiciary," he said.

He lauded the contributions of the members of his legal team, who pushed the frontiers of electoral jurisprudence to advance the country's constitutional democracy.

Ihedioha also thanked his team of committed colleagues, who served in various capacities in his administration.

"It has been a great privilege to serve the people of Imo State as governor. I am proud to have been the recipient of their genuine mandate. I will forever cherish the support, solidarity, and cooperation given to me during my tenure. My belief in the ultimate triumph and supremacy of the will of the people remains intact," he added.

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2020

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## Did Investigative Journalism Die With Dele Giwa? [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

October 30, 2011 Sunday

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Length: 1182 words

### **Body**

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As the Lagos State Chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NUJ), marked the 25th anniversary of the death of **Dele Giwa**, one of the finest investigative journalists this country has ever known, fresh challenges have been thrown at his colleagues on whether the late **Giwa** died with the art form of investigative journalism. Raheem Akingbolu reports

Since the death of the pioneer Editor-in-Chief and co-founder of Newswatch magazine, Mr. **Dele Giwa**, his remembrance has always been celebrated with sobriety. But at this year anniversary lecture organised in his honour in Lagos, the tone changed from sobriety to courage.

One after the other, speakers took turn to confront upcoming journalists on the dying spirit of investigative journalism, even after the Freedom of Information (Fol) Bill has been assented to.

Rather than continue mourning **Giwa's** unexpected passage, journalists were urged to brace up to the challenge and use their profession to fight corruption and arbitrary rule. The theme of the lecture 'Hazards of Journalism Profession and Challenges of FOI Law', focused on galvanising journalists to hone their skills and unearth stories that will engender an open and transparent society.

In his address, human rights lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana, who chaired the occasion, expressed concern over the lax attitude of today's journalists. According to him, journalists have relaxed and think of human right abuse only when they are harassed or any one of them is killed unjustly.

The lawyer, who said the gathering, was in celebration of what the late **journalist** stood, for called on the media not to relax and pretend as if all is well in the land. He condemned the recent arrest of some editors of The Nation newspaper and called on the Jonathan-led administration not to allow Nigerians to begin to feel that they are backed in the dark days of the military.

On **Giwa's** death, he advised journalists to ensure that government reopens the case, saying: "It is not too late to find his killers."

Constitutional lawyer, Mr. Fred Agbaje, like other speakers at the event, said that all is not well with the Fol law. For the law to work, the lawyer suggested the need for a special court to address issues regarding the law. By doing so, he argued that the rights of members of the public and especially journalists would be protected.

## Did Investigative Journalism Die With Dele Giwa? [analysis]

"It seems investigative journalism has died with **Dele Giwa** and I think the success of our democracy would be jeopardised if journalists are not allowed to carry out their job efficiently," he said.

The guest speaker at the event was the president of the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye. In his lecture, the Vanguard newspaper managing director, who eulogised **Giwa** for his outstanding practice, quality reportage and flamboyant dress sense, said it was a national embarrassment that the question of who killed **Dele Giwa** was still a misery 25 years after.

On the FoI Act, Adefaye said it was surprising that despite the clamour that heralded its passage, most journalists do not know its content and usefulness. He stated that the law would be of great advantage to Nigerians if the capacity to use it is well spelt out.

The late **journalist**'s friend and colleague at Newswatch, Mr. Dan Agbese shocked the gathering, when he said, "25 years after he died, our dreams have died more or less." The outburst called for sober reflections and was interpreted to mean series of things that have happened since **Giwa**'s death, especially the recklessness of Nigerian leaders, which has brought international embarrassment, and what had become the fate of the celebrated magazine Newswatch, which **Giwa** labored for.

Speaking further, Agbese, called on journalists not to mourn **Giwa** on his achievement in the field of journalism but rather mourn him if reporters of today cannot sustain his legacies. He also suggested that October 19, should be set aside for the remembrance of journalists, who lost their lives in the course of duty.

Like Falana, NUJ's national president Mohammed Garba urged security agencies to stand up to their responsibilities. He lamented that the high level of insecurity in Nigeria is worrisome, adding that the way the police discharges their duty is not encouraging. To this end, he said there was a need for them to be more proactive in address security concerns, instead of embarrassing those who are carrying out their lawful duties.

Reacting to the recent arrest of journalists at The Nation, he said: "We are not arguing whether the letter in question was forged or not, our primary concern is the way and manner the arrests were made."

Deputy managing director, The Sun, Mr. Femi Adesina called for an amendment to the FoI law, arguing that it does not protect the rights of journalists and is too protective of public office holders. According to Adesina, the law is too protective of public officers with little regard for journalists. He also made a case for a special court on the law.

Lagos NUJ chairman Mr. Deji Elumoye, had earlier lamented the government's inability to bring **Giwa**'s killers to book. Urging journalists not to be intimidated, Elumoye said: "While we accept the reality of the hazards of our profession, we are bold to say that one of the hallmarks of a civilised society is its commitment to the ideals of truth, justice and fair-play, which offer the basis for prosecution and sentencing of criminals in our midst."

Concluding, Elumoye called the Nigerian Police Force to reopen investigations into the murder of **Dele Giwa**, with a view to bringing his murderers to book, adding, "We will not relent on this call until justice is seen to have been done."

CSRââÂ ª ,Training for Journalists

To accommodate more participants, organisers of a media forum, aimed at strengthening human capacity for the African media industry on Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability reporting, has extended the registration by one week, which now ends tomorrow, October 31.

The forum is being organized by ThistlePraxis Consulting, a CSR Strategy and Assessments firm.

According to the organisers, Forbes CSR Blogger and award-winning **journalist**, Aman Singh, would lead the team of facilitators for a development initiative aimed at building and strengthening human capacity development for journalists under the theme 'Effective CSR Reporting for Media Professionals'.

### Did Investigative Journalism Die With Dele Giwa? [analysis]

Other facilitators include Ken Egbas, managing partner, TruContact PR (organisers of SERAs/Nigeria CSR Awards), Ini Onuk, lead consultant/CEO, ThistlePraxis Consulting, Nigeria (organisers of the training), and Mumo Kivuitu, executive director, Ufhadili Trust in Kenya.

The organisers stated that the purpose of the training is aimed at providing background information for accurate and effective media reporting of CSR activities, policies and strategies for businesses as well as the challenges of operating on the African continent.

The initiative would also guide journalists on CSR reporting and other business issues through robust training and practical case studies with experience drawn from local and international organisations in Africa.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2011

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## Ex-DIG - Dele Giwa's Assassination Was Marred By Interference From 'High Places'

This Day (Lagos)

October 27, 2015

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**Length:** 690 words

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned **journalist, Dele Giwa**, a retired police chief, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation, has spoken out about the unresolved murder, calling it the most frustrating case of his career.

**Giwa**, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, was killed with a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on October 19, 1986.

Omeben, a former Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG), who will turn 80 today, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places".

The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

"They said somebody brought a parcel and his son Billy received the parcel and took it to his father (**Dele Giwa**), who was having his breakfast that morning.

"On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there; **Dele** was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel. "And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. **Dele** was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed.

"Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what of human flesh, what happened to Soyinka? Nobody could give me an answer.

"My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall. "I took note of all these, went back to conduct an identification parade. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by the day watch.

"Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not.

## Ex-DIG - Dele Giwa's Assassination Was Marred By Interference From 'High Places'

"Because interference now came from high places to protect the man. "The man was said to be related to the wife of a governor at that time and as a result of his connection we came to a dead end on that lead," the former police chief, who was in charge of the research department of the police CID, when Giwa was killed, said. Omeben said the setback did not in any way deter him from using the evidence he had to follow the lead on Soyinka, and that he called on the Newswatch authorities to produce Soyinka.

"I have enough evidence to quiz Soyinka now. Please, Ray Ekpu can I have Soyinka now? "They resisted up till today. Up till today Soyinka never appeared before the police. "They started to insinuate that the assassination was masterminded by Babangida, Akilu etc. "They said that Akilu ought to have been investigated.

"As a matter of fact, I had interrogated Akilu and he told me that yes they had invited Dele Giwa some few days before the assassination over a negative statement he made about Nigeria in a New York newspaper. "He said that they had to invite him to tell him that he was wrong for portraying the country in bad light in the international press. "Akilu insisted that the invitation was not enough to accuse the government of complicity in the assassination of Dele Giwa. "He satisfied me with his explanation.

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"But for me to satisfy myself, I said please gentlemen, can I have Soyinka? "Nobody! Soyinka ran away to London that was my principal suspect!

"He did not appear until eventually I left the CID. I was retired from the police in 1989 and what happened after that I don't know," Omeben, now an Archbishop of the Jesus Families Ministries at Iyana Ipaja, near Lagos, added. He said that Giwa was also careless in maintaining a relationship with his estranged wife.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015

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## Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Uwazuruike mourn Tony Momoh

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 1, 2021 Monday

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**Length:** 395 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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By Chukwudi Nweje, Lagos

Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Afenifere Renewal Group and former President of Aka Ikenga, Chief Goddy Uwazuruike have expressed shock at the death of former Minister of Information Prince Tony Momoh.

They described him as a great and accomplished Nigerian who died with his head held high.

The Publicity Secretary of Ohanaeze Ndigbo said it is sad that Momoh died at a time his brilliance was most needed.

'It is a sad and painful news Prince Tony Momoh is a great Nigerian and he will be greatly missed.'

Publicity Secretary of Afenifere Yinka Odumakin described Momoh as a patriotic Nigerian who spoke out in support of restructuring Nigeria to true federalism.

'It is painful, Prince Tony Momoh was a true and patriotic Nigerian who spoke out in support of restructuring Nigeria to true federalism. His death at this time is a great loss to everybody who believes in restructuring Nigeria to true federalism, he will be greatly missed,' he said.

Uwazuruike described the late Momoh as a patriotic Nigerian who gave the country his best and died with his head held high.

'Prince Tony Momoh lived a life that is unique. He was not born Anthony Momoh, he was born a Muslim, but he took up the name because of Lord Tony Anden of England. He went into journalism with his very important degree and later became General Manager of The Daily Times. He was a brilliant lawyer, any law student will remember

### Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Uwazuruike mourn Tony Momoh

the celebrated case of Tony Momoh vs President of the Senate. The then-president of the Senate summoned him to appear before them to answer questions on an article that was published in The Daily Times. rather than respond, he went to court fought them and won. He has made his name and his mark, he became a minister under Gen Ibrahim Babangida. One of the most remarkable moments of his being a minister was when Dele Giwa was killed in a parcel bomb. He rushed in and spoke like a journalist and a man of authority and said the death will be investigated. Unfortunately by the next day, he was reminded that he was a minister and he recanted and said there was nothing there, that I will regard as his lowest moment, otherwise he was a great man, he did his beat we can only say rest in peace, he had done his tour of duty and he died with his head held high,' he stated.

The post Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Uwazuruike mourn Tony Momoh appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2021

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## **My journalism journey**

The Sun (Nigeria)

January 31, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1519 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Permit me, dear readers, to stray away from the current happenings such as the petrol palaver and the naira redesign nuisance, both of which have shown the world how badly we run our lives. The excuse for choosing to write on my journalism odyssey today is the recent conferment of a Lifetime Achievement Award on me by one of Nigeria's leading newspapers, Vanguard. This is my fifth lifetime achievement award, two of which came from non-media outfits while the other three, including this one, came from media organisations. A few years ago, I received one from the Nation newspaper in Kenya when it marked the 50th anniversary of its existence. A couple of years ago, I was also honoured with the award by Diamond Media, run by one of the respected journalists in the country, Mr. Lanre Idowu.

I deliberately chose journalism when I was in primary school, a period no pupil would sensibly appreciate the full implications of that choice. My father used to subscribe to a newspaper called the Nigerian Outlook, a paper published by the Government of Eastern Nigeria. I would return from school before he would return from a place called Utu Etim Ekpo, where he was a member of the Customary Court of Appeal, an intermediate court between the Customary Court and the Magistrate's Court. It was within the pages of this newspaper that I read speeches delivered by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of Eastern Nigeria, and articles by M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu, a prominent **journalist** of that era. At that time, a primary school pupil could read and comprehend what he read in a newspaper. I wonder whether a primary school pupil in a public school can do so today.

When I got admission into a secondary school called Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene, I developed the habit of reporting major events, especially sporting activities. I would paste my report on the notice board for my fellow students to read. My byline was Pressman Remy. And when I was in Higher School at Holy Family College, Abak, I started a student's magazine which I called The Nightingale. It was sold to the students monthly and when it started making some impact in the college, the principal assigned one of the teachers from Ireland who taught us English to

## My journalism journey

supervise my editorial work. After Higher School, I got admission into the University of Lagos, Institute of Mass Communication, in Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, to study Mass Communication. My father wanted me to study Law. I refused without knowing what it would be like to be lawyer. I chose journalism and I think journalism also chose me. As it is often said, the rest is history.

I did my vacation job with the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation, which published the Nigerian Chronicle. It was there that I cut my journalism teeth under Mr. Moses Ekpo who is now the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State. He was the one who taught me the basics of journalism practice. I owe him a debt of gratitude. The guidance he gave me made me to return to the Chronicle after graduation for a job. By this time, he had moved on to something else but I grew within three years to become, through a competitive examination conducted by Prince Tony Momoh, then editor of the Daily Times, the editor of the Nigerian Chronicle at age 29. At the Chronicle, I was a big fish in a small pond. After three years, the opportunity to be a small fish in a big pond came. What did I want, to be a king in hell or a servant in heaven? It wasn't an easy decision but I opted to take the job of the editor of the Sunday Times, the highest selling newspaper in Nigeria at the time. To take that job, I took a pay cut to work in the Daily Times group that had 13 publications, the biggest newspaper conglomerate in Africa. From the Sunday Times, I moved to the Business Times and from there to the Concord Group of Newspapers as the chairman of the editorial board. After Concord there was a pregnancy and Newswatch was born. **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed, Dan Agbese and I had conspired to establish a magazine that would gun for gold standard journalism. The rest, again, is history.

At the Vanguard award, the organisers had recalled that in my 49 years of journalism practice I had been detained six times by four governments that hated to hear the truth. But truth, as Dryden said, is the foundation of all knowledge and the cement of all societies. It is also the cornerstone of journalism practice. Every violation of truth, according to Emerson, is a stab at the heart of human society. During those six rounds of detention, I remained unfazed because, in my journalism life, thoroughness is an article of faith. I always sent a note to my wife, Uyai, urging her to hold her head high because I had done nothing for which she could be ashamed. A courageous, diligent woman, she had to be both the father and mother to our young children, doing a rectangular journey from home to school, to work, to prison and to school again to pick the kids from school. Her show of dedication to me and the family on those difficult occasions was priceless, invaluable and inestimable. Her multi-tasking skills were on full parade. I owe her a debt of gratitude.

During these rounds, one man also played a prominent part, especially when I was being tried at St. Anna's Court in Lagos. Segun Osoba, who was president of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN), mobilised thousands of journalists through the streets of Lagos into the court premises. As I arrived in a horrible, rickety, windowless Black Maria and saw the sea of heads Osoba had assembled in my support, my heart leapt for joy. I cried, the cry of joy in a situation of joylessness. And when someone mounted road blocks on our way as we were about to start Newswatch Osoba, courageous warrior, moved against those roadblocks. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

Osoba and Sam Amuka, publisher of Vanguard, are like Damon and Pythias, a celebrated pair of friends. The two of them seem joined at the hip. They seem to have been cut from the same cloth. Even though they are both in their 80s, they will not stand and stare while their profession is being throttled by power-mongers. In every important journalism activity, they are there giving statesmanly leadership and guidance. A few weeks ago, when the media community was trying to review its Code of Ethics in line with global standards, these two elders were present and pleasantly sherpherding us to the goal. I wonder how many eighty-something-year-olds are still active in their professions. Pretty few. The media community is lucky to have them. So, the media community must show at every turn their gratitude to these two elders of their profession for standing by them every inch of the way, through sun and rain.

When I was secretary-general of the NPAN during Abacha's regime, the media had a difficult situation to deal with: how to handle the Mass Media Commission, which was intended to kill the media dead. Amuka said to me, "Ray, you are the engine room of the NPAN, you must prepare a communiqué for all our meetings at home and bring. We will just cross the T's and dot the I's so that we do not spend a long time here. If we spend a long time arguing and debating every issue, Abacha might send his boys to pick up all of us here and the media will be dead."

## My journalism journey

His advice was an invaluable template, which I adopted in those dangerous days. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

Even though I had been tried for murder and mutiny, two allegations that carry the death penalty, for writing what the men of power didn't want to read, I have also been honoured as International Editor of the Year 1987, one of the Outstanding Young Persons of the World 1988 as well as being elected president of the NPAN and international president of the Commonwealth Journalists' Association. The Akwa Ibom Polytechnic has named its Department of Mass Communication after me, while the former vice-chairman of ExxonMobil, Mr. Udom Inoyo, has established the Ray Ekpu Award for Investigative Journalism. I could not have bought these pieces of recognition with money. I am truly grateful to everyone who has in one way or another contributed to the recognition of this old man from a little known village in Akwa Ibom State. But a greater chunk of the appreciation ought to go to God who put these destiny helpers on my path and made them to be my helpmate. Achievements in journalism in Africa are not low-hanging fruits because of the low appreciation of the *journalist's* work in our beleaguered continent. Today, journalists are still badly treated in various parts of Africa, including Nigeria. Obnoxious legislation is still being pursued with vigour. Photographers' cameras are collected and smashed by security men. Journalists are locked up for the most frivolous of reasons. Several Nigerian journalists, including my friend, **Dele Giwa**, have been killed. Several others are missing. For surviving in my practice for 49 years, I am grateful to my maker. John D. Rockefeller used to say, when asked how he made his money, "God gave me my money." I can say without any equivocation that God gave me my journalism.

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2023

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## Buhari, Solve Dele Giwa's Murder!

Weekly Trust

October 31, 2015 Saturday

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**Length:** 1071 words

**Byline:** SonalaOlumhense

### **Body**

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Several fascinating things happened in Nigeria's 2015 presidential election. For me, among the most significant was the support offered to the eventual winner, Muhammadu Buhari by two journalists he sent to jail as military head of state.

Nduka Irabor and Tunde Thompson, by the selflessness and eloquence of their action, contributed to the historic victory of Nigeria's current leader.

There is now a golden opportunity for Buhari, who claims to be a reformed democrat, to pay back the industry he once combated: he should re-open the Dele Giwa investigation, and identify the killers of a fine journalist in his prime.

There is no better time. Mr. Giwa was killed 29 years ago, in October 1986. Later that month, another Nigerian, one Chris Omeben, turned 50. He was a Deputy Inspector-General of Police.

For some reason, Mr. Omeben, now retired and in the twilight of his life, recently told the media of Nigeria how he had been unable to find a suspect in Giwa's murder.

Actually, that is not completely correct: he had had two men in mind. The first was a suspect arrived at in a roundabout kind of investigation. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by [Mr. Giwa's] day watch, Mr. Omeben said.

Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not.

Why? Because interference now came from high places to protect the man, the DIG revealed.

Note: Mr. Omeben knew the suspect who had delivered the bomb. He didn't interrogate him because powerful forces-high places-dissuaded him.

The problem is that Mr. Omeben did not dwell on those powerful forces that were shielding his prime suspect. He needed a fall guy.

Kayode Soyinka.

### Buhari, Solve Dele Giwa's Murder!

Mr. Soyinka was the London correspondent of Newswatch, Giwa's journal. Also of Nigerian nationality, he did not lack reasons to be in Nigeria quite often, and on the day of the murder, he happened to have been staying with his Editor-in-Chief.

They were sharing the delights of Funmi Giwa's breakfast fare when the parcel bomb arrived.

On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there; Dele was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel, our Sherlock Holmes said.

And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

Heard.

You heard Sherlock right: Heard.

Sherlock's entire case against Soyinka is somehow built around that word: Heard, as in hearsay. Soyinka mercifully outlived the big blast, but according to Sherlock, who claims to have been unable to interview the journalist, Soyinka is guilty of something because of the very fact that he lived.

Remember: Sherlock heard that Soyinka had survived because he slipped into an adjacent room. But from whom had he heard? Not the man who was slain; and certainly not the person whom he did not interrogate, and those were the only persons in the room.

Sherlock, in the manner of Louis XIV, who thought he was the French State, seemed to believe he was the Nigeria Police Force. Soyinka has always said, and he has evidence, that he was interviewed twice by the police, including at the First Foundation Hospital on the day of the murder.

But Sherlock discounts those interviews apparently because-being the police force-he didn't get the personal chance to convert his prime suspect to murderer.

And so: from I heard, Sherlock declared: My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall.

Hopefully, this is not the way that real crime investigation is still being undertaken in the Nigeria Police, as that would explain why murders are rarely solved within Nigeria.

Until Giwa's murder, the only Nigerians who had reason to know anything about explosives were the military and security agencies. How would Soyinka have known what wall to hide behind, and at what moment?

Mr. Omeben, 80 last month, casually dismisses the failure of the police to explore obvious military suspects. The problem was, and is, that the police have always had some kind of a priori procedural understanding that military personnel are never suspects.

As a result, in the Giwa murder the police found convenient excuses to avoid public interest in anyone hiding in a military uniform, a point Sherlock glosses over. To examine the tone of Mr. Omeben's tale is to come to the sad conclusion that had he laid hands on Soyinka, he would have pinned a murder charge on him.

Because interference now came from high places to protect the man Who was the man who was being shielded? And why was the police afraid of high places in the pursuit of the cause of law?

Who constituted high places, if that was indeed true, but General Ibrahim Babangida and his inner circle at that time? Let it be remembered that Babangida has since 1986 been popularly believed to be behind Giwa's murder.

Sherlock had that one covered: They started to insinuate that the assassination was masterminded by Babangida, Akilu etcAs a matter of fact, I had interrogated Akilu and he told me that yes they had invited Dele Giwa some few days before the assassination over a negative statement he made about Nigeria in a New York newspaperHe satisfied me with his explanationTogun also absolved himself with his own explanation

Buhari, Solve Dele Giwa's Murder!

It is shameful to think that these half-baked conjectures comprised, or was considered to be policing, and were officially sufficient in explaining Giwa's murder. In real time, it is basically an investigation that-Lagos traffic and all and in an era pre-dating cell phones-any self-respecting journalist would have completed in one day. His editor would still have had him all over town through the night, digging for authentic information.

DIG Omeben's 30-year old report-or lamentation-is a national embarrassment. It explains why there is so much impunity in Nigeria, and confirms that the police are sadly the principal impediment to the maintenance of law and order.

This is where President Buhari comes in. With one presidential order, he can resolve this 30-year old murder case, and set the police on its way to being a true and independent crime-fighting institution.

By ensuring that the Dele Giwa murder is finally and competently investigated and bringing to justice those responsible for it, he can confirm his commitment to the rule of law and to a free press, and bury forever the pesky ghost of Decree 4.

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2015

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## **'How Dele Giwa's Murder Led to Mother's Slow Death'**

This Day (Lagos)

January 09, 2013

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**Length:** 566 words

**Byline:** Chiemelie Ezeobi

### **Body**

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Mrs. Elekiya Ayisat **Giwa**, the 87-year-old mother of the late **Dele Giwa**, Tuesday gave up the ghost at a private hospital (Aruna Ogun) at the Ikorodu area of Lagos State after a brief illness.

**Dele Giwa**, a veteran **journalist** and the editor and founder of Newswatch Magazine, was killed on October 19, 1986, by a letter bomb, the first of its kind in Nigeria.

After depositing the corpse at the Ikorodu General Hospital, the family picked February 9, as the tentative date for the deceased's burial at their home town, Ugekpe Ekperri, in Auchi, Edo State.

"Mama's death was the build-up of the crisis she suffered when **Dele Giwa** was brutally murdered. She was always a healthy woman until **Dele**'s death.

"His death broke her up. It was then she became hypertensive," Mama's last born, Mrs. Abibat Ronke **Giwa**-Aboaba said to THISDAY.

According to her, more than his brutal and senseless death, the fact that more than 25 years after, his killers were yet to be found and brought to book did more harm to mama's spirit.

**Giwa**'s assassination occurred two days after he had been interviewed by State Security Service officials during the regime of the former president, Ibrahim Babangida.

She added, "It was a very sad incident and the experience was most traumatic for her. She always cried bitterly each time she remembered him.

"It was until few months ago when she started letting go but by then the damage had be done. Months before she died, she made her peace with his death and said she had forgiven those that wrongful killed him in his prime."

Narrating the chain of events that led to the death of the mother, **Giwa**-Aboaba, whose house mama stayed till her death, said the deceased had suffered a stroke on December 22, last year and was expected to recover after treatment.

She said, "Mama had a stroke on December 22 and I initially took her to the General Hospital in Ikorodu where she stayed for a week.

### 'How Dele Giwa's Murder Led to Mother's Slow Death'

"But when I discovered that their services were not okay for me, I moved her to a private hospital and she was there for one week too before she died this morning (yesterday)."

She described the deceased as a wonderful woman, very gentle, tolerant and always concerned about her children.

On the actions carried out by the family with Giwa's death, she said they tried to bring the killers to book but gave up later after deciding to leave them to God's judgment.

She however said the Late Gani Fawehinmi had truly championed for the cause, a fact that led to his death. "Gani was one of the major persons that spearheaded the fight to fish out those that caused my brother's death.

"He was even imprisoned for this sake and it later led to his death because he became ill as a result of the continuous imprisonment. Before he died, he gave his family instructions to hold a rally at Edo State in his honour.

With the octogenarian's death, the family moved her corpse to the General Hospital morgue in Ikorodu. They however complained bitterly about the state of the morgue.

Giwa-Aboaba said they had wanted a private morgue but since that wasn't readily available; they had no choice but to deposit the body at the General Hospital.

She however quickly added that they have put plans on ground to have her moved to the morgue of a military hospital in Lagos today. "No, mama wouldn't have wanted her body to be kept at the general hospital, especially in its present state," she muttered almost to herself.

**Load-Date:** January 9, 2013

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## Chuks Iloegbunam: Restless But Peaceful Soul

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

May 23, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 1165 words

**Byline:** Tony Eluemunor

### **Body**

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Tony Eluemunor

When I think about my big brother, Mazi Chuks Iloegbunam, what readily comes to mind is the timeless Abba song, "MOVE ON". Its opening lyrics truly capture the essential Chuks Iloegbunam. Here we go: "They say a restless body can hide a peaceful soul. A voyager and a settler, they both have a distant goal. If I explore the heavens, or if I search inside. Well, it really doesn't matter as long as I can tell myself I've always tried".

The Iloegbunam many know could be that one that never, never, repeat never, suffers fools gladly. As we all know, if you do not suffer fools gladly, you are not patient with people who you think are stupid.

Discuss this saying with Chuks and he might tell you how and when the term emerged. I checked and saw this: it was first coined by Saint Paul in his second letter to the Church at Corinth. The full verse of the original source of the idiom, 2 Corinthians 11:19, reads: "For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise."

Chuks will take on any who is foolish enough to jostle with him in an argument, and he will teach that person unforgettable lessons in literacy and penmanship. His writing could be caustic, even as he uses the most apt of words but still strange to someone who is widely read, yet you would find most fitting when you consult a dictionary. There is a word for such; accuracy, precision, exactitude.

How would I know, you may ask. My answer is simply this: he taught me ... he was my first teacher in the newsroom. But my story jumps. Perhaps I should begin at the beginning.

One evening, Mr. Jika Attoh, who was my classmate at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Mass Communication Post-Graduate class, took me to the Guardian to see Chuks. And we ended up spending the night in Chuk's house at Shomolu, Lagos. He treated me not just as a friend of a friend, but like a brother. I can still remember him, with all seriousness, and fire blazing from his eyes, and with impatience in his voice, asking me: "What is wrong with you, Tony, or whatever is your name? Don't you talk? Why can't you feel at home? Why can't you relax? Nobody owns

### Chuks Iloegbunam: Restless But Peaceful Soul

this world; yes, you are my guest today, but tomorrow, I could be your guest. Feel free, my brother. Nobody needs any tension here". Yes, it is difficult to understand Chuks; he could erupt like a volcano and the next moment he is ice water.

The next time I saw him, he had left the Guardian newspapers and had pitched his tent with the Newswatch magazine. He was anchoring a Newswatch cover. He was discussing one aspect of that story with Jika, who like him, graduated from the University of Ife, Ile- Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). The Newswatch story was on the 25th anniversary of Chinua Achebe's THINGS FALL APART. And Chuks, always one to do an all-things-considered story, was attempting to shed light on the Chinua Achebe – Wole Soyinka relationship or rivalry.

Well, so as not to attract his anger again by not feeling free in his presence, I mouthed a few things about Achebe's being an Africanist who saw the world through the African eyes, and Soyinka being a humanist and preppy activist ready to fight evil wherever it was found. I added that they were not really rivals as Achebe was a renowned novelist but Soyinka was a remarkable playwright and poet. If there was any rivalry, I blamed it on their students and admirers who failed to fully understand that they complemented each other to Nigeria's glory and pride, after all the sky is wide enough for the Eagle and the kite. So, their lines never really crossed as both stayed away from the field where the other had gained global renown. We spoke some more and later I saw my name in the Newswatch magazine, and half of a page of that magazine was devoted to my Achebe-Soyinka explanation.

One stiflingly disappointing day, I had spent hours at an Ikoyi, Lagos, office. I vowed that I would never come to that office again to seek for job. To cheer up my plummeting spirit I decided to visit Chuks at Newswatch, at least I would get to read the newspapers and magazines I couldn't afford to buy. The Newswatch Big Four (the late Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed were there throwing banters in the open newsroom. And Chuks, ever confident because he knows no fear, stopped the jaunty discussion to point at my inconsequential self, and introduce this student as his "good and trusty" friend, who "decorated your magazine when he explained the Achebe-Soyinka rivalry in".... and Dele Giwa, raised his right hand and used the index finger to strike his brain thrice and say animatedly, "Yes, I remember that discourse. Oh, are you Tony Eluemunor?"

Giwa continued: "Oh, I read you days ago in the Guardian on Sunday, and you featured in the Monthly Life which appeared today. I think you can write. See me on your way out". I did and Mr. Giwa pushed a letter towards me and asked me to sign: it was an appointment letter. I had become a journalist!

Some four years later, I was now at THISWEEK magazine, and Chuks came to see me. He thrust a form into my hand and urged me to apply for a journalism fellowship. I asked him why he wasn't applying. He said he had applied. So, I replied that it would be foolish of me to be competing with him. He laughed and said he had given copies of it to 20 others, adding if "God say na you go go, nothing can change it. You must stop being afraid. This life is not for any special person. Each person has his own break". I applied, and Harvard University issued a call to me; on Ford Foundation scholarship for the Fellowship of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism. Yet, before I left for Cambridge, Boston, Massachusetts, Chuks was already in the UK!

The same Mr. Chuks Iloegbunam has remained my Big Brother for decades. He gave me an insight into the profundity of Bob Marley's music; I had loved and adored Jimmy Cliff and almost hated Marley for dethroning my champion. He opened to me more vistas of appreciating the art of writing. He actually rewrote the intro (introduction) of my very first story at Newswatch, and Dele Olojede took it and celebrated it all around the newsroom, and everyone thought I was a star.

Over the years, I have studied Chuks Iloegbunam and learnt a lot from this man who turned 70 years old on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. But he has left one thing unexplained to me: how a person could adopt a total stranger as a brother and become his guardian angel. Did God send him on such a mission; just for me? I still don't know how he explained our relationship to his angelic wife; Obiageli (Madam to me); she calls me (always with a smile that could split the deepest darkness) "tounny tounny".

Thank you, Chuks Iloegbunam. Happy birthday, Big Brother. As Abba sang, "Like a roller in the ocean, life is motion. Move on. Like a wind that's always blowing, life is flowing. Move on. Like the sunrise in the morning, life is dawning. Move on. How I treasure every minute, being part of, being in it. With the urge to move on.

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2021

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## My journalism journey

The Guardian

January 31, 2023 Tuesday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1529 words

## Body

Permit me dear readers to stray away from the current happenings such as the petrol palaver and the naira redesign nuisance, both of which have shown the world how badly we run our lives. The excuse for choosing to write on my journalism odyssey today is the recent conferment of a Lifetime Achievement Award on me by one of Nigeria's leading newspapers, Vanguard.

This is my fifth lifetime achievement award, two of which came from non-media outfits while the other three including this one came from media organisations. A few years ago I received one from the Nation Newspaper in Kenya when it marked the 50th anniversary of its existence. A couple of years ago I was also honoured with the award by Diamond Media run by one of the respected journalists in the country, Mr Lanre Idowu.

I deliberately chose journalism when I was in primary school, a period no pupil would sensibly appreciate the full implications of that choice. My father used to subscribe to a newspaper called the Nigerian Outlook, a paper published by the Government of Eastern Nigeria. I would return from school before he would return from a place called Utu Etim Ekpo where he was a member of the Customary Court of Appeal, an intermediate court between the Customary Court and the Magistrate Court. It is within the pages of this newspaper that I read speeches delivered by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of Eastern Nigeria and articles by M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu, a prominent ***journalist*** of that era. At that time a primary school pupil could read and comprehend what he read in a newspaper. I wonder whether a primary school pupil in a public school can do so today.

When I got admission into a secondary school called Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene I developed the habit of reporting major events especially sporting activities. I would paste my report on the notice board for my fellow students to read. My byline was Pressman Remy. And when I was in Higher School at Holy Family College, Abak, I started a student's magazine, which I called The Nightingale. It was sold to the students monthly and when it started making some impact in the College the Principal assigned one of the teachers from Ireland who taught us English to supervise my editorial work. After Higher School I got admission into the University of Lagos, Institute of Mass Communication in Akoka, Yaba, Lagos to study Mass Communication. My father wanted me to study Law. I refused without knowing what it would be like to be a lawyer. I chose journalism and I think journalism also chose me. As it is often said, the rest is history.

## My journalism journey

I did my vacation job with the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation, which published the Nigerian Chronicle. It was there that I cut my journalism teeth under Mr. Moses Ekpo who is now the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State. He was the one who taught me the basics of journalism practice. I owe him a debt of gratitude. The guidance he gave me made me to return to the Chronicle after graduation for a job. By this time he had moved on to something else but I grew within three years to become, through a competitive examination conducted by Prince Tony Momoh, then Editor of the Daily Times, the Editor of the Nigerian Chronicle at age 29.

At the Chronicle I was a big fish in a small pond. After three years the opportunity to be a small fish in a big pond came. What did I want, to be a king in hell or a servant in heaven? It wasn't an easy decision but I opted to take the job of the Editor of the Sunday Times, the highest selling newspaper in Nigeria at the time. To take that job I took a pay cut to work in the Daily Times group that had 13 publications, the biggest newspaper conglomerate in Africa.

From the Sunday Times I moved to the Business Times and from there to the Concord Group of Newspapers as the Chairman of the Editorial Board. After Concord there was a pregnancy and Newswatch was born. **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed, Dan Agbese and I had conspired to establish a magazine that would gun for gold standard journalism. The rest, again, is history.

At the Vanguard award the organisers had recalled that in my 49 years of journalism practice I had been detained six times by four governments that hated to hear the truth. But truth as Dryden said is the foundation of all knowledge and the cement of all societies. It is also the cornerstone of journalism practice. Every violation of truth, according to Emerson, is a stab at the heart of human society. During those six rounds of detention I remained unfazed because in my journalism life thoroughness is an article of faith.

I always sent a note to my wife, Uyai, urging her to hold her head high because I had done nothing for which she could be ashamed. A courageous, diligent woman, she had to be both the father and mother to our young children, doing a rectangular journey from home to school, to work, to prison and to school again to pick the kids from school. Her show of dedication to me and the family on those difficult occasions was priceless, invaluable and inestimable. Her multi-tasking skills were on full parade. I owe her a debt of gratitude.

During these rounds one man also played a prominent part especially when I was being tried at St Anna's Court in Lagos. Segun Osoba who was President of the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), mobilised thousands of journalists through the streets of Lagos into the court premises. As I arrived in a horrible, rickety, windowless Black Maria and saw the sea of heads Osoba had assembled in my support my heart leapt for joy. I cried, the cry of joy in a situation of joylessness. And when someone mounted roadblocks on our way as we were about to start Newswatch Osoba, courageous warrior, moved against those roadblocks. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

Osoba and Sam Amuka Publisher of Vanguard are like Damon and Pythias, a celebrated pair of friends. The two of them seem joined at the hip. They seem to have been cut from the same cloth. Even though they are both in their 80s they will not stand and stare while their profession is being throttled by power mongers. In every important journalism activity they are there, giving statesmanlike leadership and guidance.

A few weeks ago when the media community was trying to review its Code of Ethics in line with global standards these two elders were present and pleasantly shepherding us to the goal. I wonder how many eighty something year olds are still active in their professions. Pretty few. The media community is lucky to have them. So the media community must show at every turn their gratitude to these two elders of their profession for standing by them every inch of the way, through sun and rain.

When I was Secretary General of the NPAN during Abacha's regime the media had a difficult situation to deal with: how to handle the Mass Media Commission which was intended to kill the media. Amuka said to me "Ray, you are the engine room of the NPAN, you must prepare a communiqué for all our meetings at home and bring. We will just cross the T's and dot the I's so that we do not spend a long time here. If we spend a long time arguing and debating every issue Abacha might send his boys to pick up all of us here and the media will be dead." His advice was an invaluable template, which I adopted in those dangerous days. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

## My journalism journey

Even though I had been tried for murder and mutiny, two allegations that carry the death penalty, for writing what the men of power don't want to read, I have also been honoured as International Editor of the year 1987, one of the Outstanding Young Persons of the World 1988 as well as being elected President of the NPAN and International President of the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA).

The Akwa Ibom Polytechnic has named its Department of Mass Communication after me while the former Vice Chairman of ExxonMobil, Mr Udom Inoyo, has established the Ray Ekpu Award for Investigative Journalism. I could not have bought these pieces of recognition with money. I am truly grateful to everyone who has in one way or another contributed to the recognition of this old man from a little known village in Akwa Ibom State. But a greater chunk of the appreciation ought to go to God who put these destiny helpers on my path and made them to be my helpmate.

Achievements in journalism in Africa are not low hanging fruits because of the low appreciation of the journalists work in our beleaguered continent. Today, journalists are still badly treated in various parts of Africa including Nigeria. Obnoxious legislation is still being pursued with vigour. Photographers' cameras are collected and smashed by security men. Journalists are locked up for the most frivolous of reasons. Several Nigerian journalists including my friend Dele Giwa have been killed. Several others are missing.

For surviving in my practice for 49 years I am grateful to my maker. John D. Rockefeller used to say when asked how he made his money, "God gave me my money." I can say without any equivocation that God gave me my journalism.

In this article journalism

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2022 GUARDIAN Newspapers.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

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## **'Insurgency started with Dele Giwa's bombing'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 21, 2014 Friday

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Length: 534 words

### **Body**

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The Chairman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Prof. Chidi Anselem Odinka, has said the violence carried out by Boko Haram started in 1986 when top journalist, Dele Giwa, was killed with a parcel bomb.

He spoke in Kaduna yesterday when giving a keynote address at the inauguration of Moluma Yakubu Loma Centre for Medical Law, and the MIVE Legals Matrimonial Centre, Kaduna.

Odinka lamented what he regarded as democratisation of violence since the return to civil rule in 1999.

The Professor of Law accused former Borno State Governor Senator Ali Modu Sheriff of impoverishing the state by under-educating the citizens, among other things.

He said: "Contrary to what people think, the phenomenon, which has now become Boko Haram, actually started at an Ikeja street on October 18, 1986. That day, the first Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was used to blow up Dele Giwa. Everyone knew that it was a state-sponsored murder. "That was the first time that an IED went off on Nigeria soil. Series of events would later lead to Boko Haram today. At that time, the late Gani Fawehinmi had the courage to challenge the state on that murder. But he was persecuted until his death.

"The police officer, who investigated the murder, was also killed in un-explained circumstances in Mokwa, Niger State. He was the younger brother of the celebrated writer and critic of government, Tunji Dare.

"When a state sponsored the murder of its citizens, it lost its legitimacy as a government. So, today's terrorism started as a state sponsored. In its 2013 report, the Kabiru Turaki Report laid out starkly footprints of the extent to which the claim of the Nigerian state to a monopoly of violence was challenged.

"The democratised violence is the symptom, which now defines most Nigeria's underlying ailment. Many things can kill you in Nigeria, to the extent that our life expectancy is now 47 for male and 51 for female and is still dropping. This is compared to 61 in Rwanda, which had a life expectancy of 41 before the genocide, which claimed 10 per cent of its population in 1994. Life expectancy there is still rising.

"Of about 320,000 policemen we have in Nigeria, about 100,000 are acting as personal guards to VIPs. The rest of 160 million will have to do with about 200,000 policemen. Our 60,000 soldiers are deployed to perform police duties in 32 states, stretching them thin to the extent that we are attacked by external forces.

'Insurgency started with Dele Giwa's bombing'

"Politicians must be blamed for today's violence. They buy arms for thugs and force their way to power, just to find out that they can not retrieve these arms.

"Some deliberately impoverished their people to keep them ignorant. For example, in Borno State, on or about December 14, 2006, the then Governor of the state, Ali Modu Sherif, in a response to widespread criticism of his record or lack of it as a governor, said: 'A lot of falsehood has been published over the years in newspapers about my government. I have never lost sleep over them because less than five per cent of Borno people can read what is written in newspapers.'"

The professor hailed the initiative of the founder of the two centres, Gloria Ballasom, saying they were the first of their kinds in the country.

**Load-Date:** November 20, 2014

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## My Journalism Journey

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

February 1, 2023 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1509 words

**Byline:** Ray Ekpu

### **Body**

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Permit me dear readers to stray away from the current happenings such as the petrol palaver and the naira redesign nuisance, both of which have shown the world how badly we run our lives. The excuse for choosing to write on my journalism odyssey today is the recent conferment of a Lifetime Achievement Award on me by one of Nigeria's leading newspapers, Vanguard. This is my fifth lifetime achievement award, two of which came from non-media outfits while the other three including this one came from media organisations. A few years ago I received one from the Nation newspaper in Kenya when it marked the 50th anniversary of its existence. A couple of years ago I was also honoured with the award by Diamond Media run by one of the respected journalists in the country, Mr Lanre Idowu.

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## My Journalism Journey

without knowing what it would be like to be lawyer. I chose journalism and I think journalism also chose me. As it is often said, the rest is history.

I did my vacation job with the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation which published the Nigerian Chronicle. It was there that I cut my journalism teeth under Mr Moses Ekpo who is now the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State. He was the one who taught me the basics of journalism practice. I owe him a debt of gratitude. The guidance he gave me made me to return to the Chronicle after graduation for a job. By this time he had moved on to something else but I grew within three years to become, through a competitive examination conducted by Prince Tony Momoh, then Editor of the Daily Times, the Editor of the Nigerian Chronicle at age 29. At the Chronicle I was a big fish in a small pond. After three years the opportunity to be a small fish in a big pond came. What did I want, to be a king in hell or a servant in heaven. It wasn't an easy decision but I opted to take the job of the Editor of the Sunday Times, the highest selling newspaper in Nigeria at the time. To take that job I took a pay cut to work in the Daily Times group that had 13 publications, the biggest newspaper conglomerate in Africa. From the Sunday Times I moved to the Business Times and from there to the Concord Group of Newspapers as the Chairman of the Editorial Board. After Concord there was a pregnancy and Newswatch was born. **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed, Dan Agbese and I had conspired to establish a magazine that would gun for gold standard journalism. The rest, again, is history.

At the Vanguard award the organisers had recalled that in my 49 years of journalism practice I had been detained six times by four governments that hated to hear the truth. But truth as Dryden said is the foundation of all knowledge and the cement of all societies. It is also the corner stone of journalism practice. Every violation of truth, according to Emerson, is a stab at the heart of human society. During those six rounds of detention I remained unfazed because in my journalism life thoroughness is an article of faith. I always sent a note to my wife, Uyai, urging her to hold her head high because I had done nothing for which she could be ashamed. A courageous, diligent woman, she had to be both the father and mother to our young children, doing a rectangular journey from home to school, to work, to prison and to school again to pick the kids from school. Her show of dedication to me and the family on those difficult occasions was priceless, invaluable and inestimable. Her multi-tasking skills were on full parade. I owe her a debt of gratitude.

During these rounds one man also played a prominent part especially when I was being tried at St Anna's Court in Lagos. Segun Osoba who was President of the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) mobilised thousands of journalists through the streets of Lagos into the court premises. As I arrived in a horrible, rickety, windowless Black Maria and saw the sea of heads Osoba had assembled in my support my heart leapt for joy. I cried, the cry of joy in a situation of joylessness. And when someone mounted road blocks on our way as we were about to start Newswatch Osoba, courageous warrior, moved against those roadblocks. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

Osoba and Sam Amuka Publisher of Vanguard are like Damon and Pythias, a celebrated pair of friends. The two of them seem joined at the hip. They seem to have been cut from the same cloth. Eventhough they are both in their 80s they will not stand and stare while their profession is being throttled by power mongers. In every important journalism activity they are there giving statesmanly leadership and guidance. A few weeks ago when the media community was trying to review its Code of Ethics in line with global standards these two elders were present and pleasantly sherpherding us to the goal. I wonder how many eighty something year olds are still active in their professions. Pretty few. The media community is lucky to have them. So the media community must show at every turn their gratitude to these two elders of their profession for standing by them every inch of the way, through sun and rain.

When I was Secretary General of the NPAN during Abacha's regime the media had a difficult situation to deal with: how to handle the Mass Media Commission which was intended to kill the media dead Amuka said to me "Ray, you are the engine room of the NPAN, you must prepare a communiqué for all our meetings at home and bring. We will just cross the T's and dot the I's so that we do not spend a long time here. If we spend a long time arguing and debating every issue Abacha might send his boys to pick up all of us here and the media will be dead." His advice was an invaluable template which I adopted in those dangerous days. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

## My Journalism Journey

Even though I had been tried for murder and mutiny, two allegations that carry the death penalty, for writing what the men of power don't want to read, I have also been honoured as International Editor of the year 1987, one of the Outstanding Young Persons of the World 1988 as well as being elected President of the NPAN and International President of the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA). The Akwa Ibom Polytechnic has named its Department of Mass Communication after me while the former Vice Chairman of ExxonMobil, Mr Udom Inoyo has established the Ray Ekpu Award for Investigative Journalism. I could not have bought these pieces of recognition with money. I am truly grateful to everyone who has in one way or another contributed to the recognition of this old man from a little known village in Akwa Ibom State. But a greater chunk of the appreciation ought to go to God who put these destiny helpers on my path and made them to be my helpmate. Achievements in journalism in Africa are not low hanging fruits because of the low appreciation of the journalists work in our beleaguered continent. Today journalists are still badly treated in various parts of Africa including Nigeria. Obnoxious legislation is still being pursued with vigour. Photographers' cameras are collected and smashed by security men. Journalists are locked up for the most frivolous of reasons. Several Nigerian journalists including my friend Dele Giwa have been killed. Several others are missing. For surviving in my practice for 49 years I am grateful to my maker. John D. Rockefeller used to say when asked how he made his money, "God gave me my money." I can say without any equivocation that God gave me my journalism.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2023

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Dele Giwa's murder suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria , say ex-DIG who probed the murder



## **Dele Giwa's murder suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria, say ex-DIG who probed the murder**

Nigerian Tribune

October 26, 2015 Monday

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**Length:** 654 words

### **Body**

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Twenty-nine years after the murder of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, Chris Omeben, who conducted the investigation, said the unresolved assassination was the most frustrating case he handled in his career.

Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, was killed through a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos residence on October 19, 1986.

Omeben, who turns 80 on October 27, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), on Monday, that the high-profile investigation was marred by interferences from 'high places.'

The DIG explained that even when he had narrowed in on the principal suspect, who could have thrown more light on the riddle, the suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria.

"They said somebody brought a parcel and his son Billy received the parcel and took it to his father (Dele Giwa), who was having his breakfast that morning.

"On the breakfast table was a man called Kayode Soyinka, he was there Dele was there and then the son Billy handed over the parcel. And as he did so, I heard Soyinka left the table and went to the adjacent room.

"It was while he was there that the parcel detonated. Dele was injured and eventually died. The metal partition separating the dining room and the kitchen was destroyed.

"Beyond that, everything in the kitchen was destroyed. If metal could be mangled this way by the bomb, what of human flesh, what happened to Soyinka? Nobody could give me an answer.

"My conclusion was that Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall.

"I took note of all these, went back to conduct an identification parade. We had an identification parade and got people of different physical attributes to be identified by the day watch.

"Eventually, when one of those paraded was said to bear a resemblance to the person that delivered the bomb, in spite of my insistence to have the man quizzed, we could not because interference now came from high places to protect the man.

Dele Giwa's murder suspect was allowed to escape from Nigeria , say ex-DIG who probed the murder

"The man was said to be related to the wife of a governor at that time and as a result of his connection, we came to a dead end on that lead," the former police chief, who was in charge of the research department of the police CID when Giwa was killed, said.

Omeben told NAN that the setback did not in any way deter him from using the evidence he had to follow the lead on Soyinka, and that he called on the Newswatch authorities to produce Soyinka.

"I have enough evidence to quiz Soyinka now. Please, Ray Ekpu can I have Soyinka now? They resisted up till today. Up till today, Soyinka never appeared before the police.

"They started to insinuate that the assassination was masterminded by Babangida, Akilu, among others. They said that Akilu ought to have been investigated.

"As a matter of fact, I interrogated Akilu and he told me that yes, they had invited Dele Giwa some few days before the assassination over a negative comment he made about Nigeria in a New York newspaper.

"He said that they had to invite him to tell him that he was wrong for portraying the country in bad light in the international press. Akilu insisted that the invitation was not enough to accuse the government of complicity in the assassination of Dele Giwa. He satisfied me with his explanation.

"Togun also absolved himself with his own explanation. The parcel bomb was said to have the Federal Government logo on it, which to me was not enough evidence. It was more of a circumstantial evidence. I can prove it!

"Go to any printing press if you are a 'good' criminal and you are planning well, they can print it for you and place it on the parcel, and it will look as if it came from the government.

"But for me to satisfy myself, I said please gentlemen, can I have Soyinka? Nobody! Soyinka ran away to London, that was my principal suspect. He did not appear until when I left the CID. I was retired from the police in 1989 and what happened after that, I don't know,"

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2015

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## **Nigerian journalists and the military coup in Niger**

The Guardian

August 17, 2023 Thursday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1145 words

## **Body**

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Let me begin this piece by commanding the Nigerian Guild of Editors, NGE, for rightly describing military intervention in governance anywhere in the world as an aberration. It is an aberration because soldiers are trained in the act of war and not governance. They are charged with the responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of their nations.

Rising from its Standing Committee meeting held in Lagos, the NGE in a communique" urged ECOWAS to employ strategic engagement and diplomacy in ensuring that democratic structures are restored in the country (Niger)"

In other words, the body of editors is clearly against the military coup in Niger but opposed to the use of force to restore the democratic structures in the country.

I also note that the Guild urged ECOWAS to use diplomacy. It didn't say Nigeria's President, Bola Tinubu shouldn't use invade Niger, unlike the narrative being pushed erroneously by a section of the media. The decision to use force, if necessary to restore democracy in Niger was taken at a meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments in line with the sub-regional protocol on unconstitutional change of government. It wasn't a decision taken by Nigeria or President Tinubu, who is currently the chairman.

The opposition of the NGE military incursion in governance is clearly understood considering our nasty and unpleasant experiences with military interventions in Nigeria. That's why I'm surprised that a few journalists in their comments attempted to justify the military coup in Niger.

Any journalist who joined the profession in Nigeria during the military regimes would not have any reason to justify military intervention anywhere in the world, except he has some personal scores to settle with the present occupants of power at different levels in Nigeria.

If I knew what I know now about the military intervention in the governance of a nation, I wouldn't have erroneously jubilated over the coups of December 31, 1983 and the August 27, 1985.

I'm of the view that Nigeria's democracy and development would have advanced more than what we have today if not for the military misadventure of January 15, 1967, when we experienced the first military coup.

## Nigerian journalists and the military coup in Niger

The military junta led by General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi suspended Nigeria's federal constitution and promulgated the unitary decree which we are still struggling to overturn till today. The federal constitution encouraged competition among the regions. This competition brought about development, and each region developed at its own pace. Nowadays, state governors spend more days in Abuja than their state capitals with the belief that closeness to the powers in Abuja would attract development to their states. Now, we clamour for state police in a country where we once had local government police. No thanks to the unitary decree. The military that accused politicians of taking 10% of contract sums ended up taking up 70% when they were now in charge. They became more corrupt than the politicians they chased out of power for alleged corruption. They nurtured and sustained corruption in different forms.

Journalists can write against military action in Niger without necessarily supporting the coup there. The junta in Niger should be told in clear terms that they had no right to use the guns given to them to defend the nation to shoot themselves to power. If they felt strongly about the dominance of France in their nation, they should have dropped their uniforms, embrace politics, form a political party and use the anti- French narrative to canvass for votes in the next election.

In a bid to sustain themselves in power, they are moving towards Russia and the destructive Wagner Group led by the notorious Yevgeny Prigozhin. The Wagner people don't fight for free. They are mercenaries (commercial fighters) loyal only to money. They don't fight to win in order to sustain the contract.

What's more, the Wagner group recently challenged President Vladimir Putin, the same man that trained and empowered them, by invading Russia. This led to their banishment to Belarus. Now, they want to keep them busy in Africa. How can any rational being tolerate the idea of having such a dangerous group like Wagner near the Nigerian borders?

My colleagues who are editors today must have been young reporters during the dark days of General Sani Abacha.

As a young ***journalist*** with the Tempo Magazine that was a thorn in the flesh of Abacha junta, I know what I experienced. We couldn't even go to our office. We resorted to guerrilla journalism as our contribution to forcing the military to return to the barracks. One of my colleagues in The News magazine, Bagauda Kaltho was killed in Kaduna by the Abacha killer squad. A renowned editor ***Dele Giwa*** was letter – bombed during the regime of General Ibrahim Babaginda. Many newspapers, including the Guardian, Punch, etc were shut by the military. Some editors, Kunle Ajibade and Niran Malaolu, were jailed for a ridiculous reason of participating in a phantom coup.

Some had to use the "NADECO ROUTE" to escape from Nigeria to begin a new life in exile.

In my newsroom in AIT, we had over seven security operatives masquerading as reporters to monitor some of us they referred to as NADECO journalists. These nasty experiences will never make me to support any military coup anywhere in the world. If the military governments weren't good for us here in Nigeria, what makes you think they will perform magic in Niger?

Power should flow from the people, not from the barrel of the gun. Democracy is never a perfect system. It's not a hundred meter dash. Democracy once produced demagogues such as Adolf Hitler of Germany and Benito Mussolini of Italy who instigated the World War 11, that led to the deaths of millions of people. Yes, both men were elected by the people. They didn't come to power through military coups. Should that make us to reject democracy? The answer is a resounding NO. Democracy requires patience. It has in- built mechanisms to correct its own mistakes. The spate of impeachments of governors, Senate Presidents and Speakers of both National and State Assemblies had abated.

Let me emphasize that you can oppose the planned ECOWAS military intervention without necessarily supporting the coup or painting coupists as heroes. Doing so could send dangerous and unintended signals elsewhere. I'm worried about the way some of our colleagues are writing in support of the coup. Whatever you write today is being read worldwide, including by those who hold the instruments of coercion to stage a coup.

We shouldn't play into their hands. We should be extremely careful

## Nigerian journalists and the military coup in Niger

Isah is Head of News, Silverbird's Rhythm FM and former President of the Nigerian Guild of Editors.

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## Dimgba Igwe's Journalism Masterpiece

The Sun (Nigeria)

September 5, 2020 Saturday

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**Length:** 1020 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Exactly six years ago on September 6, 2014, while jogging to keep fit on an early Saturday morning routine, habitual exercise, my bosom friend and co-author, Pastor Dimgba Igwe was killed by a hit-and-run mystery car that disappeared never to be found, leaving him bloody and helpless in the half-light of the slowly breaking day.

Dimgba Igwe left behind a journalism masterpiece titled: Advanced Features, Secrets of Writing Successful Articles. It's a book that unlocks the secrets of writing to be published. It's targeted at journalists and non-journalists—freelancers—who want to be able to write and get published. It covers a broad range of topics: freelance journalism, writing news articles, features, opinion articles, memoirs, biographies, travel writing, ghostwriting and what the author calls "writing to sell."

It's a book that has been hailed as a journalism classic by those who should know. People like Reuben Abati, Femi Adesina, Kunle Ajibade, Mike Awoyinfa and Prof. Olu Obafemi who wrote the foreword. Dimgba Igwe himself explains why he wrote this book, his last testament to a profession he loved with the unbridled passion of a devotee. In the opening pages, the author explains why he wrote the book:

"It was freelance contributions that brought me in direct contact with the late celebrated editor, Dele Giwa. Impressed with my work, he hired me right away to work in the Sunday Concord. That was a big break for me then and for which I consider him one of my journalism heroes. My freelance experience would have been confined to the local media market if my friend, Peter Jazzy Ezeh, had not opened the international frontiers to me through a useful introduction. In that sense, you could say I owe this book to him. To Ezeh, an avid bookworm, I am indebted.

"During the military clampdown of 1994 when our newspaper, the Concord Press, was shut down by the junta, my friend and 'twin brother' Mike Awoyinfa, challenged me to channel my frustration into writing a book rather than contemplate business ventures. 'With all your brain, how can you think of going into business?' he sneered when I

## Dimgba Igwe's Journalism Masterpiece

threatened to quit journalism for the business world in the face of frequent military clampdown. This book is one of the evidences that I finally yielded to Awoyinfa's intellectual conceit, if not outright blackmail! That probably explained why Awoyinfa who is a devotee of media styles took time to read and edit the manuscript, after all others had worked on it, taking care of my stylistic imperfections.

"The others who read, edited or made valuable suggestions include Femi Adesina, editor, Daily Sun; Dr. Reuben Abati, chairman, editorial board, The Guardian, Kunle Ajibade, author of a best-selling prison memoir and executive editor, The News magazine and of course, Dr. Olu Obafemi, a professor of English who wrote the foreword. I can't thank these highly esteemed professionals and academics enough for their candid remarks, criticism and suggestions, most of which were responsible for whatever merits you find in the book.

"So many people want to write books, essays, speeches, newspaper and magazine articles but don't know how to begin. So many people have stories to tell and can, indeed, render vivid accounts of their experiences in normal conversations but freeze when it comes to putting such exciting experiences into writing. Why? Does that describe you? Then this book is for you. It opens doors to the highly challenging and lucrative world of freelancing, it offers vital keys to ghostwriting, memoir writing, negotiating and marketing strategies for such intellectual products."

### WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT THIS BOOK

Reuben Abati: I have read quite a number of publications on the art of successful writing; Dimgba Igwe's Advanced Features: Writing Successful Articles is a memorable, refreshing, and matchless contribution written in exquisite prose. It is the work of a man of practical undisguised interest in the subject. Igwe is at once a guide, teacher and analyst. His book is addressed to the freelance writer but it will be of great use to all writers in the English Language, journalists, travel writers and biographies especially. It is a labour of love and a professional testimony from one of Nigeria's most prolific public affairs analysts.

Mike Awoyinfa: This book makes me jealous. How I wish I had written it. It is a book everyone aspiring to make headway in journalism MUST read. It covers all the broad rubrics of journalism. Read it.

Kunle Ajibade: Dimgba Igwe got a job as a full-time ***journalist*** in Sunday Concord under the late ***Dele Giwa*** after a successful stint as a conscientious and confident freelance writer. That experience conferred on him the authority of a master. On the pages of this carefully crafted book, therefore, journalism comes alive in truly magisterial and inspiring way. This is hardly surprising, for Igwe believes strongly in the job and remains incredibly fanatical about its articles of faith.

Olu Obafemi (Ph.D): The book is fresh, rich and accessible and original—told straight from the heart, by one of Nigeria's most creative and inventive, dyed-in-the-wool journalists and writers. It is not just a book for journalists, professional and amateurish, but for anybody willing to come to grasp with contemporary knowledge about the human experience in a globalizing world, seen from the eye of the newsmaker. It is an inevitable read.

Femi Adesina: I have not read many books on freelance journalism, but I doubt if I'll read a better one than this. Practical, informative, educative without being unnecessarily didactical, and written in free flowing, easy to read language. Indeed, I was almost sorry to have finished reading it...And every editor or media manager must read this book or forever remain marooned in the misconception that you need an army of staff to run your publication(s). This book is surely a revolution and a revelation.

Enquiries 08033445125, 08026019981

The post Dimgba Igwe's Journalism Masterpiece appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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**Load-Date:** September 5, 2020

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No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole



## **No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole**

The Sun (Nigeria)

June 12, 2021 Saturday

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*Voice of the Nation*

**Length:** 1131 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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It was a 90-minute interview, an encounter spanning the duration of a football match. But not for once did we talk football. For those who don't know, Dr. Patrick Dele Cole is one of the legends of the journalism profession in Nigeria. A historian and diplomat with a PhD from Cambridge, the man who followed in the footsteps of Alhaji Babatunde Jose to become the Managing Director of the Daily Times after it was hit by a crisis of catastrophic proportions, Dr. Cole was the man sent on a rescue mission. And he did rescue the titanic newspaper ship—let's call it SSS Daily Times—introducing fresh ideas, bringing in new talents from the New York Times, bringing in creativity, creating exciting feature stories—such as the famous PAGE SEVEN—bringing in razzmatazz columns, columnists and intellectually grounded editorials. Dr. Patrick Dele Cole, now 81, is the genius and talent hunter who brought to Nigeria, the legendary journalist Dele Giwa, then working in the New York Times. He was also the one that brought Dr. Stanley Macebuh from where he was teaching English first at the University of California, Berkeley and later at Columbia University, New York. All these game-changers in Nigerian journalism are gone. Dele Giwa, then 39, was killed by a gruesome parcel bomb which he personally opened and was blasted into eternity on October 19, 1986. Dr. Macebuh also died early at 68 on March 7, 2010.

On meeting Dr. Cole at home on Saturday evening, I asked him questions on all these great men and his own contribution to journalism. I found a diffident man who was not willing to be glorified as a great achiever in the newspaper front. I asked him how he felt stepping into the shoes of the legendary Alhaji Babatunde Jose, the man who built Daily Times and took it to greater heights. And he replied: "Alhaji Jose was a legend and you can't compete with a legend. What I fought against was that many of the top journalists were political by the time we got there in 1976. I told them: 'If you want to have a political agenda, then you shouldn't be working in this newspaper. You go out and do politics.'" He recalls that "at the beginning it was a bit difficult but so far as I was concerned, my conscience was clear. I told them: 'Just do your work. Report. Raise the standard. Make sure we sell our

No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole

newspapers." One achievement he is proud of is making Daily Times readers outside Lagos to read fresh news, not stale.

It was an unforgettable encounter with this newspaper manager, diplomat, historian and a leader who tells me he has had a good life. As proof, he points to a group family photograph he took a few decades ago sandwiched by his wife, children and grandchildren. He points one by one to each child and gives a snappy introduction of how old the child is now and what he or she is doing today. For example, his big-time entrepreneur son, Tonye Cole is the founding partner of Sahara Group. I asked Dr. Cole the secrets to longevity and he brought out a bottle filled with pills, meaning old age is about taking your drugs. He laments that old age is a lapse into forgetfulness. "You even forget your enemies," he says.

#### BAN ON TWITTER

The interviewing was winding to an end. As a parting shot, I asked Dr. Cole his views on Nigeria's Twitter ban and his mood changed, bursting into a sermon on today's Nigeria.

"What concerns me is that in Nigeria we have freedom of speech," he begins. "Any attempt by any government to restrict the freedom of speech is detrimental to democracy. Democracy provides a field for the competition of ideas. If Buhari has better ideas than Twitter, he should say it. Truth is never less of a truth because others are denying it. No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him. There is technology today to go around Twitter. They will send it to your phone. So if you want to continue, you will get Twitter but you will get a different version. It will be based from South Africa. But you will get it every day."

"Look, Twitter is not Nigeria's problem. Farmers are today endangered in the hands of herders who are carrying AK-47 and shooting and burning people. That is a problem. The problem we have in Nigeria is some kind of military-style terrorist organisations who will go to a school, take your children and ask for ransom and you do not do anything about that. And what you are doing is to ban Twitter."

"My advice is that he should withdraw this ban or suspension of Twitter. There are other things more important to do. In fact, it is a losing battle. I just told you how to go round it. It is a technological thing. You cannot stop the flow of information. The only countries that have been able to stop the flow of information to that area are North Korea and China. Do you want to be like North Korea? You can't. Well, China, yes. But then, you can't compete with China. China has muscle, they have one-quarter of the world, so they can stop the news. They have enough internal news within themselves to keep going. But Nigeria? Come on! You don't even make pencils. You don't make biro. Everything you have in Nigeria you import. And you want to close Nigeria. How? The border you tried to close is a stupid thing. How can you close the border? First of all, Customs. Your argument is that the border is porous. Now, who are the people you have put in the Customs to make this border porous? Is it my brother? Is it your brother? So if the border is porous, you will try and seal it. Make sure that the Customs people there are working right. But if you enable those people by imposing more and more corrupt and inefficient officers at the border, then obviously it will continue to be porous. Whether you close it for two years or more, whenever you open it, the rubbish will continue. In a country that is enamoured to importing, instead of growing rice, we import it, all the things we can do, we prefer to import. Simple things like zipper, pencil, all types of things which in any other country you will see that the people are able to fix them. To plaster a wall, so that it is done right, we have to bring people from Cotonou."

"What Buhari wrote (on Twitter) is more or less saying that you Easterners, you didn't die enough. So we will kill more of you. More or less what he was saying. That if you are not careful, that you are too young to know the gravity of what happened. My point is that if you have a problem with Easterners wanting Biafra, why don't you sit down on the table and talk to them? You have Easterners, you have Igbo people in your executive council. Why don't you sit down with them and ask: 'What's all this?'"

The post No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole

**Load-Date:** June 12, 2021

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## Whitewashing impunity and iniquity

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

August 2, 2022 Tuesday

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**Length:** 667 words

### **Body**

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A peek, any peek, into Nigeria's difficult history as a country would immediately betray that there are those, many of them in fact, who have contributed in no small measure to complicating the Nigerian story.

Spread across military and civilian circles almost in equal measure, whenever Nigeria's book of woes will be opened, these men and women will no doubt get dishonorable readings for their misdeeds.

However, it appears that as time has taken its toll on some of these men and women, the tendency to whitewash their actions and make them less undesirable and more presentable than they can ever be has become appealing to many who revel in drawing perverse parallels.

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida was Nigeria's military president from 1985 to 1993, a period in which Nigeria found out that like an onion bulb, darkness can have many layers. He became military president of Nigeria after he deposed Muhammadu Buhari in a palace coup d'état. It was under Babangida's watch as military president that some of the worst atrocities committed against Nigeria and Nigerians were committed with reckless abandon and even glee.

Many argue that it was under Babangida, in the time colloquially known as the Babangida Era, that the political culture of corruption which today stands deeply embedded in the country really blossomed.

Executions and assassinations were also hot commodities during the Babangida era. Having survived two coup d'état attempts, he had no qualms ordering the 1985 execution of Mamman Vatsa and the 1991 execution of Gideon Orkar. Under Babangida, hundreds of soldiers also went on trial.

But it was not just soldiers. On October 19, 1986, Dele Giwa, a Nigerian journalist, Editor and founder of Newswatch magazine was killed by a parcel bomb in his home at Ikeja, Lagos, while in his study. The assassination occurred two days after he had been interviewed by State Security Service officials. The assassination has never been solved but a few Nigerians agree that it was sanctioned by the state of which Babangida was head at the time. In 2001, Babangida refused to testify before a national

## Whitewashing impunity and iniquity

human rights commission about the murder, passing up in the process an opportunity to clear his name once and for all.

In 1993, at historic national polls, Moshood Abiola swept to victory. But he was never to become President of the country. It was yet under Babangida that the election was annulled.

Under Babangida's iron fist, dozens of activists and journalists spent years in detention under horrific conditions.

Yet, in spite of this seemingly endless list of atrocities conceived, hatched and executed under Babangidas watch as military president, there are many who consider him a hero. These people, wading in the pool of ignorance they have deliberately muddied, have argued that Babangida is a hero for the way his coup detat succeeded in unseating Muhammadu Buhari who was then military president of the country.

Those who have been peddling this extremely reprehensible and laughable line of thought on social media and elsewhere have argued that given how low the country had sunk under Muhammadu Buhari by 1985, Babangida's palace coup of 1985, which opened the door to an era during which some of the deepest wounds on the conscience of Nigeria was inflicted, was an act of grace for Nigeria. This line of argument is shocking to say the least.

Nigeria may be at an all-time low given the failed promises of a government that whitewashed all its principal actors while successfully brainwashing Nigerians to vote for it not once but twice.

If the mistakes of the past are to be corrected, the correction will not be by the hands of those who don mendacity, mischief and even malice like garbs.

Babangida remains who he is for all that happened to Nigeria under his watch. Buhari remains who he is for all that is happening to Nigeria under his watch. Between them, there may be plenty villains but there is certainly no hero.

\xa0Kene Obiezu,

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**Load-Date:** August 2, 2022

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No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole



## **No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole**

The Sun (Nigeria)

June 12, 2021 Saturday

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*Voice of the Nation*

**Length:** 1131 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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It was a 90-minute interview, an encounter spanning the duration of a football match. But not for once did we talk football. For those who don't know, Dr. Patrick Dele Cole is one of the legends of the journalism profession in Nigeria. A historian and diplomat with a PhD from Cambridge, the man who followed in the footsteps of Alhaji Babatunde Jose to become the Managing Director of the Daily Times after it was hit by a crisis of catastrophic proportions, Dr. Cole was the man sent on a rescue mission. And he did rescue the titanic newspaper ship—let's call it SSS Daily Times—introducing fresh ideas, bringing in new talents from the New York Times, bringing in creativity, creating exciting feature stories—such as the famous PAGE SEVEN—bringing in razzmatazz columns, columnists and intellectually grounded editorials. Dr. Patrick Dele Cole, now 81, is the genius and talent hunter who brought to Nigeria, the legendary journalist Dele Giwa, then working in the New York Times. He was also the one that brought Dr. Stanley Macebuh from where he was teaching English first at the University of California, Berkeley and later at Columbia University, New York. All these game-changers in Nigerian journalism are gone. Dele Giwa, then 39, was killed by a gruesome parcel bomb which he personally opened and was blasted into eternity on October 19, 1986. Dr. Macebuh also died early at 68 on March 7, 2010.

On meeting Dr. Cole at home on Saturday evening, I asked him questions on all these great men and his own contribution to journalism. I found a diffident man who was not willing to be glorified as a great achiever in the newspaper front. I asked him how he felt stepping into the shoes of the legendary Alhaji Babatunde Jose, the man who built Daily Times and took it to greater heights. And he replied: "Alhaji Jose was a legend and you can't compete with a legend. What I fought against was that many of the top journalists were political by the time we got there in 1976. I told them: 'If you want to have a political agenda, then you shouldn't be working in this newspaper. You go out and do politics.'" He recalls that "at the beginning it was a bit difficult but so far as I was concerned, my conscience was clear. I told them: 'Just do your work. Report. Raise the standard. Make sure we sell our

No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole

newspapers." One achievement he is proud of is making Daily Times readers outside Lagos to read fresh news, not stale.

It was an unforgettable encounter with this newspaper manager, diplomat, historian and a leader who tells me he has had a good life. As proof, he points to a group family photograph he took a few decades ago sandwiched by his wife, children and grandchildren. He points one by one to each child and gives a snappy introduction of how old the child is now and what he or she is doing today. For example, his big-time entrepreneur son, Tonye Cole is the founding partner of Sahara Group. I asked Dr. Cole the secrets to longevity and he brought out a bottle filled with pills, meaning old age is about taking your drugs. He laments that old age is a lapse into forgetfulness. "You even forget your enemies," he says.

#### BAN ON TWITTER

The interviewing was winding to an end. As a parting shot, I asked Dr. Cole his views on Nigeria's Twitter ban and his mood changed, bursting into a sermon on today's Nigeria.

"What concerns me is that in Nigeria we have freedom of speech," he begins. "Any attempt by any government to restrict the freedom of speech is detrimental to democracy. Democracy provides a field for the competition of ideas. If Buhari has better ideas than Twitter, he should say it. Truth is never less of a truth because others are denying it. No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him. There is technology today to go around Twitter. They will send it to your phone. So if you want to continue, you will get Twitter but you will get a different version. It will be based from South Africa. But you will get it every day."

"Look, Twitter is not Nigeria's problem. Farmers are today endangered in the hands of herders who are carrying AK-47 and shooting and burning people. That is a problem. The problem we have in Nigeria is some kind of military-style terrorist organisations who will go to a school, take your children and ask for ransom and you do not do anything about that. And what you are doing is to ban Twitter."

"My advice is that he should withdraw this ban or suspension of Twitter. There are other things more important to do. In fact, it is a losing battle. I just told you how to go round it. It is a technological thing. You cannot stop the flow of information. The only countries that have been able to stop the flow of information to that area are North Korea and China. Do you want to be like North Korea? You can't. Well, China, yes. But then, you can't compete with China. China has muscle, they have one-quarter of the world, so they can stop the news. They have enough internal news within themselves to keep going. But Nigeria? Come on! You don't even make pencils. You don't make biro. Everything you have in Nigeria you import. And you want to close Nigeria. How? The border you tried to close is a stupid thing. How can you close the border? First of all, Customs. Your argument is that the border is porous. Now, who are the people you have put in the Customs to make this border porous? Is it my brother? Is it your brother? So if the border is porous, you will try and seal it. Make sure that the Customs people there are working right. But if you enable those people by imposing more and more corrupt and inefficient officers at the border, then obviously it will continue to be porous. Whether you close it for two years or more, whenever you open it, the rubbish will continue. In a country that is enamoured to importing, instead of growing rice, we import it, all the things we can do, we prefer to import. Simple things like zipper, pencil, all types of things which in any other country you will see that the people are able to fix them. To plaster a wall, so that it is done right, we have to bring people from Cotonou."

"What Buhari wrote (on Twitter) is more or less saying that you Easterners, you didn't die enough. So we will kill more of you. More or less what he was saying. That if you are not careful, that you are too young to know the gravity of what happened. My point is that if you have a problem with Easterners wanting Biafra, why don't you sit down on the table and talk to them? You have Easterners, you have Igbo people in your executive council. Why don't you sit down with them and ask: 'What's all this?'"

The post No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

No matter where Buhari runs, Twitter is going to chase him, says Dr. Patrick Cole

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2021

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## GandDollar Gate: Beyond Ja'afar's video

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

July 9, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 942 words

### **Body**

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While we knew and respected each other from a distance, I first met Ja'afar Ja'afar in 2015 when I was serving my second stint as the editor of Friday Leadership.

Journalists have a way of knowing themselves through various networks even if they had never met. Journalism is a profession like any other that builds one's reputation in the eyes of the world. Knowing the hassles one goes through to put a paper to bed or produce an article, colleagues rate themselves even from afar.

Ja'afar, with his equally double-barrelled named journalist twin brother, AbdulAzeez AbdulAzeez, is one of those not too young to write and not too old to dare firebrand journalists that enjoy their work not necessarily because of the fame it can bestow, or the money that isn't there, but largely because of the adrenaline that courses through one's veins when faced with danger. Saying the truth can be dangerous.

He may be seen as a controversial young chap by many, but hey - truth, most times, comes wrapped in controversies. Is there a prophet that was not seen as controversial in the beginning? Or a revolutionary that was welcomed without invoking controversies in society? Any change from the known or a challenge to the established order brings with it a certain dose of controversy.

We all know, not just suspect, that many of our leaders are sleazy. They steal our commonwealth, especially through contract inflation and collusion with contractors - their partners in crime. At the end of the day, no work is done or where done, poorly executed while funds have been disbursed for them.

In other cases, to cut their losses, contractors who had been short-changed by government officials deliver substandard projects and services. In most cases, they abandon the projects midway. And those who should hold them to account cannot because they had eaten from the forbidden pot.

Unfortunately, it is always the ripped-off citizens that hail their cheats and damn those who expose them.

Corruption, it has been said, is not chickenhearted; it always fights back. This is why it is hoped that it is not the case when we see pictures of pre-puberty school children, whose future is being mortgaged by the corrupt, being used as cannon fodder, bearing placards denouncing Ja'afar and "promising" to vote for Ganduje next year.

## GandDollar Gate: Beyond Ja'afar's video

While the Ja'afar video is under probe, I would not opine on their veracity or otherwise but call on all relevant authorities to do what is needed because such a case can only be likened to the Godwin Daboh versus Joseph Tarka or even the Nasir el-Rufa'i versus the Senate saga. They are defining events that can shape our thinking as a nation.

Ja'afar risks being regarded unfavourably if the video is doctored, but he also will be a celebrity of sorts if the video is proven to be genuine. He will become our modern-day **Dele Giwa** and perhaps get his sculpture erected in the Journalists' Hall of Fame when we get one.

Governor Ganduje will politically fizzle out in ignominy if the video is authenticated, but his hand will be strengthened if they turn out to be doctored. People will read it as desperation by his political enemies, but especially it would be said that they set out to embarrass President Muhammadu Buhari.

The way to give a bite to the anti-corruption crusade is to give people like Ja'afar political appointments if he comes out victorious because such people would have a reputation to guard jealously. There are others like him, but the orientation of our leaders is to give appointments to "team players". Their definition of a "team player" is a person who will partake in defrauding people without letting the cat out of the bag.

There had been cases of people society expected uprightness from but had entered into a "quid pro quo" arrangement and smiled to their banks. Anybody who will expose vice anywhere deserves commendation.

However, my chief concern is the contractor who agreed to be part of this sting operation, assuming it happened. He risks losing it all. No longer get any patronage from that angle, because the governor must know him very well. He has a family to cater for and has commitments and obligations, yet he was fearless enough to go through with this. He is a patriotic citizen who can sacrifice his interests for Nigeria. Not many like him around.

But if he can take this kind of risk for Nigeria, what is Nigeria going to do for him?

People fighting corruption this way not only risk their livelihoods but also their lives. So it won't be out of place for the country to give him some kind of social protection for such an exemplary act. After all is said and done and he is proved true, the whistle-blower's reward would also be a good idea, in addition to whatever else may follow.

There must be a deliberate policy by the government to protect such people and their families, or they would be left vulnerable to the mercy of wounded public officials or the "esprit de corps" that is strong among the class of our "polithiefians".

Those in authority only hire their own to gain control and form an army of corruption to fight back. They emasculate the upright physically, mentally and financially.

The fight against corruption must be intensified and won. For as many smooth operators, there will always be patriots who will blow the whistle. However, the fight will be lost or won depending on how the government treats or mistreats all involved.

If corrupt acts take place, the government must show its teeth and protect those who bell the cat. But if a reputation is tarnished unfairly, authorities must take action to deter others.

Hassan Gimba is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune Prime.

**Load-Date:** July 9, 2023



## Pupils learn about journalism, others on career day

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 14, 2019 Thursday

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Length: 526 words

### **Body**

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Notable professionals from various fields of endeavour came together to counsel pupils of Home Science Association Secondary School, Alakuko, Lagos State, during their 2019 Career Day last Wednesday.

The session featured professionals from the media, aviation, medicine, agriculture and guidance and counselling.

Principal of the school, John Kenny Olokose, said unlike in the past, when parents limited their wards' career choices, there were many more fields now in which they could excel.

Olokose said the decision on which direction to head after secondary school solely rested on the pupils.

He said opportunities now abound in several fields, with pupils having the freedom to decide where to go.

He said: 'Many of you have dreams. You can now contextualise the dreams. In the next 10 years, you can be a big achiever. If you do not have a dream, start having one now. Dream your dreams. But note that it takes sacrifice to actualise your dream.'

Speaking on journalism, Editor of The Nation, Mr. Adeniyi Adesina, told the pupils there were two ways to become a **journalist** - by studying Mass Communication, or acquiring a degree in any course of study and then getting on-the-job training.

He said other professionals, including doctors, architects and lawyers, are journalists. He identified the ability to write as a crucial skill for journalism.

Beyond acquiring a certificate, Adesina said being a **journalist** required hard work. He said a **journalist** does not sit in the office but goes to the beat to gather information and then returns to his desk to write stories or feature articles.

He stated that the profession has a constitutional role and as such helps in making leaders accountable to the nation.

He said: 'This is the only profession recognised by the constitution.'

'You must hold the government of the day accountable as a **journalist** because your role is to serve the people.'

He also educated the students on the different aspects of journalism: print, broadcast and online.

Pupils learn about journalism, others on career day

When asked if it is safe to practise journalism considering the fact that ace journalist, Dele Giwa died as a result of parcel bomb, he said the attack on journalists in the past was largely carried out during military rule.

He said with the return to democracy, things are stabilising and the government now observes the rule of law.

Doyin Kukoyi, presenter of the popular programme, Gbajumo Osere, on DSTV Channel 157, told the students they would need to excel in English and Mathematics to study journalism.

She said studying Mass Communication could also take them into different aspects of journalism as well as public relations and advertising.

She added: 'One of the greatest powers you have is the ability to pass on information to every human being. The power is in passing the message across to a mass audience.'

Kukoyi said every journalist must be distinct in the use of English Language and also have a Unique Selling Point.

Other professionals who spoke included a pilot with Air Peace and a former student of the school, Captain Adebayo Manuwa; a medical doctor, Dr. Macaulay Abimbola; an agriculturist, Nurat Omotayo Atoba; and a counsellor, Oluwatoyin Williams.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2019

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## Gideon Orkar: The man who saw tomorrow

The Punch

October 30, 2021 Saturday

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**Length:** 1356 words

### **Body**

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Tunde Odesola Published 27 April 2020

Tunde Odesola

Tick-tock, tick-tock, both hands of the clock tiptoed to 12 midnight. It was December 31. Hunger and anger waved at the year, 1983, which said its goodbyes and trudged towards the calendar door. Economically, 1983 was bad for Nigeria and her naira. The masses had nothing but the skin covering their bones. Stuffed up to the throat with corruption, apathy and impunity, the nation held no hope for the citizenry.

But the masses were thankful. Thankful for surviving the year and the 'austerity measures' imposed by the prodigal Shehu Shagari administration, which swept into power in October 1983 on the wings of a violent election. Like an answer to an anxious prayer, a young Fulani soldier, Muhammadu Buhari, jumped on Dodan Barracks, Lagos, near the stroke of midnight with his band of bumbling, self-righteous soldiers and kicked out Shagari and his focusless National Party of Nigeria. The nation broke into wild jubilation, hugging Buhari's New Year present.

After just one year and eight months in the saddle, however, Major General Buhari was booted out of office by the man who ran the bloodiest military junta in the history of the country, General Ibrahim Babangida. No regime in Nigeria's history recorded a higher number of deaths of military personnel and civilian activists than Babangida's murderous regime.

During the Babangida years, **journalist Dele Giwa** was shredded by a parcel bomb, over 150 senior Nigerian military officers crashed midair and perished in a Lagos swamp; poet-soldier, Major General Mamman Vatsa, whom Babangida was best man to, wasn't spared by the little man now marooned on Minna hilltop. Vatsa was tied to a stake and shot to death in 1986 over an alleged coup plot along with many other brilliant soldiers. The gun of Babangida's misrule dripped with blood.

On Sunday, April 22, 1990, about five years into Babangida's bloody rule, a junior soldier, Major Gideon Orkar, led the most audacious coup in the annals of the country by attempting to oust the fiercely-corrupt Babangida from power. The Orkar coup demystified Babangida, who fled, tail between legs, to Abuja, where he relocated the seat of power to from Lagos after escaping being killed, through the courage of his ADC, Colonel UK Bello, who spirited him and his family out of Dodan Barracks via the backdoor. Bello later returned to the barracks to face the coup

### Gideon Orkar: The man who saw tomorrow

plotters but was killed inside an armoured tank. Subsequently, the coup was foiled and the plotters were arrested. Orkar, a Tiv from Benue State, and 41 other soldiers were shot to death on July 27, 1990.

Babangida abandoned power in 1993 when he couldn't bear the local and international backlash resulting from his cancellation of the June 12 presidential election won by the late MKO Abiola. Sani Abacha, arguably, the only major general Babangida was taller than, later demolished the sandcastle Babangida foisted on the nation and christened Interim National Government, side-footing the weightless leader of the ING, Ernest Shonekan, out of Aso Rock – after just three months in power. Abacha was nothing but greed. IBB was everything but good. The lucifer of deception embraces the devil of greed.

The Orkar coup clocked 30 years old a few days ago. So much water has passed under the Nigerian bridge. During the coup, Nigeria was headless for many hours as senior military officers rallied troops and engaged the revolutionary junior soldiers in a fierce battle to control Lagos. Never in its 53 years of existence had Lagos witnessed the amount of ammunition fired on the day as soldiers fought in the trenches on April 22 through 23, 1990. Lagos went into a cardiac arrest with the heavy artillery bombardment.

After seizing power, Orkar accused the Babangida government of corruption, nepotism and killings. In his nationwide speech, Orkar cut off Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Borno and Bauchi from the geographical expression called Nigeria. He said, "On behalf of the patriotic and well-meaning peoples of the Middle Belt and southern parts of this country, I, Major Gideon Orkar, wish to inform you of the successful ousting of the dictatorial, corrupt, drug baronish, evil man, deceitful, homosexually-centred, prodigalistic, unpatriotic administration of General Badamosi Babangida."

He continued, "We have equally commenced their trials for unabated corruption, mismanagement of national economy, the murders of Dele Giwa, Major-General Mamman Vasta, with other officers as there was no attempted coup but mere intentions that were yet to materialise, and other human rights violations.

"The National Guard, already in its formative stage, is disbanded with immediate effect. Decrees Number 2 and 46 are hereby abrogated. We wish to emphasise that this is not just another coup but a well-conceived,-- planned and executed revolution for the marginalised, oppressed and enslaved peoples of the Middle Belt and the South.

"Our history is replete with numerous and uncontrollable instances of callous and insensitive, dominatory, repressive intrigues by those who think it is their birthright to dominate till eternity the political and economic privileges of this great country to the exclusion of the people of the Middle Belt and the South. They have almost succeeded in subjugating the Middle Belt and making them voiceless and now extending (the) same to the South."

It's 30 years since Orkar and his men stormed the Dodan Barracks by 1:40am. It's 54 years since Majors Chukwuma Nzeogu and Emmanuel Ifeajuna hatched Nigeria's first coup on January 15, 1966, killing 22 people, including the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa. It's 54 years since northern officers launched a 'July Rematch' counter-coup that killed the Head of State, General J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi, and many other leaders.

However, not even during the military bloodiness did clannishness dominate governance as Nigeria is currently witnessing under the Muhammadu Buhari regime. This is the first time in the life of Nigeria when herdsmen will kill Middle Belt and southern Nigerian citizens while the Federal Government does absolutely nothing to check the ethnic cleansing. It's the first time the Federal Government will openly say herdsmen are right to kill and plunder if the Middle Belt people and southerners do not give out their lands to herdsmen for RUGA. It's also the first time that all service chiefs and all paramilitary organisations, except two, are northerners.

World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, disclosed in 2017 that Buhari urged the bank to concentrate development in the northern region of Nigeria. The non-appointment of the Igbo into the National Defence Council and the National Security Council is in breach of Section 217(3) of the constitution which says the composition of the Armed Forces must reflect federal character.

After repeated denials, it recently came to light that northern states have long been benefiting from the Federal Government's Conditional Cash Transfer programme while states like Lagos and Delta didn't benefit. Buhari's state,

### Gideon Orkar: The man who saw tomorrow

Katsina, has the highest beneficiaries with 133, 227 indigenes getting cash transfers. Katsina is followed by Zamfara (130,764), Jigawa (99,044), Kano (84,148), Plateau (78,430), Kebbi (76,026), Kogi (62,129) and Benue (58,943). Also, Nasarawa (48,687), Kaduna (35,348), Kwara (32,218), Gombe (26,532), Akwa Ibom (24,929), Yobe (24,814), Bauchi (23,305) are on the list of top beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries in Osun, Oyo and Cross River states are 15,572, 13,811 and 11,998 respectively while Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Abia, Anambra and Imo have 11,368, 9,805, 9,596, 9,347, 8,105 and 7,220 beneficiaries respectively.

Babangida's administration, which Orkar sought to overthrow, clearly appears to be a saint when compared with the Buhari regime in areas such as fairness in appointments, security and infrastructural development. Without a doubt, Buhari's place as Nigeria's most cliquish leader is sealed in infamy and this mortal failing will be the everlasting memoriam of his presidency. Truly, Nigeria deserves Orkar's pity. Orkar deserves a posthumous national award.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2021

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## PETER ENAHORO (Peter Pan) TO THE RESCUE!

The Nation (Nigeria)

April 26, 2023 Wednesday

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**Length:** 4628 words

### **Body**

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Former General Editor, Africa Now and Publisher of Africa Today.

When I left Concord newspapers as London Correspondent in October 1983, I was not sure what to do next. I did not know where my next job would be. This was the time when I needed a job the most. I had just got married, and my wife and I were expecting our first child. So it was not only myself that I had to feed and take care of as I used to, I was now responsible for the upkeep and wellbeing of my family. Meanwhile, the media circle in London, as big as it was, and still is, could be actually a very small community.

The news of my departure from Concord had spread among my London colleagues very speedily. My choice of where to work next was limited. But I thought my best bet was with West Africa magazine, the oldest African weekly based in the city. It was just a walking distance away from my former office at the Concord and was owned by the Nigerian government through the Daily Times of Nigeria. It had the late Kaye Whiteman as its editor.

Kaye was David Williams's protégé, and he knew me very well. I approached West Africa and held a meeting with him. We discussed my situation. He particularly wanted to know what had happened and why I had to leave the Concord. I explained to him that Chief Abiola wanted me in Nigeria and I was not ready for reposting to Nigeria at that stage for personal reasons and also because, in the first place, I was not a local correspondent employed in Nigeria and posted to work for Concord in London like the Sketch did. He was sympathetic with my predicament but unfortunately said he could not offer me a job.

Why he couldn't, I really did not know. I thought it might have to do with how to pay my salary. Where I came from at the Concord, owned by a multimillionaire publisher, I was never owed any salary, and it was never paid late to me. Any prospective employer, especially in the pan-African news magazine publishing circle in London at that time, feared if they could afford to pay me. I issued the cheque to pay myself and other staff of the company in London at the end of each month anyway. I took his decision not to offer me a job in good faith and left.

A few years later, after I had moved on, Kaye, in a remarkable twist of irony, found himself having to write about me in his famous 'Matchet's Diary' column in West Africa. He had to publicly admit that he once regretted not hiring me

## PETER ENAHORO (Peter Pan) TO THE RESCUE!

when I came to him looking for employment in 1983. He wrote: 'I can reveal with some mortification that I once turned him down for a job on this journal, but you can't win them all.'

What prompted him to write about me was the high profile lecture on Nigeria I was invited to deliver at the renowned School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 1993. He was very generous in his comments about me in that article. He was, without a doubt, one of the most respected British journalists who could speak authoritatively about my London career, most especially my exploits over the years as a foreign correspondent in the city.

Therefore, it is imperative that I reproduce here in full Kaye Whiteman's comments on me in that 22-28 February 1993 Matchet's Diary column in West Africa magazine. He titled it, 'Kayode - Commonwealth Crusader.' Here is what he wrote:

'WITH HIS FORTHCOMING talk to the Royal African Society on Thursday, February 25 (1993), Kayode Soyinka consecrates his position as one of the foremost African journalistic practitioners in London. The talk is to be at the School of Oriental and African Studies in Bloomsbury at 6pm, and his subject is 'Nigeria: the Year of Transition,' but there is other evidence of the London Bureau Chief of Newswatch's current high profile. I have to commend him, for instance, for having written creditable, and sufficiently different, obituaries of the late Sir Adetokunbo Ademola in both The Independent and The Guardian (here he has had a complete corner, but it is sad that neither The Times, the paper of record, nor the Daily Telegraph, have found space to record the passing of such an eminent international personality).

'Kayode also, a few weeks back, took it upon himself, in a letter to the Editor of The Independent on the subject of the Calcutt report and present pressures to control the British press, to express astonishment that any British government 'could ever dream of introducing legislation to curb the press, no matter the recent abuses of its so-called power'. He goes on to wonder 'if anyone is considering the effect such new press-gag laws as the government is contemplating would have on journalists and media-government relationships around the world, especially in the Commonwealth - and Africa in particular, where we journalists have had to fight against all the odds to assert our independence and operate in an atmosphere of freedom'. He concludes by saying: 'Britain should be giving a lead and not behaving like those tinpot dictators who see the press as their worst enemy.'

'Like his boss Ray Ekpu he has been prominent in the Commonwealth Journalists Association and has been around in London for well over 10 years, having started off as Correspondent for Chief Abiola's Concord, before moving to Newswatch when it began in 1985. His place in press history, as well as his own coming of age as a ***journalist***, came from his presence on the spot when the late ***Dele Giwa***, founding father of Newswatch, was parcel bombed in Lagos in 1986. An incident so horrifying is bound to put iron in the soul. I can reveal with some mortification that I once turned him down for a job on this journal, but then you can't win them all. I have always considered him something of a 'newshound,' covering all the London ramifications of the Dikko kidnap and subsequent trials, for example. This was shown more recently in a sound piece of investigative journalism he did on John Onanuga, the Nigerian involved in the bizarre Norman Lamont 'Threshergate' affair. Onanuga, as already recorded in this column, first claimed that it was Lamont, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who purchased cheap champagne and Raffles cigarettes at Threshers, then retracted his statement having found himself clearly out of his depth.

After the tabloids began to hound him with misleading stories suggesting his presence in this country was illegal, Kayode conducted an interview with him in Yoruba in which he clearly admits on tape that 'it was Lamont who bought things from me.' And as Kayode reports, even Thresher admits that they could find no evidence to suggest that Onanuga was an illegal immigrant in Britain.

For the record, he comes from a well-known Nigerian family. He is the brother of former weekly Concord editor Bayo Onanuga, who resigned last April after the banning of the publication for a front-page critique of the running of the Nigerian economy. Which brings me back, almost, to where I started, with Kayode and the press.'

What a testimonial! As I was delivering my lecture that evening in an auditorium that was filled to the brim, Kaye was among the familiar faces that I saw in the audience. I noticed that he was listening with rapt attention to every

## PETER ENAHORO (Peter Pan) TO THE RESCUE!

word I uttered. He went on to do a report of the lecture in the Matchet's Diary, again, in the 8-14 March 1993 edition of West Africa. He titled it as 'Debating Nigeria' and wrote:

'Having given him some solid advance publicity, I should record that Kayode Soyinka's talk at SOAS on Nigeria's transition (see this column two weeks ago) was a stimulating evening. It attracted a lot of people, and a lot of controversy, and I understand a text is eventually to be published.'

Let me simply note that Kayode is a convinced democrat, who believes that an imperfect civilian regime is better than a military one any time, although there were quite a few to disagree with him, citing the Second Republic as an example.

Thus the interminable khaki versus agbada argument got into full swing. It was a good-humoured evening, as evidenced by the remark from the floor when Segun Johnson introduced himself as representing the Organisation for the Restoration of Democracy in Africa. Quick as a flash came the response 'think of Nigeria first.' I must commend Kayode for airing one of my own preoccupations when he deplored the lack of sense of history of today's Nigerians ('Have you read the memoirs of Chief Adebo?' he asked the audience). Kayode does his bit, as I have noted, in the obituary field, apropos of which I note that finally, a month after the event, that well-known paper of record The Times of London has managed to note the passing of that great Nigerian, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola. Unbylined as it was, internal evidence suggests that this one, at least, was not done by Kayode.'

Kaye Whiteman was very generous to me in his comments on my London career and his reports on this particular event. I feel I owe him a debt of gratitude. He also did an elaborate review of my first book, *Diplomatic Baggage: MOSSAD and NIGERIA - The Dikko Story*, when it was launched. This was on 31 January 1995, at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, under the chairmanship of the late Dr. Olusola Saraki, and in the presence of Dr. Umaru Dikko himself. The review appeared in the 6-12 March 1995 edition of West Africa.

The book was on the kidnapping that occurred in broad daylight on a well-to-do London Street within half a mile of Kensington Palace on 5 July 1984 of a former minister and close aide of deposed President Shehu Shagari of Nigeria. The kidnapping was a sensational occurrence which grabbed the headlines in the media globally. Dikko was the fiercest opponent of the military junta in Nigeria led by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari which had just toppled the democratically elected government of President Shagari in which Dikko was a very powerful and influential minister. He was drugged, boxed into a packing-case together with three of his captors and nearly flown to Lagos where he would have been put on trial and probably given a life sentence.

I chose to write about this incident because, throughout my 17-year career in London as a correspondent, it was the most bizarre and the most fascinating story for me of Nigerian and African interest. Even Nelson Mandela, when I met him in February 1995 in his first year in office as President of South Africa, and presented him with an autographed copy of the book, told me he and his co-prisoners on Robbin Island heard about the Dikko Kidnap while they were in prison - 'You Nigerians,' he quipped.

Besides, I used the book to tell a story about Nigeria and to explain that what happened on that afternoon which to all intents and purposes was an affront on the British government and people, and must be condemned no matter how miscreant Dikko might have been; it was not typical of what one might be tempted to describe as a typical Nigerian attitude or behaviour. Rather it was just a spill over of political power play in Nigeria which unfortunately spilt over on the streets of London.

Lastly, I had to choose this topic for a book to write because I knew I was ending my long career as a foreign correspondent in London and I thought that having this book done would speak for me and represent what I did and all those years of reporting from London. In short, this book was something to show, even years after I might have gone, that Kayode Soyinka passed through here as a London Correspondent. I feel happy and very proud that *Diplomatic Baggage* is used widely in many universities around the world by students of Anglo-Nigerian Relations, International Affairs and Diplomacy and Africa Politics and politics generally. I thank Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, for inviting me to come in as a Visiting Scholar to write the book, and the Commonwealth, through what used to be known as the Commonwealth Media Development Fund (CMDF) for granting me the funds for the Scholarship. However, in an interesting twist of irony, after the collapse of West Africa, Kaye ended up writing for

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me at Africa Today, my own pan-African newsmagazine. It was established in January 1995 but made its debut on the global newsstands at the end of April of that year with the May 1995 edition. Kaye wrote consistently for Africa Today until his death 17 May 2014.

I spoke with him on the telephone two days before his death, and he did not betray any sign of ill-health. His voice was strong, and we discussed story ideas for the next edition of Africa Today. The sad and shocking news of his sudden death was broken to me as I arrived in Lagos, Nigeria, on a visit. The least I could do to honour such a generous benefactor was to write a well-deserved and befitting appreciation and tribute to him. I recognised his support for me in the tough task of publishing Africa Today and placing it consistently on the global newsstands. He was an accomplished writer, journalist, and editor. Not only was he an expert on Africa but he was a great friend of the region, and Nigeria in particular, where he was considered an honorary citizen. The tribute was published in Africa Today itself, the UK Guardian and several other newspapers around the world, including in Nigeria and around the Commonwealth, where he had many friends. At one stage in his career in the early '80s, he had been a spokesperson in Brussels for the old European Economic Community (EEC). From 1999 to 2000, he served as the Director of Information at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London, under Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku. He died aged 78.

However, when Kaye couldn't offer me a job at West Africa, I knew I still had to get myself a job fast. I was determined to get one before my wife gave birth. Meanwhile, we had a new responsibility immediately after we got married on 15 October 1983 by buying a house in the Mill Hill area in northwest London. So we now had to pay the mortgage as well. My wife felt naturally concerned about the untimeliness of losing my Concord job and the discomfort that it would give us, especially with our new responsibilities. Who wouldn't be? Being newly-wed is not the best time for a husband to lose his job. But Titilope was very understanding. She was my pillar of strength throughout that difficult period. Still not knowing where my next job would come from, I kept reassuring her not to worry, that an opening would show up and I would get a new job soon.

As luck would have it, one day I received a telephone call out of the blue from Lagos that turned out to be very crucial for me. It effectively put an end to my sorrow of job hunting. It was the voice of an influential Nigerian figure on the other side of the telephone. It was Chief Olu Adebanjo, a renowned journalist of the very old school of Nigerian journalism.

Chief Adebanjo used to be the editor of the famous Daily Express. He had become a politician and was at the time serving as Special Adviser and Federal Minister of Information to President Shehu Shagari - being the first and only person to date to have combined these two strategic positions. He had heard about my predicament and the circumstances that led to my disengagement from Concord newspapers as London Correspondent. He knew I was in the market in London looking for a new job. In our telephone conversation, he told me he had spoken on my behalf with Peter Enahoro, the Publisher of Africa Now. He asked me to go and see him, telling me that Enahoro would employ me. Chief Olu Adebanjo, may his soul rest in peace, was a Godsend.

The following morning after that telephone conversation, I went to Dilke House, on Mallet Street, right opposite the University of London Student Union Building, where Africa Now had its office. Chief Adebanjo had already got me an appointment to see Peter Enahoro. And he was in the office when I got there. I was filled with awe as I entered his posh office and sat in front of Peter Enahoro, the legendary and famous 'Peter Pan,' for real.

When I was growing up, Peter Enahoro was a household name in Nigerian journalism and politics. He was the fabled editor of the Daily Times of Nigeria. In fact, he had earlier edited the Sunday Times at the tender age of 23 in 1958. Four years later in 1962, he was made the editor of the Daily Times when he took over from another distinguished editor, Babatunde Jose. At both national newspapers, the most influential and most widely read in Nigeria, he had run the most powerful regular column under his pen name 'Peter Pan.' He had used that column to prick the conscience of many Nigerian government officials and politicians. He had built a big reputation for himself as a gadfly in the conscience of the nation with his writings. When you read Peter Enahoro, you cannot but admire his mastery of the language. His effective use of satire can crack the ribs, as could be experienced by reading his bestseller, How to be a Nigerian.

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And, lest we forget, he came from a political and media family. His senior brother, the late Chief Anthony Enahoro, was also a celebrated **journalist** who holds the record as the youngest national newspaper editor in Nigeria; at the age of 21, he was editor of the Southern Nigerian Defender based in Ibadan and owned by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of Nigeria's founding fathers.

As a politician, Chief Enahoro fought many battles. He had the historic honour of being the one to propose and raise the motion in Parliament in Lagos for Nigeria's independence and was Nigeria's first Federal Minister of Information in the country's First Republic. When the first military coup in Nigeria was staged 15 January 1966 and ended the first post-independence democratically elected government, led by Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, curiously enough, Peter Enahoro did not use his popular column to condemn it. On the contrary, he seemed to be enamoured of the young military officers who staged the coup as some of them were said to be his friends.

However, when the counter-coup of 29 July 1966, led mainly by northern Nigerian soldiers took place, his position as editor of Daily Times became somewhat untenable, and he had to resign in 1967. Enahoro was a threat to and target of the new military men in power. If he had not left the country after the 29 July 1966 coup, he certainly would have been arrested by the new soldiers who had taken over power. Peter went into exile in Europe in 1967. He first settled in Germany where he became editor of Deutsche Welle. From there he moved to the United Kingdom in 1976 where he edited Africa Magazine owned by former Nigerian diplomat, the late Ralph Uwechue. From there he left to become the editor and a director of New African owned by the Algerian, Afif Ben Yadder. In 1980, he finally started his own Africa Now.

Here is a man who had an eventful career as one of the best editors of national newspapers in Nigeria. He was perhaps the country's best known international **journalist** and publisher. Considering his stature in the profession, journalists of my own generation couldn't have been privileged to work with and under Peter Enahoro.

In fact, we had no such right anymore because he had served and paid his dues as a **journalist** and editor in Nigeria long before our time. And here I was, as inexplicable circumstances of life would dictate it for me, a young **journalist**, just about two months from my 26th birthday, seated right in front of this larger-than-life and legendary editor and publisher. I was ready to work under Peter Enahoro in 1983. It was a rare privilege, and I am sure many reading this would understand why I was so overwhelmed and awed as I stepped into his office at Dilke House. I could see him radiating success. He was stylish and very flamboyant. Not only was he urbane but he was also very humble - a very nice man, indeed. He also loved playing his golf. He was the first Nigerian and the only African publisher I saw with a big cigar, driving a Rolls Royce in London. His Rolls carried a special number plate too: PEN121. It was a combination of the initials of his names and month and the day of his birth. We started our discussion on why I had to leave Concord. I explained the whole thing to him, just as I had done to Kaye Whiteman at West Africa.

He was very understanding and was amused by Chief Moshood Abiola's 'pettiness' to sack me himself, especially as there were no justifiable reasons. At that time in 1983, Peter Enahoro was still in self-exile and had been out of Nigeria for about 16 years. However, he was very conversant and up to date with the goings-on in the country. He still regularly wrote about Nigeria and the events taking place in Africa in his column in the monthly Africa Now. He told me that he needed an editor for the Nigeria desk at Africa Now and that he would offer me the job if I were willing to take it. Enahoro warned me though that Africa Now might not be able to offer me the same salary I was earning at Concord, but that they would not be too far from it if they could not match it.

I had no choice really. Of the three pan-African monthly newsmagazines in London at that time, with global circulation, Africa Now was the one with a true journalism giant like Enahoro as publisher in the industry. I thought it would be a great privilege for me to work with and for him. I grabbed the opportunity with both hands and accepted to be the General Editor of Africa Now. That appointment in 1983 was a major turning point in my career. First of all, it was a promotion.

It was my first Editor's job, and I got it just about two months from my 26th birthday. It was a transition I had to quickly get used to. I had switched from being a daily newspaper reporter dealing with breaking news to an editor

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for a pan-African newsmagazine with monthly frequency. This required special skills and a higher level of writing stories and news features in a way that would give them a long shelf life. On a more personal note, it was a great relief to my agony of sudden (albeit brief) period of joblessness. I got the job before our first child was born on 15 January 1984. Appropriately, we named our daughter Oluwatumininu, meaning 'The Lord comforts me.' The Yoruba have a tradition to look at the circumstances around the family at the time of a child's birth; this could dictate the type of name the newly born is given. Our names always connote a distinct meaning.

At Africa Now, I was in charge of reporting Nigeria. The magazine was, at that time, very widely read in Nigeria, Africa and throughout the world. It published Special Reports on Nigeria regularly. It didn't take me long to get used to the new environment and establish good relationships with other editors that I met there.

In fact, I chose John Gritten, the former Production Editor of Africa Now, as the first Managing Editor of Africa Today when I established it in 1995. I regularly travelled for Africa Now to Nigeria, which offered me the opportunity of making contact with and seeing some of my former colleagues and friends in Concord at its Lagos headquarters again. I worked very closely with Peter Enahoro. By the time I joined Africa Now, the magazine had established a very close relationship with the Shagari government in Nigeria.

Enahoro supported that democratically elected government so much that when it was toppled in January 1984, and General Muhammadu Buhari became Nigeria's Head of State, Enahoro refused to support that military government. He had had a picture of President Shagari hanging on the wall behind his desk at his London office, which he refused to pull down until democracy was restored in Nigeria.

In 1984 we were to publish our annual special report on Nigeria, and I was sent to the country to package it. Enahoro did not expect that General Buhari would grant us an exclusive interview that would normally go inside that special report. Enahoro had been very critical of Buhari.

The main reason was the way many politicians had been indiscriminately arrested and locked up indefinitely by the regime; those that were charged and tried in court were sentenced to ridiculously long years of imprisonment. I had to lean on Buhari's Chief Press Secretary, Wada Maida, who had been a friend and my colleague in London as London Correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), to get that Buhari interview done. They were all surprised when I reported back to London that we got the interview.

I even got the Finance Minister in that government, Dr. Onaolapo Soleye, to grant us an interview for the magazine which was also published in that special edition. The way we reported Nigeria was very important to Enahoro. He liked to go through all copies of Nigerian stories going into the magazine. It was okay by me because it made me eager to listen to his comments, especially on my stories.

I remember him telling me, after going through all the features going into that 1984 Special Report on Nigeria, that the article he enjoyed reading most was the one on the state of the Nigerian civil service, whose writer we could not reveal because he was an insider - a serving permanent secretary!

During my time working under Peter Enahoro at Africa Now I not only became better at writing - one cannot work under such a brilliant and elegant prose stylist, storyteller and wordsmith and not know how to write - but I was also able to learn more about Nigeria from him, most especially its political history and how the military became involved in its national life. Peter Enahoro is an encyclopaedia of Nigerian political history. It was always a pleasure just sitting down with him at his office when we were not under the pressure of deadlines, or busy with production, and listen to him regaling us with one story after another on political happenings and individual characters in Nigerian politics and government.

In all, it was a short but memorable time I spent at Africa Now - just a little over a year. I left in 1985 to join my friends and former Concord colleagues at the start of Newswatch magazine. I must say, that it was with great reluctance that I left Africa Now to join Dele Giwa and his colleagues at Newswatch. I remember bringing Dele Giwa to meet with Peter Enahoro at Africa Now while I was there. What a sight that was for me, bringing together two great journalists and editors who have undoubtedly made indelible imprints on Nigerian journalism. On the day I handed in my resignation letter, Peter called me at home later that night to persuade me not to leave. We had a

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long telephone conversation. Unfortunately, my mind was already made up. I had had a very strong relationship with Dele Giwa, Yakubu Mohammed and Ray Ekpu at Concord. They had been good to me and Titilope, my wife. They were supportive of me throughout my time at the Concord, particularly during the period of my disagreement with Chief Abiola.

I saw an opportunity to reunite with them at Newswatch, which I wanted to take. I am eternally grateful to Peter Enahoro for coming to my aid during one of the most critical and trying moments in my career. He is by some distance the most experienced, and best editor and publisher I ever worked with. I will always appreciate him for rescuing me by giving me a job when Chief Abiola decided to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

\*Peter Enahoro, aged 88, was born 21 January 1935. He died in London on Monday, 24 April 2023.

\*Kayode Soyinka, is publisher of Africa Today. This Special Tribute is from his recent memoir: BORN INTO JOURNALISM - MEMOIR OF A NEWSPAPER REPORTER. The memoir is now available in Nigeria at Rovingheights Bookstore, Landmark Event Centre, Plot 2 and 3, Water Corporation Drive, Victoria Island Annex, Lagos. It is also available at Rovingheights Bookstore in Abuja.

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## Stanley Macebuh: Unforgettable pathfinder of modern Nigerian journalism

The Guardian

February 9, 2023 Thursday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1000 words

## Body

Dr. Stanley Nkwachikwelumamaya Macebuh was a rare breed in the freshest sense of the term, a charge of fine electricity who all on his own changed the face of journalism practice in Nigeria.

Stanley was at once a scholar, philosopher, cerebral journalist, informed commentator, mentor, liberal, technocrat, icon, legend, connoisseur, all rolled into one diminutive body of irresistible charisma.

As the founding Managing Director of the Guardian Newspapers, Stanley bequeathed on this country in word and deed "the Flagship of the Nigerian Press."

He died at age 67 by 4.15 in the morning on Sunday, March 7, 2010 at the National Hospital, Abuja. Born on December 28, 1942, the incredibly intelligent lad attended Government Primary School, Port Harcourt, where he broke all the academic records.

He took a scholarship to Ngwa High School, Aba, where he excelled at the very top of his class. He was then admitted for his Higher School Certificate at the esteemed Kings College, Lagos, where his intellect was the staple of legend. He even taught at Kings College, a prodigy.

Kings College legends such as Dr Yemi Ogunbiyi and the immortal "Motor-Park Economist" Ashikiwe-Adione-Egom can never tire of giving testimony of Stanley's good works.

Stanley took his prodigious intellect to the English department at the University of Ibadan from 1963 to 1966. He departed the shores of Nigeria in 1967, just before the outbreak of the civil war, to study at the University of Sussex in England.

It is a mark of his genius that he acquired his DPhil (Doctor of Philosophy degree) at the age of 26.

The University of California, Berkeley, California, USA then poached him as an in-house African philosopher during the Civil Rights Movement era in the US.

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It was Stanley's Doctoral Dissertation supervisor who recommended the wunderkind to the American authorities for him to join the UCLA Faculty at Berkeley, California.

He distinguished himself for two years at Berkeley before two other universities in America, Columbia University of New York and City College of New York, both engaged in a battle to have him on their faculties.

Both universities had to agree to share his multiform services! Stanley therefore set the record of lecturing in the two universities at the same time, and it was organized in such a way that he taught full-time at City College and part-time at the Institute of African Studies of Columbia University.

Stanley had risen to the post of a tenured Associate Professor of English in the US before he was invited by Patrick Dele Cole to return to Nigeria to breathe fresh air into the Daily Times newspaper as the Editorial Adviser. He brought along the legendary Dele Giwa, and Nigerian journalism would never be the same again.

Stanley initiated the policy of separating the Editorial Board as the think-tank of the newspaper from the reportorial regimen.

Back then, it was the feature writers that supplied the editorials more or less as afterthoughts.

When the politics in Daily Times got out of hand he left, only to later join forces with the financier Alex Ibru to found The Guardian, which he from the very beginning intended to be not just a great liberal newspaper but the "Flagship of Nigerian Journalism."

Stanley's audacious dream was to make The Guardian among the five best newspapers in the English-speaking world. Stanley was a man who cherished ideas, and he hired all makes of intellectuals who even disagreed with him ideologically. He believed in the sanctity of intellectual disputation.

The editorial board he set up was made up of Onwuchekwa Jemie, Sonala Olumhense, Femi Osofisan, Eddie Iroh, Sully Abu, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Chinweizu, Odia Ofeimun, Edwin Madunagu, Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe etc.

Stanley put his foot down that all opinion articles must come in within the 800-word ambit, stressing that anybody who could not make his argument within 800 words had not properly organized his thought in the first instance.

He also championed the cause of addressing everybody as "Simply Mister" against the Nigerian grain of addressing ill-assorted potentates as Chief, Prof, Dr, Engr., Rev. etc.

The labour of his ideas would eventually clash with the capital of the family that set up the newspaper. Stanley perforce had to leave The Guardian and tried his hands at business, but that was not his forte. He helped some financiers to set up Sentinel magazine and the Post Express newspaper but his lofty ideas could not gel with the owners. He was at the inception of democracy in 1999 appointed Senior Special Assistant (Special Duties) to former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The gruff ways of Obasanjo could not have suited the urbane subtlety of Stanley. He later became the Deputy Chief of Staff to Obasanjo, but in the course of Obasanjo's second term in office he was in and out of the system.

Before his death, he was engaged as a consulting Editorial Adviser to Nduka Obaigbena's ThisDay. Stanley made his mark as an intellectual, publishing in 1973 a seminal study of the iconic African-American novelist and essayist, James Baldwin.

He is said to have worked for many years on another academic tome on Jewish-American studies, provisionally entitled "The Tyranny of Things".

His very close associates reveal that Stanley regretted until his death the non-completion and publishing of the book after he had written well over 400 pages.

Even so, his return to Nigeria in 1977 denied him of his ultimate ambition of getting employed at Harvard University and eventually retiring there as a Professor Emeritus.

### Stanley Macebuh: Unforgettable pathfinder of modern Nigerian journalism

Stanley's life deserves all celebration, and he richly deserves the accolade of "Father of Modern Nigerian Journalism". An aesthete, he not only had a rich taste for fine stylistic writing but also had an abiding love for fine cognac. He is sorely missed by all fine minds. They no longer make legends like Dr. Stanley Macebuh.

In this article [Stanley Nkwachikwelumamaya Macebuh](#)

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## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard"

- Voltaire

The man we are celebrating here today died at the age of 39. Most of us have since crossed that age. He was exposed to danger and had no protection for the job he did. **Dele Giwa** was killed on October 19, 1986. History records the cause of his death as 'letter bomb'.

Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

Despite the fact that his death via letter bomb came with some shock and disbelief, many had thought that the unfortunate incident would signal an end to the murder of journalists. But that turned out a wishful thinking. Several accounts abound in the shelves of many libraries and websites, depicting scores of journalists that have been killed in Nigeria after **Dele Giwa**. For instance, New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) listed some of

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the names as Enenche Akogwu (Channels TV), who was killed in Kano on January 20, 2012; Zakariya Isa of Nigeria Television Authority, who met his end on October 22, 2011, in Maiduguri; Sunday Gyang Bwede of The Light Bearer, who was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State; Nathan S. Dabak equally of The Light Bearer, who also was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos; Bayo Ohu of The Guardian, who was shot at and killed in cold blood on September 20, 2009, in Lagos; Samson Boyi of The Scope, who was killed on November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State; Sam Nimfa-Jan, who, until he was killed on May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan, Kaduna State, worked for The Detail; Fidelis Ikwuebe, who worked as a freelancer and was murdered on April 18, 1999, in Anambra State; Okezie Amaruben of Newsservice, who met his end on September 2, 1998, in Enugu State; and Tunde Oladepo of The Guardian, who was killed in Abeokuta, Ogun State, on February 26, 1998.

There is also Ikechukwu Udendu of Anambra News, who was killed on January 12, 2013, in Anambra State; Nansok Sallah of Highland FM, who had life snuffed out of him on January 18, 2012, in Jos, Plateau State; Edo Sule Ugbagwu of The Nation, who was shot at and killed in his house

in Shasha area of Lagos State on April 24, 2010; Ephraim Audu of Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service, who was murdered on October 16, 2008, in Lafia, Nasarawa State; Paul Abayomi Ogundesi of ThisDay, he was killed in Dopemu area of Lagos State on August 16, 2008.

Have we forgotten ThisDay's Godwin Agbroko, who was killed on December 22, 2006, in Lagos? Have we forgotten Bolade Fasasi of the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), who was murdered on March 31, 1999, in Ibadan, Oyo State, or Chinedu Offoaro of The Guardian whose sad and painful end came on May 1, 1996, in Lagos? How about Baguda Kaltho of TheNEWS, who 'disappeared' on March 1, 1996, in Kaduna? We are still looking for him though the Lagos

State government has long named its press centre in Alausa after him.

I guess these names don't bore you. We shall keep remembering them as sad pointers to a past where impunity reigned and where courageous pens were silenced with bullets, not superior arguments.

Statistics also have it that 110 journalists were killed worldwide in 2015 alone. This was contained in the reports of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in its annual report of 2016. Of this number, 67 were killed in supposedly peaceful countries, while the rest were killed in war zones. Thirty-One were killed between January and September of 2016 in Libya, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Brazil, Ukraine, Syria, Mexico, Turkey and Afghanistan.

The report also highlighted the plight of 54 journalists, who were held hostage at the end of 2015. It said 26 of them were in Syria, while 153 journalists were in prison with 23 of them in China and 22 in Egypt.

Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico, India, Brazil, Ukraine and Guinea were also listed by CPJ as most dangerous countries for journalists in 2016. Nigeria made the list in 2003, but no longer.

**READ ALSO:** UN says journalists still face difficulties in Somalia in spite of progress

A further breakdown of available statistics showed the beats covered by victims of fatal attacks. According to CPJ, Business beat constitutes 6 percent; Corruption, 23 percent; Crime, 23 percent; Culture, 13 percent; Human Rights, 16 percent; Politics, 42 percent; Sports, 6 percent; and War, 68 percent. These statistics are self-explanatory. It shows exactly why violence against journalists is high in some countries. The CPJ analysis also showed the types of deaths suffered by journalists. It put deaths from crossfire/combat as constituting 42 percent, deaths from planned assassinations at 45 percent, and deaths from dangerous assignments at 10 percent. You can now say where Dele Giwa's unfortunate murder falls in and why.

### **Dele Giwa**

From the statistics above, **Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price. Sadly, the issues for which his life was brutally cut short are still with us. That means many more journalists may have to also pay the ultimate price, if our society will know the truth and follow it.

## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

With the advent of new media, the threat has increased. There has been a rising wave of threats to, and at times, outright arrest, imprisonment or prosecution of online media proponents and bloggers. The first time this trend reared its head was in Bauchi State, when a civil servant who criticised his governor over Facebook was arrested and detained.

The trend grew and reached alarming proportions not too long ago when some bloggers were arrested and detained at Ikoyi Prison in Lagos for publishing materials that those who were offended frowned at. The most recent was the arrest of the publisher of abusidiyu.com, Mr. Sidiq Usman, for what was termed "cyberstalking."

However, violence against journalists is a trend that should worry you and me. The reason government is scared is because of its rising profile of impunity. Governments at all levels in Nigeria have operated in a manner that suggests antagonism to media. And the reason is simple – corruption.

The first victim of a corrupt society, where impunity has replaced order, is the free press. I have not seen any corrupt government, which is at home with the free press.

The man we remember today died 32 years ago. If he were to take a peep into the profession he exited so sadly, can we guess what he would say of safety of journalists in Nigeria over 30 years after? Dele Giwa was a great man. He had a lion heart. He was strong-willed and I am sure he wanted the best for his society and that was the reason he went beyond press statements to dig into stories that caused some people sleepless nights. His life is, therefore, a challenge to us all to work for the type of journalism that delivers for the media organisation, the society and the journalists as well.

READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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Note: This piece, reviewed, was delivered on October 19, 2016, at the Dele Giwa's remembrance anniversary organised by Lagos Council of the NUJ and Dele Giwa Foundation

The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** June 26, 2021

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## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard"

- Voltaire

The man we are celebrating here today died at the age of 39. Most of us have since crossed that age. He was exposed to danger and had no protection for the job he did. **Dele Giwa** was killed on October 19, 1986. History records the cause of his death as 'letter bomb'.

Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

Despite the fact that his death via letter bomb came with some shock and disbelief, many had thought that the unfortunate incident would signal an end to the murder of journalists. But that turned out a wishful thinking. Several accounts abound in the shelves of many libraries and websites, depicting scores of journalists that have been killed in Nigeria after **Dele Giwa**. For instance, New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) listed some of

## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

the names as Enenche Akogwu (Channels TV), who was killed in Kano on January 20, 2012; Zakariya Isa of Nigeria Television Authority, who met his end on October 22, 2011, in Maiduguri; Sunday Gyang Bwede of The Light Bearer, who was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State; Nathan S. Dabak equally of The Light Bearer, who also was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos; Bayo Ohu of The Guardian, who was shot at and killed in cold blood on September 20, 2009, in Lagos; Samson Boyi of The Scope, who was killed on November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State; Sam Nimfa-Jan, who, until he was killed on May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan, Kaduna State, worked for The Detail; Fidelis Ikwuebe, who worked as a freelancer and was murdered on April 18, 1999, in Anambra State; Okezie Amaruben of Newsservice, who met his end on September 2, 1998, in Enugu State; and Tunde Oladepo of The Guardian, who was killed in Abeokuta, Ogun State, on February 26, 1998.

There is also Ikechukwu Udendu of Anambra News, who was killed on January 12, 2013, in Anambra State; Nansok Sallah of Highland FM, who had life snuffed out of him on January 18, 2012, in Jos, Plateau State; Edo Sule Ugbagwu of The Nation, who was shot at and killed in his house

in Shasha area of Lagos State on April 24, 2010; Ephraim Audu of Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service, who was murdered on October 16, 2008, in Lafia, Nasarawa State; Paul Abayomi Ogundesi of ThisDay, he was killed in Dopemu area of Lagos State on August 16, 2008.

Have we forgotten ThisDay's Godwin Agbroko, who was killed on December 22, 2006, in Lagos? Have we forgotten Bolade Fasasi of the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), who was murdered on March 31, 1999, in Ibadan, Oyo State, or Chinedu Offoaro of The Guardian whose sad and painful end came on May 1, 1996, in Lagos? How about Baguda Kaltho of TheNEWS, who 'disappeared' on March 1, 1996, in Kaduna? We are still looking for him though the Lagos

State government has long named its press centre in Alausa after him.

I guess these names don't bore you. We shall keep remembering them as sad pointers to a past where impunity reigned and where courageous pens were silenced with bullets, not superior arguments.

Statistics also have it that 110 journalists were killed worldwide in 2015 alone. This was contained in the reports of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in its annual report of 2016. Of this number, 67 were killed in supposedly peaceful countries, while the rest were killed in war zones. Thirty-One were killed between January and September of 2016 in Libya, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Brazil, Ukraine, Syria, Mexico, Turkey and Afghanistan.

The report also highlighted the plight of 54 journalists, who were held hostage at the end of 2015. It said 26 of them were in Syria, while 153 journalists were in prison with 23 of them in China and 22 in Egypt.

Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico, India, Brazil, Ukraine and Guinea were also listed by CPJ as most dangerous countries for journalists in 2016. Nigeria made the list in 2003, but no longer.

**READ ALSO:** UN says journalists still face difficulties in Somalia in spite of progress

A further breakdown of available statistics showed the beats covered by victims of fatal attacks. According to CPJ, Business beat constitutes 6 percent; Corruption, 23 percent; Crime, 23 percent; Culture, 13 percent; Human Rights, 16 percent; Politics, 42 percent; Sports, 6 percent; and War, 68 percent. These statistics are self-explanatory. It shows exactly why violence against journalists is high in some countries. The CPJ analysis also showed the types of deaths suffered by journalists. It put deaths from crossfire/combat as constituting 42 percent, deaths from planned assassinations at 45 percent, and deaths from dangerous assignments at 10 percent. You can now say where Dele Giwa's unfortunate murder falls in and why.

### **Dele Giwa**

From the statistics above, **Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price. Sadly, the issues for which his life was brutally cut short are still with us. That means many more journalists may have to also pay the ultimate price, if our society will know the truth and follow it.

## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

With the advent of new media, the threat has increased. There has been a rising wave of threats to, and at times, outright arrest, imprisonment or prosecution of online media proponents and bloggers. The first time this trend reared its head was in Bauchi State, when a civil servant who criticised his governor over Facebook was arrested and detained.

The trend grew and reached alarming proportions not too long ago when some bloggers were arrested and detained at Ikoyi Prison in Lagos for publishing materials that those who were offended frowned at. The most recent was the arrest of the publisher of abusidiyu.com, Mr. Sidiq Usman, for what was termed "cyberstalking."

However, violence against journalists is a trend that should worry you and me. The reason government is scared is because of its rising profile of impunity. Governments at all levels in Nigeria have operated in a manner that suggests antagonism to media. And the reason is simple – corruption.

The first victim of a corrupt society, where impunity has replaced order, is the free press. I have not seen any corrupt government, which is at home with the free press.

The man we remember today died 32 years ago. If he were to take a peep into the profession he exited so sadly, can we guess what he would say of safety of journalists in Nigeria over 30 years after? Dele Giwa was a great man. He had a lion heart. He was strong-willed and I am sure he wanted the best for his society and that was the reason he went beyond press statements to dig into stories that caused some people sleepless nights. His life is, therefore, a challenge to us all to work for the type of journalism that delivers for the media organisation, the society and the journalists as well.

READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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Note: This piece, reviewed, was delivered on October 19, 2016, at the Dele Giwa's remembrance anniversary organised by Lagos Council of the NUJ and Dele Giwa Foundation

The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## **Nyaknno Abasi Osso: The search engine before Google**

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 27, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1406 words

### **Body**

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'Libraries store the energies that fuel imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life. Libraries change lives for the better.' Sydney Sheldon

By Utibe Ukim

When I chose Mass Communications over Medicine, it was because I had been so impacted by the Nigerian Chronicle published by the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation Calabar, that hanging a stethoscope around my neck lost its appeal. My father loved it and through him, I got 'familiar' with names like Nelson Etukudo, Ray Ekpu, Martins Usenekong, Antigha Bassey, Clement Ebri, Etim Amin and Signor Tofu (pen name for Elder Onofiok Ufot, multi-talented father of advertising great, Udeme Ufot, who at the time, was registrar of the University of Calabar), all great writers of the time.

If that newspaper was great, it owed a lot to its library and the work of the man who started and ran it, Nyaknnoabasi Osso, Nigeria's leading documentation specialist, whose birthday we celebrate today.

Nyaknno is the founder of Biographical Legacy and Research Foundation's (BLERF). He served previously as Special Assistant on Liveary, Research and Documentation to President Olusegun Obasanjo and as the Chief Librarian at Newswatch where he published the ground-breaking Newswatch Who's Who, a definitive biographical documentation of distinguished Nigerian achievers in all walks of life. He has been a friend and mentor for most of my life.

Through the years, Nyaknno has invested his entire life and resources collecting, assembling and managing millions of books, journals, newspapers, magazine and documents in a way no other Nigerian has. His home and offices in Abuja are filled with rare historical resources and reference materials fit for national archives.

BLERF has grown out of his passion to document our past through the lives and biographies of millions of Nigerian achievers so we can take lesson into our future. In a country where only little value is given to proper record keeping and preservation of historical documents, and where public and private libraries have been closed and entire stock of reference materials sold to paper recyclers, Nyaknno's passion challenges us to rethink and take action to save what remains.

## Nyaknno Abasi Osso: The search engine before Google

Tinubu tasks US on collaboration with democratic African States

The celebrated Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in Abeokuta is his brain child. Twenty five years of his life and capacity are expressed in the beauty, content and rich treasures of that Centre. It was his major preoccupation from 1988-2013.

His current project, BLERF, is a world class news media research centre Nyaknno funds from his personal resources. It and boast a rich collections of more than two million books, journals, bound volumes of newspapers, magazines, clippings, rare photographs, CDs, flashes, hard-drives collected since 1971.

His dream for the centre is bigger than his purse which slows his speed at converting the idea to reality. BLERF's website( [www.bleref.org](http://www.bleref.org)) has close to 35,000 names, the largest collection of Nigerian achievers, worldwide. The target is to grow the list to one million within the next five years. Such an enormous documentation project will require partnership and CSR investments to bring to life. Without strong financial partnership, this will only remain a dream.

I must have met Nyaknno around 1982 and was immediately struck by his love for everything in print! I spent what seemed like eternity in his office, receiving scant attention as he read and marked pages after pages of various local, national and foreign publications heaped in front of him. He would throw a question at me with his trademark laughter while his head lay buried in his work. The traffic in and out of his office was heavy. I soon found out it was production time and many reporters, writers and editors needed his input for the next day's paper. I quickly figured it wasn't a glamorous job in the newspaper publishing ecosystem and wondered why this smart and intelligent young man chose such a career path.

Nyaknno's story is a one of discovering his passion early and pursuing it with resolute devotion. It's been a life of big dreams, lots of intellectual adventures, and an uncanny ability to strike the right connection at the right time. Call it, seizing the moment.

As an only child of parents who had buried seven children before him, childhood meant extreme protection. But when he saw other children playing in the school field across his home, he dressed up, joined them and earned himself a place in primary school. While the Bible and the Catholic Digest introduced him to serious reading in secondary school - where his love for history once made him to write out 72 pages at a school history examination- it was his first day at a gap job while awaiting admission to study medicine at the University of Ibadan that got him hooked on books.

When he left his village of Ete in Ikot Abasi local government area of present day Akwa Ibom State to join his uncle, the late Prof Jumbo Udo at the University of Ibadan, the plan was to enroll at the University of Ibadan College of Medicine. He wrote the exams and the gap job at the University Library was only to keep him busy. On his first day at work, he was chased home at midnight by the University Librarian. He had found his passion and nothing was going to stand in his way. That was in 1971. Out went Medicine to the protestation of his Uncle and family.

Throughout his life, providence has always positioned him in the path of opportunity. Media librarianship wasn't something he imagined when he left Ibadan to join the newly established University of Nigeria Calabar Campus. A chance meeting with Ray Ekpu at the Cross River State Library, Calabar did it for him. An introduction and candid opinion that Ray's writings could benefit from in-depth research earned Nyaknno the job of setting up and running the library at the Nigerian Chronicle. Ray would later introduce Nyaknno to **Dele Giwa** in 1980.

There's an interesting story about how Nyaknno joined Newswatch. **Giwa** in the company of the late Chief Ime Umanah had arrived his home at lunchtime one Sunday in July 1984. No pleasantries, just a simple instruction from the man he so admired. 'Get dressed immediately. We are going to Lagos to start a magazine called Newswatch.' A few hours later, the trio were on board a Nigerian Airways flight to Lagos. Newswatch found its engine room. Nyaknno got himself a playing field that came to define his career trajectory.

### Nyaknno Abasi Osso: The search engine before Google

At Newswatch, Nyaknno built a rich library that powered the intense editorial requirement of the news weekly. If you ever read and loved any editorial work in the magazine, his fingerprints were all over them. When reporters and editors needed information on anything under the sun, they went to Nyaknno. He would deliver within minutes.

In those days without computers and internet, Nyaknno was the search engine that powered search, quality content and the award-winning journalism Newswatch came to be known for. How he did it so well can only be summed up in the inspiration he drew from a meeting and handshake with Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon: Lasting legacies are built by doing what no one else has done before!

I visited him at work and at home, a short walk from Newswatch, after my NYSC. I couldn't spot the difference. Every space at home was taken up by books, just like the office. It has remained that way till today no matter where he's lived. Sometime I imagine that family is the only intrusion he has permitted to share his affection for everything in print in the 52 years since he said yes to book!

Nyaknno has interned or visited hundreds of major libraries across the world. So you can understand the pains he feels when he speaks about the dearth of public libraries in Nigeria. He wants Nigeria to return to building public libraries to speed up the development of our young people. As Bill Gates puts it, 'investing in public libraries is an investment in the nation's future.'

It would be a fitting tribute to Nyaknno for governments, individuals and corporations to commit to funding public libraries and supporting laudable private initiatives like BLERF so they in turn can, like Sydney Sheldon said, inspire us to explore and achieve and

improve our quality of our national life.

Utibe Ukim **Journalist**, writer and media entrepreneur

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

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## Murder in the Consulate

The Nation (Nigeria)

March 2, 2021 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1304 words

### **Body**

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Thanks to U.S. President Joe Biden, the world now knows conclusively the horrible fate that befell the dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 2, 2018.

Khashoggi was lured to the Consulate to pick up papers that would seal his divorce from his Saudi-born wife and clear the way for him to marry his Turkish fiancée. Life was about to take a more agreeable turn for the exiled journalist, a reporter and columnist for the Washington Post.

He headed to the Consulate that day, accompanied by his fiancée. The visit would be brief; she would wait outside, and they would return to their residence with a passport to their wedded future.

Hours passed by, and he did not come out of the Consulate. Alarmed, she alerted the Turkish authorities. Surveillance video showed a man wearing the clothes Khashoggi had on when he entered the Saudi Consulate. But the man was not Khashoggi.

Khashoggi did not show up that day, or the next, or the day after. It would turn out that he had set out on a one-way trip, a mission of no return.

What happened to Khashoggi?

Hours before he was due at the Consulate, a chartered flight from Riyadh, the Saudi capital, had landed at Ankara airport, in the Turkish capital. On board was a team of Saudi officials, including the chief security officer to the Saudi Crown Prince and de facto Saudi ruler, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), whom the Western media had been lionizing as a modernizer and reformer. The Saudi king, in whose name he rules, has long been incapacitated by infirmity and superannuation.

An x-ray of their hand luggage revealed a curious collection of artifacts: a bone saw, and other accessories of, let us call it, macro surgery, to dignify the butcher's trade. With their diplomatic cover, they cleared security and headed to the Saudi Consulate.

## Murder in the Consulate

Several hours later, they headed back to the airport and flew back to Riyadh in their chartered jet, mission accomplished, with no telltale fingerprints. Or so they thought.

But Turkish intelligence had videotaped the mission in all its bestial and blood-curdling detail. To advance his stature and his claim to being a major in Middle East politics, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan leaked the recording to some key members of the international community, including the United States.

If there ever was a smoking gun, this had to be the mother of all smoking guns.

It showed the men who had flown in from Riyadh early that day throttling Khashoggi, cutting off his fingers perhaps to prepare him for the main act, and then hacking him to pieces, leaving others to stuff the parts into sacks and clean up as best they could. A local contractor helped dispose of the grisly remains.

Consulate staff hurriedly put new coats of paint on the Embassy precincts, but tell-tale signs were still much in evidence when Turkish officials visited several days later to inspect the crime scene.

At first the Saudi authorities denied any involvement. 'The former guy,' as Biden called his execrable predecessor in a sublime putdown, echoed the Saudi authorities. He said he had spoken with the Saudi crown prince and that he had vehemently denied any involvement. The media must therefore not rush to judgment.

Later, indulging his predilection for saying one thing in a sentence and unsaying it in the very next, if not in the same sentence, the former guy said of the Saudi authorities that 'maybe they did and maybe they didn't.' He would go on to suggest that some 'rogue elements' might have carried out the killing.

In the face of iron-clad evidence, the Saudi authorities changed tacks. The killing, they said, had been carried out by some free-lance executioners acting entirely on their own without their knowledge and without their approval.

But the attentive audience knew that this was no freelance or impromptu outing. The gruesome operation had to have been approved from the very top. The team of murderers included the crown prince's chief security officer, personnel from his security detail, and top medical officers in public employment. The logistics could not have been perfected on a whim.

Pivoting on the narrative of the rogue assassins, the Saudi authorities rounded up 11 unnamed officials, among them, it is believed, some of those who had jetted to Ankara on that gruesome mission in October 2018, and put them on trial before a secret court in an effort to pin Khashoggi's murder entirely on them. Five of them were reportedly condemned to death.

The whole thing was a sham through and through, and Trump the former guy knew it. His intelligence officials had compiled for his benefit a detailed report of the murder. Nobody expected him to evince a sense of grief, much less outrage.

After all, while in office, he routinely called the American media and the working press 'enemies of the people,' except the section owned by Rupert Murdoch, especially its broadcast arm Fox News.

But some empathy, surely, was indicated for a beleaguered person who sought refuge in America the land of the free, contributed his skills and insights to an American institution over the years and wanted to be a part of the American experience?

Fat chance.

Trump does not do empathy. Reprisals against the Saudi authorities were also out of the question. Saudi Arabia was a staunch American ally and a proxy in its conflict with Iran, a friend of Israel, the world's largest oil-producing country, and a client in lucrative arms deals reportedly worth \$100 billion. Why allow the killing of one *journalist* get in the way of such good business?

That, alas, is what passes for realpolitik-politics without sentiment.

### Murder in the Consulate

Not even Jimmy Carter's White House, with its affirmation of human rights and humane values, would have made a calculation different from Trump's. In these matters, 'national interest' is what really counts. To those who define and are charged with protecting that interest, every other consideration is sentiment.

At the time of the Khashoggi murder, Democratic hopeful Biden, as he then was, had expressed outrage. He had vowed to make the Saudi authorities pariahs over the murder and their horrid human rights abuses. But President Biden is now less sure-footed.

To his credit, he declassified and released with minor redactions the intelligence report on the Khashoggi murder that the former guy had embargoed. That report implicates Saudi's crown prince unambiguously and takes the matter out of the realm of conjecture.

But as to practical consequences, Biden and 'the former guy' are on the same page, even if not in moral terms. Biden would pursue no direct sanctions that could place America's vital interests at risk.

If there is any consolation in this bestial matter, it is that the truth has finally been revealed.

There is a local angle to this tale.

For 36 years years, Nigeria's authorities have concealed the facts and the truth of the parcel-bomb murder of Dele Giwa, the crusading founding editor of the iconic newsmagazine Newswatch, in his home in Ikeja, Lagos.

A ranking police officer tasked with the investigation, my brother Herbert Tunde Dare, was murdered while pursuing the assignment with his accustomed doggedness.

Other investigators, sought to drown the matter in a tide of perjury, evasion, prevarication, and obfuscation. Besides the fact of the murder itself, they came up with nothing that can be called credible.

But nothing stays secret forever.

There may well be, lying in some dank official vault, a classified report on the investigations that official after succeeding official has sought to conceal, for reason of self-preservation or esprit de corps. There may well be a crucial witness who will conclude one day that he has nothing to lose by telling the world who killed Dele Giwa.

May the principal suspect and his collaborators live to witness that day.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2021

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## Chronicles of an uncommon journalist

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 16, 2022 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1043 words

### **Body**

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Book review

Title: Dotun Oyelade Reporting... (Memoirs of a Newshound)

Authors: Dotun Oyelade, Tola Teriba and Ayodeji Ajisope

Reviewer: Isaac Olawale Albert

Publisher: Aikon Integral Concept, Ibadan (2022)

Prince Dotun Oyelade, is a broadcast *journalist*, publisher and politician. But he restricted the coverage of his publication, Dotun Oyelade Reporting...(Memoirs of a Newshound), to the first two aspects of his life: journalism and publishing. He intends to write on his political life in the years to come but flagged some of his political landmarks in the work to include being Publicity Secretary to Alliance for Democracy in 1999 and Private Secretary to Governor Lam Adesina from 1999 to 2003. He was Special Adviser on Public Communications to Governor Alao Akala from 2007 to 2011 and was also Head of the media campaign team of Governor Seyi Makinde January 2018 to May, 2019.

The interesting publication is broken into five parts of 18 chapters. The first part consists of two chapters and these have to do with how Prince Oyelade cut his professional teeth in journalism by working at NTV. The first chapter ought to have chronologically been the third but the author made it the first invariably to teach some lessons to students of journalism education. Oyelade was in Akure in 1978 to report the visit of Olusegun Obasanjo. As he charged through the crowd with his microphone to get a scoop for his federal television channel he was bullied back by some unfriendly soldiers guiding the head of state. It took him some time to get out of the panic mode. This must have been included in the book to show that it is not easy for an early career *journalist* to get breaking stories as taught in the classroom; it involves unpredictable risks and embarrassments. It was actually in the second chapter that Oyelade narrated how he was employed by NTA in August 1977 under the leadership of Yemi Farouqui. His supervisors on the job included Bayo Sanda, Fabio Lanipekun and Biodun Adetuberu. In the news department, Oyelade worked with Segun Oyedele, Kunle Adeigbe and a host of others. He used colourful adjectives to describe the innovations brought to NTA by each of these personalities. He called attention to the suspect image of the

**journalist** working under the military, the intrigues of reporting the 'Ali must go student protest', attempts to repress the media etc.

Part two of the book consists five chapters focusing on Oyelade's sojourn and exploits at the TSOS/BCOS. In chapter three, he told the story of how the amity between Governor Bola Ige and Dr. Yemi Farounbi led to the founding of TSOS and how the station was provided the best facilities and conditions of service for practising journalism. He listed all the people he worked with in the station but singled out Yanju Adegbite, who later became the Project Coordinator at BCOS from 2011 to 2019, as the first face to appear on TSOS TV. In Chapter 4, he called attention to a number of ground breaking reports he wrote for the station: the Lawrence Anini saga, trial of Gen. Mamman Vatsa, the Cocoa House inferno, the death of Awolowo and **Dele Giwa**; the inaugural AFRC meeting of the Babangida regime etc. In chapter 5 Oyelade called attention to how the corporate identity of BCOS changed when the NPN government of Chief Olunloyo came to power in October 1983 in Oyo. Chapter 7, is the shortest of the essays.

Part 3 consists of seven chapters and has to do with Oyelade's foray into publishing: another field in which he has made outstanding contributions. In chapter 8, he told the story of how it all started in February 1988 after interviewing Professor Ojetunji Aboyade, the former Vice Chancellor, University of Ife, now OAU, at the BCOS Studios. Within a month of this discussion Oyelade was hired to manage a publishing house jointly established by Professors Akin Mabogunje and Aboyade: Fountain Publication. Oyelade was with Fountain Publication for just a year; the owners were more engrossed in their academic activities. In chapter 9, Oyelade narrated how he had to move to Chief Joop Berkhout's Spectrum Books where several works were produced: including Emeka Ojukwu's *Because I Am Involved*. Chapter 10 has to do with how he left Spectrum Book in 1991 to register his own company, Current Publications.

: 2023: Experts urge journalists to set agenda for transformational leadership

Part 4 of the book consists of only one chapter (15th) and it is on the 'Current Studios and Publications': a broadcast commercial studio for video and audio recording and post-production.

Part 5 is on the man Dotun Oyelade. The rest of the chapter lists his achievement on the job: staff manpower development, staff welfare, motivation and reward system, execution of iconic projects, amendment to the corporation's edict with a view to identifying certain provisions inconsistent with modern day realities; reinstatement of officers wrongfully dismissed/retired; redeployment of staff of bcos from the mainstream of the civil service. Chapter 17 are people's perception of Prince Oyelade while the last chapter, the 18th contains tributes by his family members: wife and children.

The publication, Dotun Oyelade reporting...(Memoirs of a Newshound), is not an everyday autobiography but an innovative case note that has a lot of lessons for students of journalism studies. The publication describes Oyelade as a newshound. The term refers to an aggressive or energetic **journalist** with insightful and instructive attainments. He worked closely with several eminent politicians (Lam Adesina, Alao Akaka, and Seyi Makinde) but he said this has not made him a professional politician but a **journalist** in politics. In other words, the work under review is not an autobiography per se but an autobiography innovatively redefined. He prefaced each of the issues he raised with detailed historical background in a manner that makes the chapters instructive for students of history. I found this approach to academic writing to be very original and worthy of commendation.

Students of journalism studies have a lot to learn from the publication not only in terms of the exemplary way Prince Oyelade did his work but more importantly his writing skills which he excellently demonstrated here.

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2022



## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1332 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard"

- Voltaire

The man we are celebrating here today died at the age of 39. Most of us have since crossed that age. He was exposed to danger and had no protection for the job he did. **Dele Giwa** was killed on October 19, 1986. History records the cause of his death as 'letter bomb'.

Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

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## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

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From the statistics above, **Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price. Sadly, the issues for which his life was brutally cut short are still with us. That means many more journalists may have to also pay the ultimate price, if our society will know the truth and follow it.

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The first victim of a corrupt society, where impunity has replaced order, is the free press. I have not seen any corrupt government, which is at home with the free press.

The man we remember today died 32 years ago. If he were to take a peep into the profession he exited so sadly, can we guess what he would say of safety of journalists in Nigeria over 30 years after? Dele Giwa was a great man. He had a lion heart. He was strong-willed and I am sure he wanted the best for his society and that was the reason he went beyond press statements to dig into stories that caused some people sleepless nights. His life is, therefore, a challenge to us all to work for the type of journalism that delivers for the media organisation, the society and the journalists as well.

READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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**Load-Date:** September 8, 2020

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## **#EndSARS Protests: FG Asked To Probe TV Reporter's Death**

Nigerian Tribune

November 6, 2020 Friday

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**Length:** 623 words

### **Body**

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The Federal Government has been called upon to immediately conduct a transparent and independent investigation into the death of a reporter with Gboah TV, an online television channel, Mr Pelumi Onifade, who was reportedly arrested by officers attached to the Lagos State Task Force while covering the recent #EndSARS protests, and later found dead at a mortuary in Ikorodu Lagos, where his body was deposited.

A non-governmental organisation, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), made the call on Friday in a statement signed by its Communications Officer, Mr Idowu Adewale.

According to MRA, Onifade, 20, was covering the scene of a mob raid on a government facility at Oko-Oba in Agege Local Government area of Lagos State for his media organisation (Gboah TV), where he was serving as an intern when operatives of the task force stormed the scene and engaged people who attempted to loot palliatives at the Ministry of Agriculture store in the abattoir area of the state.

MRA noted that despite the fact that Onifade wore a jacket identifying him as a *journalist*, he was reportedly arrested and dragged away by men of the task force on October 24, 2020, and that his television station had issued a statement that the family and the media outfit he worked for had searched for him for days before they eventually discovered his body at the mortuary in Ikorodu. This is a distance of up to 20 kilometres apart.

The late Onifade, a second-year student of the Department of History at Tai Solarin University of Education(TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State, was an intern with the television house.

Speaking on the issue, MRA's Programme Director, Mr Ayode Longe, said 'Mr Onifade's death is one too many and is particularly ironic as he was arrested while covering protests that had engulfed the country as a result of police brutality and extra-judicial killings.'

'This latest incident must not go un-investigated. The Federal Government must make every effort to establish the circumstances of his death, identify his killers and make them face the wrath of the law.'

Reminding the Federal Government of MAR's call on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists earlier this week for the establishment of mechanisms to combat impunity for attacks

## #EndSARS Protests: FG Asked To Probe TV Reporter's Death

and violence against media workers in order to ensure accountability for such acts and discourage future attacks, Mr Longe said 'the killing of Onifade has given additional urgency to such a call.'

He said in this day and age, no attack against any *journalist*, and certainly not the killing of a *journalist*, should go unpunished as such cases of impunity only breed more impunity.

Mr Longe reiterated that government should fulfil its international obligations by launching a serious and transparent investigation into all unresolved cases of murders of journalists since the 1986 assassination of the former Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, Mr *Dele Giwa*, and several other journalists whose deaths have not been resolved, including the instant case of Mr Onifade.

He said MRA was not only standing with the Onifade family is demanding, among other things, that the police officer or officers who killed him must be identified and prosecuted and that pending a full investigation, the officer who led the squad that arrested the young *journalist* should be held responsible and if he is unable to provide a convincing account of what happened after they left the scene of the arrest and show that Mr Onifade left his custody alive, should be prosecuted for the killing.

He also called for substantial compensation to the Onifade family for the wrongful killing of their son and a public apology to the family by both the Lagos State Government and the state police command.

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2020

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## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard"

- Voltaire

The man we are celebrating here today died at the age of 39. Most of us have since crossed that age. He was exposed to danger and had no protection for the job he did. **Dele Giwa** was killed on October 19, 1986. History records the cause of his death as 'letter bomb'.

Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

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The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2021

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## **'How journalism became love of my life'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 11, 2023 Wednesday

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**Length:** 3698 words

### **Body**

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Apostle Bola Adewara is the Publisher of E-Life, a Christian digital magazine, committed to spreading the gospel. He spoke on his voyage in journalism and how his works are impacting lives. Excerpts:

What inspired you to become a **journalist**?

My romance with journalism started from home because my dad was a literature enthusiast. Under our bed was a giant box containing all manner of newspapers and magazines of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Magazines like Flamingo, Drum, Trust, West African Pilot, Tribune, Nigerian Yearbook, etc. I was always visiting this box, reading those papers to know what had happened in Nigeria before I was born. My love for stories, writing and reading began from there. I still have so many of these publications with me till date in my library.

When I got to secondary school, because I had read far and wide, I have stories to tell. I formed the press club called Zee Press and the cartoon end, called Scorpion. We did so many writings, even with our poor English. When I gained admission to Kwara State College of Technology in 1982, I also started writing and pasting on the wall. After Kwara Tech, I was home one day when a brother noticed that I was always writing, and he gave me his portable typewriter to upgrade me from using the pen. Later, my dad bought a brand new one for me. All the things I was writing them, I took to the New Nigerian Newspapers. I remember meeting with the editor who encouraged me to come to the office once in a while and I kept at it. Later, another newspaper came in Kaduna called Today and there was also Reporter by Yar Adua. I always went to these offices until I got admitted to the University of Ife to study Philosophy/History combined.

One day, after my service years in Sokoto and returning to Lagos, I heard that my former lecturer, Dr. G.G Darah, was the Editorial Board Chairman of the Daily Times. I decided to pay homage to him and maybe he would give me some money to manage. I was unemployed and didn't know what to do with my life. On getting to Darah's office, he was glad to see me. He asked what I was doing. I told him I just finished my service year and was unemployed now. He stood up, held my hand, took me to the Newsroom of Daily Times, and handed me over to the deputy Editor, Toyin Makanjuola (TMack). The man took me to the sub desk headed by Abu Olanrewaju. These were the people who began to train me as a sub-editor. There, my journey as a **journalist** started professionally. So, the inspiration started from my background. You become what you feed yourself with.

## 'How journalism became love of my life'

What was journalism like when you started after graduation?

I noticed that journalism was a poor paying job. Very few journalists had cars. Virtually all the staff in Daily Times were on foot. Salary was so poor. But Dr. G.G Darah told me that I should not remain a sub editor that the beauty of journalism is in reporting, meeting people, seeing things happening. I can't forget that advice. Immediately, I began to think of what else to do, rather than reporting in office every afternoon as a sub editor to work on the reports brought by reporters. I met with Mr Saliu Haruna, editor of Evening Times and he encouraged me to start writing on the emerging home video industry. He gave me a full page called Video Link. The home video industry was just starting then, I found myself going to all film locations in Lagos. The industry started at Meiran, then moved to Iyesi. I was on location of all the major early home videos. I saw the industry from its infancy. I know the history, the personages and manifestations of the industry. I was the only **journalist** in Nigeria concentrating on the Home Video Industry in the very early 1990s. From Aje niyan mi, financed by an Igbo marketer, by Kenneth Nnebue NEK to Ti Oluwa Nile, Ayo Ni Mofe by Mainframe in Osodi, Lagos, Living in Bondage, to these modern times, I saw it all. I was also the first **journalist** to interview many of these artistes. Many of them were poorly paid then. They only survived on interest. Please give it to the Yoruba artistes for keeping the faith until the Igbo people came in with big money to change the face of the industry.

If journalism was poorly paid then, how could a young man like you opt for it?

Just like the theatre industry, journalism also had a great challenge. Few papers were paying well then. Observer in Benin, Statesman in Enugu, Standard in Jos, New Nigeria in Kaduna, Tribune and Sketch in Ibadan, Herald in Ilorin, Chronicle in Port Harcourt, Triumph in Kano, many, if not all of them were owned by their state governments except Tribune by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

Chief MKO Abiola started Concord newspapers in 1980 to build his political career and challenge the dominance of Tribune in the West, and by the end of 1983, Concord had become the most read newspaper in Nigeria. Abiola brought his money into the organisation and his early editors like **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed, etc. became the first journalists in Nigeria to ride in Mercedes Benz. Guardian came as an elitist broadsheet on 22 February 1983 through Stanley Macebuh, Femi Kusa, Lade Bonuola, etc. It was financed by Alex Ibru. Vanguard came the following year in 1984 by **journalist** Sam Amuka-Pemu. Newswatch magazine came on 28 January 1985, after **Dele Giwa** and co had issues with MKO Abiola. These new publications tried to change the face of the media in Nigeria while Daily Times remained a training ground for them.

Later, it was clear to me that there was no future in Daily Times. When people like Innocent Oparadike, Peter Enahoro, etc were appointed as the MDs of the organisation, it was clear to me that Daily Times was dying very fast. By 1998, many people were leaving the sinking ship. I was a young man, not ready to sink with it. I left for Vanguard in 1998, where the Sunday Editor, Fola Arogundade, a great man gave me an opportunity to write for the Sunday edition. From there to Sunday Post Express where Muyiwa Akintunde, the editor also gave me opportunities to work with him briefly. It was after that the God gave me the idea of Elife, when I was a member of KICC, Mende Maryland Lagos under the pastor who taught me purpose, Wale Adefuye.

What did you intend to achieve with Elife? How far have you gone with it?

Elife came at the worst moment of my life. When I left Post Express as a stringer, I got a job with a woman in Opebi Road, Ikeja. She was to produce a magazine called Meru, which according to her was to explain traditional healing, traditional medicine and exalt tradition institutions in Africa. With this woman, I started interviewing the babalawo, native healers, and chiefs, mention them. The woman would sit we staff under a tree in the afternoon, talking about energy all the time. She was driving us into Ifa worshipping gradually. The editor then was **Dele** Omojuigbe. Thank God that he was a sound Christian who had the power of discernment, even as at that time. I believed **Dele's** spiritual frequency jammed with the traditional frequency of the woman who was a chief in so many Yoruba towns. But at the end, **Dele** survived the challenge and left the organisation. It was a lesson for me and I also left not long after. The bigger lesson for me was the need to know Christ and that took me to KICC where I came under the influence of Wale Adefuye, the Lagos Pastor of the church. It was through him I heard a sermon by Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo on Define your Future. That sermon made me to leave paid salary and think of what to do with my life.

## 'How journalism became love of my life'

That sermon showed me that God has blessed every man with a gift which we should discover and run with. I found out that my gift is the ability to speak and write. So, I decided to invest this in a gospel publication which came as Elife.

Can you share a memorable experience from your career that had a significant impact on you?

There were many, like my encounter with Professor Peller. But the most memorable was the day Oba Funsho Adeolu, (Chief Eleyinmi in Village headmaster) the late Sataloye of Ode Remo drove me out of his palace because I was a **journalist**. I had gone to his palace one morning to have an interview with him. One by one, his chiefs came, and they began talking about another Oba who messed up. I was seated opposite him, not paying any physical attention to their discussions. I had a music player and an earpiece in my bag. I brought out the earpiece to put in my ears. Immediately Kabiyesi saw me, he shouted at me: 'Bola! Bola! Ki lo fe se yen? (what are you doing) O fe record oro wa? (You want to record our discussions?) Get out of here immediately. He shouted at me angrily.

I wanted to show him that it was a music player, not a recorder. But he was just angry and sent me out before everyone. I went out and left the palace. I walked to the street to get public transport out of the town. I was still waiting when someone ran after me and said Kabiyesi wanted to see me. I tried to refuse to go back. But realising I could be courting bigger trouble, I returned with the guy.

Getting to his palace, Kabiyesi apologised, saying he thought I wanted to record their discussion and gave me the training I wouldn't forget. He said being a **journalist** himself, he would have silently listened to what he and his chiefs were discussing and gone to publish.

That was what he thought I was doing. I shouldn't have brought out my recorder when I did. I should have just recorded it in my memory and downloaded it when I got to the office. Journalists, he added, should have sharp and retentive memories to record issues as they unfold without alerting people around. Learn how to eavesdrop on the conversations of some top people. You will need these facts someday. It was a lesson I will never forget. Don't alert anyone that you are a **journalist**. As the situation warrants, record all events in your memory!

What do you find most rewarding about your work as a **journalist**?

I have thought about this recently and these are my findings: being a **journalist** can be a highly rewarding and impactful profession. I have been able to play a crucial role in informing the public about current events, issues, and developments, helping people stay aware and educated about their surroundings. A **journalist** is a chronicler of history. It has assisted me to give voice to the voiceless, to amplify the voices of marginalised people, less privilege, bringing attention to social injustices and giving a platform to those who might otherwise go unheard. Journalism is constantly learning about new topics, industries, and people. Access is another benefit I got. I have been able to build connections with people I never imagined I would meet, interact with a diverse range of people, including experts, Church and industry leaders, and everyday individuals. Journalism has assisted me to hone my communication skills, both written and verbal. I have learned how to convey complex information in a clear, concise, and compelling manner. Travel opportunities is another.

Are there any stories or issues you are particularly passionate about covering?

I like to call it gospel journalism, after all, there are finance journalists, environmental journalists, economic journalists, judicial reporters, etc. I see myself as a **journalist** of the gospel. Being a gospel **journalist**, specifically one who reports on Christian matters, comes with unique benefits and opportunities that are aligned with the focus on faith-based content. Reporting on topics related to faith, spirituality, and positive stories within religious communities can provide a deep sense of spiritual fulfillment and purpose, especially in a country like Nigeria where people are sensitive along religious lines. Gospel journalism gives the opportunity to promote positive values such as love, compassion, forgiveness, and understanding, contributing to a more harmonious society. It inspires and uplifts readers and viewers, providing them with stories of hope, faith, and resilience. Such stories can motivate others to overcome challenges and strengthen their beliefs. Gospel journalism educates our audience about religious traditions, beliefs, and practices, fostering understanding and tolerance among people from different faiths.

## 'How journalism became love of my life'

backgrounds. It assists in promoting peace, contributing to personal growth, telling impactful stories that touch lives and shape destinies.

How do you keep up with the evolving media landscape and changing technologies in your field?

It's difficult when you don't really love this job. Journalism is not about the cash or wealth you can make from it. It's about the interest thereof. However, it will get to a stage where you will have to face the reality of life, the reality that interest will not put food on the table. Reality that you will have to pay school fees, maintain your family and pick your responsibilities at home and in the society. At that level, you must be proactive and evolve ways to survive.

For me, I delved into writing on a bigger scale; writing my own books, promoting and selling them, writing speeches for people, writing books on and for institutions and personalities, writing biographies, doing book projects, etc. I am also a web master, a job that brought me into another area of life, introduced me to another level of clientele. I told you earlier that I know my areas of gifting are writing and speaking. I soon found public speaking as another medium of expression. All I was writing on mentoring in newspapers and E-life magazine soon became what I began to speak on. You need to have good friends, men who will inspire you as friends. I have a couple of them around me who were always on me to start speaking rather than just writing. This is the genesis of Mentoring masterclass.

You veered into internet publishing long before many news media embraced the platform. How was it in those early years...

Those days, there was nothing like websites. If there was, it was not popular, and no newspaper was on the Internet. When the idea of E-life was being conceptualised between 2000 and 2004, I thought until I got the physical cash of N5 million before I could start. I had no business idea or experience. Yet, I wanted to create a magazine. I remember I made a proposal to Mrs. Connie Madubuko, now late. Connie was to assist me with about 250k, but in my ignorance, I told her I needed 5 million, and if she couldn't give that, I was ready to go away. That was when I met a friend, Lekan Otufodurin, who suggested doing E-life on the Internet. I returned home for more research, and I got to know of Success Digest, published by Sunny Ojeagbase. I learned I needed to have a computer and learn how to design websites. I went for training here and there, and I hit the Internet with E-life. It came with a bang, but no money was made publishing it. What became my cash cow was building websites for Churches and several organisations.

Because no newspaper was on the Internet, I was not encouraged to publish E-life. I never took it seriously because churches were running away from the Internet because of the initial scams and shenanigans that came with online publishing. It often amazes me now how churches bombard the Internet with their content. In those days, sites like [www.god.com](http://www.god.com), [www.jesus.com](http://www.jesus.com), [www.bible.com](http://www.bible.com) were controlled by pornographers, pedophiles, and criminals. They woke up before the Church. I was active online, populating the Internet with various pro-gospel websites like nigeriansermons.com, nigerianchurchdirectory.com, nigeriagospelmusic.com, xtphotos.com, etc. I built over 250 websites for Churches locally and internationally. We thank God that Churches are doing well on the Internet today. All this experience I compiled in my first book, Become an Internet Evangelist.

You have authored several books. Could you tell us about some of them and how they have been impacting positively on lives of Christians?

The happiest day of my life was when I released my first book, 'Become an Internet Evangelist'. As a bibliophile person, I mean a lover of books, I had prayed that just as I collect other people's books and keep them in my library, others too would collect my books and keep them in their libraries. As books written by others impact my life, so would my books also influence others.

Being active on the Internet as early as the year 2000, I noticed that pornographers, paedophiles, etc. were also very busy online. It made many Churches run away from the Internet. So, the book was to narrate my experience and encourage the Church that the best way to respond to the shenanigans online was not to abandon the Internet but to flood it with gospel contents. All we need is to know how to go about it. The following books, 'Diary of an Angry Christian', 'Message to the Ignorant Church', and 'MARRIAGE: 40 Things You Should Know', are the collections of my posts on social media, especially those of them that went viral. The most successful of my books

## 'How journalism became love of my life'

is Discover the Secrets of Mentoring, which sold over 15,000 copies online. To date, it's still selling. Mentoring is a thing we hardly do in this part of the world. Some people mention mentorship but scarcely know what it's all about. The book is an excellent piece of lectures on the topic. There are three others, 'Unprofitable Relationship', a compilation of 50 relationship questions people sent to me at various times as an online counsellor. The Lord told me to compile them, give answers to them and make a book of it so that people can learn from the mistakes of others. 'Truths You Won't Hear On Sunday Service' is a compilation of thoughts, explanations and truths many preachers would not ordinarily touch on Sunday service. Sunday service is more of a celebration day, which is why the weekly Bible Study period is often called Digging Deep. The book is digging deep for Christians. Beyond Ignorance, another form of digging deep, answers 50 controversial questions in the Church. Those are the questions we ask daily and have yet to find satisfactory answers to.

Steve Osuji: Lament for death of integrity in journalism

You are a teacher, an Apostle, **journalist** and a writer. Which of these do you want to be primarily known for?

It is difficult to say which one I prefer. But, certainly, I wouldn't say I like the pastor thing because apostles, pastors, evangelists, prophets, etc., are not titles. These are offices. Now, in Nigeria, the chase for titles has made people start calling themselves Pilot XYZ, Barrister XYZ, Surveyor XYZ, Town Planner XYZ. Nigerians have turned them into titles because of our craze for vanities and prestige. More so, I don't like the pastor or bishop things because it tends to put you on the spot. Once people hear you are a pastor, they tend to watch out for faults. Others want to test your patience. Pastors are human beings. Let them breath. Stop putting them on the spot. While I am not ashamed of the gospel, I don't like the titles. You don't need to see titles before you know I am a Christian.

When you are not writing books or preaching and teaching, what else do you do? How do you relax?

It's difficult to say I have other hobbies than reading and writing. Fortunately or unfortunately, I have a sound library in my home stocked with all the materials and gadgets I need for writing, printing and broadcasting Mentoring Masterclass, a program I run on YouTube. When I wake up in the middle of the night, I move to the library to relax. What is that relaxation? To write, read. However, I thank God that long ago, I bought many musical instruments like saxophone, viola, piano, and box guitar. I have it all in my home because I made sure all my children learn to play an instrument. I also play the saxophone very well. Perhaps, that, and chatting with my wife, is the only hobby outside the book thing.

What would you say is your vision for your ministries in the next five years?

I have a programme called E-life Mentoring Masterclass currently running on YouTube. I am working hard to do more speaking in the years to come. I discovered that there are so many liars and wrong preachers in our society teaching the wrong things, which is why there are so many miseries around. I have a 100-course outline on Mentoring Masterclass, which I want to invest the rest of my life. Our people must be mentored. The younger generation must change their perceptions so that Nigeria and Africa can change. Our people want a changed Nigeria but are not ready to change themselves. The change must start with us. My vision as a gospel **journalist** is to invest the rest of my life into Mentoring Masterclass so we can see a better Nigeria, a better Africa!

How do you see the reading culture of young Christians, especially in this age of technology?

I keep telling people that thinking people don't read again is invalid. Don't they read on social media? The issue is that writers should learn how to catch their desires. Writers should meet them where they are and know how to lure them into reading our works. More so, there is no union or association of writers again. Have you seen Christian writers or authors coming together? We are just on our own. There are so many things the Church can learn from the world. We should learn how to give freebies, organise local and international seminars, workshops, and book fairs, and how the Church leaders can help promote our books in our Churches. People do read. We are not harvesting them the way they are.

Would you say that Christian parents encourage their children sufficiently to imbibe the culture of reading?

'How journalism became love of my life'

Sadly, reading is a personal thing. It's a hobby you consciously pick once you know what you benefit from it. Most parents are not setting good examples in most ramifications of life. In many homes, the father is on social media. The mother is on the phone, and the children are on the phone. Also, schools have started giving assignments that push children to be on the phone 247. This phone culture will not kill us. It has gotten so bad now that many old writers are not writing again. Christians who should put down their experiences in book form would say no one would read. We are sitting on a time bomb of gradual ignorance and illiteracy!

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2023

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## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

"We have a natural right to make use of our pens as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard"

- Voltaire

The man we are celebrating here today died at the age of 39. Most of us have since crossed that age. He was exposed to danger and had no protection for the job he did. **Dele Giwa** was killed on October 19, 1986. History records the cause of his death as 'letter bomb'.

Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

Despite the fact that his death via letter bomb came with some shock and disbelief, many had thought that the unfortunate incident would signal an end to the murder of journalists. But that turned out a wishful thinking. Several accounts abound in the shelves of many libraries and websites, depicting scores of journalists that have been killed in Nigeria after **Dele Giwa**. For instance, New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) listed some of

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the names as Enenche Akogwu (Channels TV), who was killed in Kano on January 20, 2012; Zakariya Isa of Nigeria Television Authority, who met his end on October 22, 2011, in Maiduguri; Sunday Gyang Bwede of The Light Bearer, who was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State; Nathan S. Dabak equally of The Light Bearer, who also was killed on April 24, 2010, in Jos; Bayo Ohu of The Guardian, who was shot at and killed in cold blood on September 20, 2009, in Lagos; Samson Boyi of The Scope, who was killed on November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State; Sam Nimfa-Jan, who, until he was killed on May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan, Kaduna State, worked for The Detail; Fidelis Ikwuebe, who worked as a freelancer and was murdered on April 18, 1999, in Anambra State; Okezie Amaruben of Newsservice, who met his end on September 2, 1998, in Enugu State; and Tunde Oladepo of The Guardian, who was killed in Abeokuta, Ogun State, on February 26, 1998.

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Have we forgotten ThisDay's Godwin Agbroko, who was killed on December 22, 2006, in Lagos? Have we forgotten Bolade Fasasi of the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), who was murdered on March 31, 1999, in Ibadan, Oyo State, or Chinedu Offoaro of The Guardian whose sad and painful end came on May 1, 1996, in Lagos? How about Baguda Kaltho of TheNEWS, who 'disappeared' on March 1, 1996, in Kaduna? We are still looking for him though the Lagos

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The report also highlighted the plight of 54 journalists, who were held hostage at the end of 2015. It said 26 of them were in Syria, while 153 journalists were in prison with 23 of them in China and 22 in Egypt.

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## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

With the advent of new media, the threat has increased. There has been a rising wave of threats to, and at times, outright arrest, imprisonment or prosecution of online media proponents and bloggers. The first time this trend reared its head was in Bauchi State, when a civil servant who criticised his governor over Facebook was arrested and detained.

The trend grew and reached alarming proportions not too long ago when some bloggers were arrested and detained at Ikoyi Prison in Lagos for publishing materials that those who were offended frowned at. The most recent was the arrest of the publisher of abusidiyu.com, Mr. Sidiq Usman, for what was termed "cyberstalking."

However, violence against journalists is a trend that should worry you and me. The reason government is scared is because of its rising profile of impunity. Governments at all levels in Nigeria have operated in a manner that suggests antagonism to media. And the reason is simple – corruption.

The first victim of a corrupt society, where impunity has replaced order, is the free press. I have not seen any corrupt government, which is at home with the free press.

The man we remember today died 32 years ago. If he were to take a peep into the profession he exited so sadly, can we guess what he would say of safety of journalists in Nigeria over 30 years after? Dele Giwa was a great man. He had a lion heart. He was strong-willed and I am sure he wanted the best for his society and that was the reason he went beyond press statements to dig into stories that caused some people sleepless nights. His life is, therefore, a challenge to us all to work for the type of journalism that delivers for the media organisation, the society and the journalists as well.

READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1313 words

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READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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The post Giwa, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## Protecting the battered rights of murder victims

The Guardian

September 19, 2023 Tuesday

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# TheGuardian

**Length:** 1361 words

**Byline:** Editorial Board

## **Body**

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Enactment of a law to protect the rights of victims of murder, as advocated recently by the family of the late former Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed, is critical to building a just, peaceful and egalitarian society. When families of victims are unable to get justice for the unjustifiable killing of their loved ones, and bottle up their anger against the state, it has dire consequences for the society. Sadly, this country is replete with too many instances of unresolved murder where the unlawful killers are not found or are not prosecuted, thus free from answering for their criminal deed. Such situations, as lamented by the late Mohammed family, violate the rights of murder victims.

Family of the late military ruler, Murtala Mohammed, made the call recently at the 30th remembrance in Lagos of their son and brother, 27-year-old Zakari Mohammed, a graduate of Finance from the University of Canterbury, Kent, who was shot dead in Abuja on August 13, 1993. Dr. Aisha Mohammed-Oyebode, who made the position of the family known, expressed disgust at the way murder trials are being handled in Nigeria. "Precisely 30 years ago, the life of our cherished brother was cut short. Though the perpetrators were positively identified, all efforts to prosecute the case failed during the preliminary investigation and arraignment phase."

According to her, the entire procedure was shrouded in confusion, and the ultimate conclusion was a glaring miscarriage of justice. To put a stop to similar developments in the future, the Murtala family craved enactment of a legislation that protects the rights of victims throughout the complex corridors of the criminal justice system and reflects the spirit of the nation, noting that on a global scale, victims' rights are recognised as an essential component of human rights.

Murder, which is simply the unlawful premeditated killing of one human being by another, has been committed by many criminally-minded people on their fellow human beings for a myriad of reasons. Countries or societies, including Nigeria, believe in the sanctity of human life, and try to preserve the same through their laws. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), under Fundamental Rights, states that, "Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria."

## Protecting the battered rights of murder victims

Despite this constitutional provision, murder is still perpetrated for political, economic, religious and other reasons in the country. From time to time, people, including prominent citizens, are killed for unknown reasons and their families thrown into perpetual sorrow while the killers walk about freely on the streets without being brought to justice due, most times, to inefficiency and complicity of the law enforcement agencies as well as unduly long period of prosecution that ends up undermining the cases. In other climes, murder cases are treated swiftly and diligently, as security agencies in those nations swing into action to arrest, investigate and prosecute the masterminds and appropriately punish those found guilty. In Nigeria, the police frequently disappoint by the shoddy way they investigate and prosecute murder cases that get the culprits eventually freed even when culprits confess to the crime. The situation has consequences for the society as families of the victims of unlawful killings remain in everlasting anguish and their demands for justice are never assuaged.

Too many murder cases in Nigeria have remained unresolved. They include high profile cases such as that of former governor of old Oyo State, Chief Bola Ige, who was killed in December 2001 while serving the nation as attorney general of the federation and minister of justice; prominent journalist, Mr. Dele Giwa, who was murdered by a parcel bomb in his Lagos home in October 1986; pro-democracy activist, Kudirat Abiola, wife of the presumed winner of the annulled 1993 presidential election, Chief M.K.O Abiola, who was killed in 1996 while her husband was in detention for his struggle to regain his mandate; Funso Williams, a PDP governorship aspirant in Lagos State who was murdered at his home in Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi; Aminosoari Dikibo, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party in the South-South. There were also the cases of a deaconess of the Divine Touch Parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and mother of seven, Eunice Olawale, who was murdered in July 2016 while evangelising between 5:a.m. and 5:30 a.m. in her neighbourhood in Abuja; former Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Alex Badeh, who was murdered in December 2018 while returning from his farm, and was the only person killed out of the three occupants of the vehicle taking them; National Vice-Chairman of the defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and Muhammadu Buhari's presidential campaign coordinator in 2003, Marshall Harry who was brutally murdered in his Abuja residence before the 2003 presidential election, and Otunba Dipo Dina, the 2007 Action Congress (AC) governorship candidate in Ogun State, who was assassinated in January 2010 in Ota area of the state.

Although these cases hit the limelight because of the huge political status of the victims, they actually constitute a tiny fraction of unsolved murders across the country. More than 10 years ago, a young pregnant woman, Amina Ogunbadejo was brutally killed, along with her unborn baby, by an assailant who disappeared into thin air afterwards. Even though the victim, before she died, identified and named him as a neighbour who was owing her a paltry sum of money, the police neither traced nor brought him to justice, obviously due to their inefficiency. It is worrisome that till today, the families of the victims continue to suffer the trauma of their sudden deaths.

The dead person may be gone and not able to reveal or fight the killers, but the failure to resolve the murder has serious effects on the family and the society. Family members of murdered individuals are always at the risk of suffering prolonged depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. The fear and uncertainty that come with unresolved murder can also have lasting effects on the mental and emotional wellbeing of the relatives. The family of an assassinated person often experience a feeling of injustice when they perceive that the killers of their loved ones are getting or have gotten away with the heinous crime and the loss of life is not receiving the desired attention. The family and friends of the deceased become frustrated, and citizens lose respect in the criminal justice system. The trending issue of Ilerioluwa Aloba, also known as Mohbad remains a source of concern for the music community, especially as there are threats of protests and civil disobedience.

The society, represented by the government that makes it a grievous crime for a person to unlawfully terminate the life of another person has a responsibility to ensure that the victim gets justice when the crime is committed against him. Where the criminal justice system often fails to bring closure to cases of murder, families of the victims are tempted into taking the law into their hands by going after the perceived or suspected killers, a situation that may result in recurring assassinations. For peace and justice to reign, the law enforcement agencies, particularly the police, must handle murder cases with the seriousness they deserve, without bias and in a way that justice will be seen to be served.

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The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Byline:** Tokunbo David

### **Body**

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Since his death 32 years ago, several other journalists have either been maimed or killed, for just one ground – the same reason for which **Dele Giwa** met his end via a letter bomb. Materials published following his death, from accounts of Kayode Soyinka, who was the last man with him when his death came, point to the fact that the letter bomb came from government quarters. Several other accounts also corroborate this. Sadly, no one has been held to account for his death or even for delivering the letter bomb, even when leads had been given.

READ ALSO: Turkey expects results of Saudi **Journalist**, Khashoggi, probe 'soon'

## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

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I guess these names don't bore you. We shall keep remembering them as sad pointers to a past where impunity reigned and where courageous pens were silenced with bullets, not superior arguments.

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<figure><figcaption>**Dele Giwa**</figcaption></figure>

## Giwa, Death, and Journalism

From the statistics above, **Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price. Sadly, the issues for which his life was brutally cut short are still with us. That means many more journalists may have to also pay the ultimate price, if our society will know the truth and follow it.

With the advent of new media, the threat has increased. There has been a rising wave of threats to, and at times, outright arrest, imprisonment or prosecution of online media proponents and bloggers. The first time this trend reared its head was in Bauchi State, when a civil servant who criticised his governor over Facebook was arrested and detained.

The trend grew and reached alarming proportions not too long ago when some bloggers were arrested and detained at Ikoyi Prison in Lagos for publishing materials that those who were offended frowned at. The most recent was the arrest of the publisher of abusidiq.com, Mr. Sidiq Usman, for what was termed "cyberstalking."

However, violence against journalists is a trend that should worry you and me. The reason government is scared is because of its rising profile of impunity. Governments at all levels in Nigeria have operated in a manner that suggests antagonism to media. And the reason is simple – corruption.

The first victim of a corrupt society, where impunity has replaced order, is the free press. I have not seen any corrupt government, which is at home with the free press.

The man we remember today died 32 years ago. If he were to take a peep into the profession he exited so sadly, can we guess what he would say of safety of journalists in Nigeria over 30 years after? **Dele Giwa** was a great man. He had a lion heart. He was strong-willed and I am sure he wanted the best for his society and that was the reason he went beyond press statements to dig into stories that caused some people sleepless nights. His life is, therefore, a challenge to us all to work for the type

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READ ALSO: Police urge journalists to protect national security

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Note: This piece, reviewed, was delivered on October 19, 2016, at the **Dele Giwa**'s remembrance anniversary organised by Lagos Council of the NUJ and **Dele Giwa** Foundation

The post **Giwa**, Death, and Journalism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## **Giwa, Death, and Journalism**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 22, 2018 Monday

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**Length:** 1323 words

**Byline:** David

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa** was murdered for standing up to the lies and impunity of the ruling class. He paid the ultimate price.

Eric Osagie

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## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

The Sun (Nigeria)

January 2, 2021 Saturday

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**Length:** 1228 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Hallelujah!!! Let me start by giving thanks and all the glories to our Father. A Father like no father. He who created us and gave us life in abundance. He who preserved us all through this journey of life. He who shielded us from the snares of death and from the great pandemic that disrupted the world in 2020 and took away lives too many to count. Beloved, let me wish you a truly happy New Year.

Look at your neighbour eye ball to eye ball. Shake hands and say: "Congratulations for surviving 2020, the dreadful year of Covid-19. In 2021, we shall sing Redemption Song."

Today's column is for my friend and brother Dr. Emmanuel-Sunny Ojeagbase who clocked 70 on December 31, 2020. As I write this column, plans are on the way to organize a 70th birthday ZOOM party for him. I cannot wait to write this piece after the birthday party. To meet the deadline for this column, I just have to go with what I have. In this age of advanced technology, I sent Dr. Ojeagbase a birthday greetings on WhatsApp: "To God be the glory. Happy 70th birthday to a great man of God and a great man of Journalism. I rejoice with you on reaching this landmark age. My prayer is that you will see more and more years in good health and prosperity. You are a survivor because the Lord is in your corner. Continually, you will be a winner to the glory of He who sent you. Happy birthday."

He replied: "Thank you, my brother, Mike. Thank you for ALWAYS being there. I thank GOD for letting our paths cross. May GOD continue to bless you and your wonderful family every day of your life. Love you!"

So, how did our paths cross such that we became "neighbours" sharing the upper floors of two three-bedroom flats in Egbedore area of Lagos, in those days of humble beginnings? It's a long story which started from Kaduna where I was the Chief Correspondent of Chief MKO Abiola's Concord newspaper group and I wrote for the legendary editor of the then Sunday Concord the late Dele Giwa compelling articles which dazzled him, such that he created for me

## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

a column called "Reporter's Notebook" where I started as a columnist. Then for Sunny Ojeagbase who was the Sports Editor of Sunday Concord, I also wrote a piece on Diego Maradona that impressed him and got it published. From Kaduna, Dele Giwa arranged my being brought down to Lagos to work directly under him. There I became close to Ojeagbase living next to each along Akowonjo Road, Egbeda. From Concord, he moved to The Guardian as Sports Editor.

At that Egbeda flat in 1984, we witnessed the births of our children. Then one day, Ojeagbase had this divine call to start Nigeria's first sports newspaper. It was the great motivational speaker Ubong King who said: "A man with a vision is a mad man until the vision comes to pass." Ubong King did not live to see 2021. He died on December 26, 2020 at the age of 48. May his soul rest in perfect peace. And may the souls of all the millions who died last year rest in peace.

When Ojeagbase had this vision, this burning zeal to start a sports newspaper, I was the first person he approached. He came into my room with a letter of resignation which he asked me to go and drop at The Guardian. I was hesitant. I was thinking: Is he thinking right? Does this guy want to commit suicide?

For the typical journalist who is used to being paid a monthly salary, who hadn't imbibed the spirit of entrepreneurship, leaving paid employment was akin to suicide. I was a bit hesitant in going to drop the resignation letter. The whole episode reminded me of when King Arthur in his dying days asked Sir Bedivere to go and throw his sword, Excalibur, into the lake but he declined. As a kid, I was fond of reading Arthurian legends. Like Sir Bedivere, I resisted but eventually submitted the resignation letter and the rest is history. Ojeagbase, armed with nothing, went to start Sports Souvenir, Nigeria's first sports newspaper which he was selling with his wife and children at the National Stadium, Surulere, during big matches. From there, God blessed him and the business grew, leading to Complete Sports and the array of international sports magazines and newspapers making him the undisputed King of Nigeria's Sport Journalism.

Ojeagbase writes in his memoirs: "The first time I deliberately took a faith-based, life-altering decision, knowing I was depending solely on GOD in taking the step, was when I boldly decided to start our sports publishing business without a single penny in my bank account. Before then, I had tried every method I knew to raise capital for the business. But none of them worked. Then, in October 1984, I was confronted with a big hurdle...a hard choice. The choice was that I either kept my sports editor job and adjusted to receiving lesser pay, or I quit the job and launched the sports publishing business without seed capital. I opted for the latter, putting my faith in GOD to see me through. It was a risky decision, no doubt. And I almost lost everything because of that single action, including social standing, prestige and self-worth. But in the end, the GOD I trust proved Himself to be dependable! The publishing business endured all the initial hardship that came its way. This business has been existing for more than 30 years now. And it is going very strong to the glory of Almighty GOD, our Sustainer and Great Provider."

The story of Dr. Ojeagbase goes beyond sports. It is the story of a survivor. If you read his book, "Testimony of a Kidney Failure Survivor," you will read about the "Secrets That Helped Me Overcome Sure Death and Prove the Faithfulness of GOD!"

His story is like the story of Job. A man who battled satan and won. A man of God afflicted with life-threatening illness like diabetes and kidney failure but survived it all to write about his experiences. Trusting in faith healing, Dr. Ojeagbase one day, without telling his trusted wife, decided audaciously to do away with all his diabetes drugs. He writes: "There is a bridge linking Amuwo to Okota. As we approached the bridge, I told the driver to park the car at the foot of the bridge to discharge my 'cargo' without telling anyone what it was. As I threw away the cellophane bag containing my diabetes medication in the stream running under that bridge, I reaffirmed my trust in GOD that what He said in the Bible that I believe, will come to pass in my life."

That action nearly cost him his life, but for God. Many years after, a doctor forced him to return to his diabetes drugs. From kidney transplant in India to dialysis treatment in Lagos and Atlanta USA, God has miraculously rescued Dr. Ojeagbase from the shadows of death. And God has blessed him with a faithful wife Pastor (Mrs.) Esther Ojeagbase who is a big part of the Ojeagbase story. That he has lived to see 70 years is by God's love, goodness and mercy to a servant who has trusted in Him. A man whose story will take many books to write. A

## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

man who has mentored many. A quintessential self-made man who survived death as a teenage soldier during the Nigeria Civil War to a legendary sports **journalist**, to a motivator, to the progenitor of Information Marketing and Internet Entrepreneurship in Nigeria, to a kidney survivor, to an Evangelist preaching the Good News of salvation.

The post 70 years of Ojeagbaseism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## **Dele Giwa - Facts And Hearsay Evidence [opinion]**

Leadership (Abuja)

May 17, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 6289 words

**Byline:** Max Gbanite

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa**, in his column 'PARALLAX SNAPPS' of Sunday Concord Newspaper, January 8th, 1984, after the military overthrow of President Shehu Shagari, by Gen. Buhari, wrote, "...the military must get Akinloye especially, if diplomatic and other so-called legal means failed to produce Adisco, the military must adopt the Ghaddafi approach, and get professional kidnappers and assassins to his trail. They will get him.

After getting him, they must then compel him, by bloody and slow torture; to disclose where he is keeping all the money he stole from Nigeria. When he has told them where the money is being kept, he must be made to effect instruments of transfer of the money to Nigeria.

If he is slow at complying, the kidnappers and assassins should ask him to indicate the hand he uses for writing. They should then begin to break the fingers of his other hand one by one until he used his writing hand to sign the instrument of transfer of money to Nigeria."

**Dele** continued rather sadistically that:

"As for Sunday Adewusi [the Inspector General of Police under the deposed government of Shehu Shagari ], I have a personal score to settle with the fellow, so I would like to ask Major-General Buhari to oblige me by handing the fellow over to me, and he can be sure that I would do justice to the usurper."

The above is just to illustrate the mindset of this great and prolific **journalist** as of that time. Could he have collected a retinue of bad friends? Well, let us get back to the main issue, which are the lines between facts and hearsay in his death.

'COLLATERAL ESTOPPEL' is known in modern terminology as issue preclusion, is a common law estoppel doctrine that prevents a person from re-litigating an issue. Simply put, "once a court has decided an issue of fact or law necessary to its judgement, that decision...preclude[s] re-litigation of the issue in a suit on a different cause of action involving a party to the first case." This is for the prevention of legal harassment and to prevent the abuse of legal resources.

Late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN, (may his gentle soul rest in peace) knows about this part of law. He went to court three times, and lost; his primary evidence was adjudged hearsay by the courts; yet, he wants to re-write the laws

## Dele Giwa - Facts And Hearsay Evidence [opinion]

of Nigeria, which states that 'evidence backed with facts' will get one justice, and not sentiments and hearsay backed foibles.

Gani Fawehinmi, in a press release before his death, said that, "since the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission chaired by the retired Justice Chukwudifu Oputa had recommended that the Dele Giwa murder case be reopened, coupled with the signed statement of police investigator, Abubakar Tsav, no other time could have been more auspicious than now to reopen the case, more so that all the suspects and witnesses in the case are still alive."

He continued, "In view of the recommendation...however long, the culprits can still be brought to book. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida today has no immunity and he is alive. Col. Halilu Akilu, former Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) is alive. Lt.-Col. A. K. Togun, former Deputy Director, State Security Service (SSS), is alive."

(Culled from Saturday Tribune, October 20th 2007).

Yes, Nigerians agree with the late erudite lawyer that the case be reopened. However, to point accusing fingers at His Excellency, General Ibrahim B. Babangida, GCFR, mni, Brig. Gen. Haliru Akilu (former DMI-DG), and Brig. Gen. A.K. Togun (former SSS-DG), all retired, is where with all due respect to the great lawyer, I vehemently beg to differ.

Admittedly, Dele Giwa's death was one of the saddest moments during the tenure of Gen. Babangida. And the fact that the method of death was by a 'letter bomb' made the matter even worse, especially, given that that was the first of its kind in our checkered history. Having stated that, does it mean that those being accused by Gani Fawehinmi were the culprits? The answer is emphatically NO, period.

I say this without equivocation, because Gani's evidence was based on 'hearsay' and not facts. He submitted the following evidence to the court: (1) Statement from Mr. Kayode Soyinka (hopefully not related to Prof. Wole Soyinka); (2) Statement from Giwa's son, Billy; (3) Statements from Mrs. Funmi Giwa (Dele's wife); (4) Medical reports of Giwa's death; (5) Burial documents, and (6) A letter from Giwa to him (Gani), dated October 17, 1986 informing him of the request from the security services to meet with them.

It is on the registry of these security agencies that they have in the past met with Dele Giwa numerous times, yet Giwa never wrote to Gani or informed him of his previous meetings. What is so significant about this particular meeting? What is troubling to many people is that after the explosion, Gani ordered that Giwa's house be sealed from everyone including the Police. That is a clear obstruction of Justice. However, the Police did not arrest him. According to the police, it took special dialogue (ten days) before Gani could allow them (the Police) to conduct a preliminary investigation of the crime scene. The inability of the Police to secure the crime-scene, collect and collate evidence, unfortunately, denied Gani some of the crucial evidence required to back up his accusation, if it were true; and the Police were equally denied the opportunity to find and apprehend the real killers; whatever evidence that was left after ten days was probably contaminated.

Police investigators referred Kayode Soyinka's statements to be conflicting, and when they (Police) came back to confirm some of his assertions and discrepancies, he fled the country immediately. When The Police approached Chief Ray Ekpu (Giwa's Partner and friend) who took over command from Giwa, to produce Kayode, he (Ekpu) wrote the Police a letter whose paragraph reads; "I am sure you're aware that Mr. Soyinka does not work here, he works in our London office and he only came here on an official business which would not have lasted beyond one week, But because of the tragic incident which affected his health, he stayed here for about a month, leaving the office unmanned for the period. You may wish to reach him through the address of our London office."

Please does this letter indicate the concern of colleagues who are gravely concerned, and mourning the death of their friend and, needed to assist the Police with their investigations?

The Police attempted to ask Ray Ekpu, and other associates at Newswatch to explain 'what type of business and assignment' that brought Kayode Soyinka to Nigeria, but Gani refused. Police wanted to interview Giwa's wife and son, Gani refused. Why?

## Dele Giwa - Facts And Hearsay Evidence [opinion]

Kayode Soyinka, the only witness in describing his survival and the blast to BBC correspondence and other media houses said, "I was having breakfast with Dele Giwa together, sitting arm's length from each other when the parcel was delivered. The parcel had the markings of Presidential seal, then as I got up to use the bathroom, the explosion happened, the intensity of the blast was such that the table was blown up, Dele's two legs were virtually blown off, a big fire ensued, the ceiling was blown up....I was thrown to the other end of the room unconscious, Dele Giwa's pajamas, the same fabric and color as mine was on fire, the room was filled with smoke....Then I got up, ran out of the room...met Giwa's wife in the adjoining room and told her what had happened, before running outside to call for help."

Then on another Press briefing the same man Kayode Soyinka stated that, "Mrs Funmi Dele Giwa sustained injuries on her hands when she tried to force-open the glass doors to the study where the explosion occurred."

Is it possible to be thrown unconscious by the blast, and quickly regain consciousness to explain what Giwa was wearing, how his legs were blown up, recognize Mrs. Giwa, ran to the streets to get help, all within this period of confusion-chaos?

That, too, baffled the top-cop investigator who took over the case; the then Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), now retired, Reverend (Dr.) Chris Omeben, who investigated the case (i.e. the explosion that killed Giwa) without any influence and interruption from the military, asserted in his book "In thy hands O' God," that after a thorough investigation of the crime scene, he could not link Giwa's death to either Brig. Generals Haliru akilu and A.K. Togun (both rtd.).

He substantiated his claim on page 135 of his book when he essayed, "That the parcel was brought to Giwa, immediately Soyinka excused himself to the toilet and before he went far, the sound came off. He (Omeben) asked himself, why was it that Mr. Soyinka was not wounded or even killed? The answer to him is that Mr. Soyinka may have gone down just before the explosion. Again, why did he excuse himself immediately the parcel was brought? As a visiting colleague, he ought to have been curious about the parcel, instead of excusing himself immediately the parcel was handed over to Dele Giwa." Reverend Chris Omeben reasoned. "He examined the scene again and noted that everything in that area within a certain level above the ground was smashed, including Giwa himself who was sitting on his study chair. It therefore followed that if Soyinka was still standing or moving towards the toilet before the bomb went off, he could have been caught before he took cover. In this case, either he sustained serious injury or he would be killed instantly like his host. Therefore, according to Chris, Mr. Kayode Soyinka is suspect number one."

When the Police bomb experts were later allowed into the house, more than ten days after the explosion occurred, they gave their assessment of the explosion; the bomb blast was centrifugal, it blew down part of the ceiling, the windows were shattered, the bathroom windows shattered and the windowpane and steel bent, and the door to the bathroom blown apart.

Yet, Kayode Soyinka, the lone witness escaped with only an ear perforation!

Billy Giwa (Dele's son) in his statement to the press said, "The security guard-malam guarding our house gave him the parcel which the malam claimed to have received from a motor-cyclist."

Giwa's business associates at Newswatch in narrating their own version posited that the parcel was delivered by armed men in a 504 Peugeot car which the security-malam refused to collaborate. Nevertheless, Gani went to first, the High Court from there to the court of appeals, and to the Supreme Court, with little or no evidence. The first two courts rejected his request for 'MANDAMUS' (i.e. Independent Prosecution of the security heads). The Supreme court set aside the Court of Appeal's ruling and directed that the issue be referred back to the High Court and should be heard by a High court Judge, except the Chief Judge of Lagos state.

The duo of Akilu and Togun retained the services of the late erudite legal luminary, Chief Rotimi Williams; at the Lagos High Court hearing, Gani lost. His evidence were said to be insufficient to establish a *prima facie* case to warrant the trial for murder of the two officers. The court described the information which Gani presented as evidence for prosecution as 'hearsay'. The evidence in Gani's hands were as follows: Statement from Giwa's son

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Billy, statements from Kayode Soyinka, statements from Giwa's wife Funmi, medical reports of the death, burial documents, and a letter from Giwa to him dated October 17, 1986 informing him of the request from the security services to meet with them.

While the court proceedings were going on, it is on record that the Military-led government never interfered with the independence of the Judiciary.

Then one day Dele Giwa's partners, not happy with the way Gani was handling the case came to their senses, and on the front page of Punch newspaper of Wednesday November 5, 1986 was a headline, 'Twist in Giwa's Murder Mystery: NEWSWATCH DISOWNS FAWEHINMI,' by Innocent Anyim. The story reads:

"Newswatch directors have dissociated themselves from Chief Gani Fawehinmi's move to prosecute two military officers for the alleged murder of Dele Giwa. In an emergency press conference addressed by the Acting Chairman of the Board of Directors, Alhaji Abdulaziz Ude, and attended by all other directors yesterday, the Newswatch said Chief Fawehinmi's action was hasty, ill-timed and capable of aborting police investigation into the incident: We wish to state categorically that Chief Fawehinmi does not have our authority or that of the family to proceed on what we consider a hasty and ill-timed action, the directors said...what Fawehinmi has done, they continued, 'is jumping the gun. His action can only have an effect of aborting investigations and depriving Nigerians of the opportunity of hearing the results of police investigations."

Max Gbanite,

New Jersey, USA

The first case, suit M/51/86 was on November 7 1986, heard in the High Court by Chief Judge of Lagos State, then, Justice Candido Johnson. The Chief Judge dismissed the application on the grounds that applicant (Gani Fawehinmi) had not established a *prima facie* case for the granting of the application. The CJ wrote, *inter alia*:

"It appears to me important to appropriate that the need to endorse any certificate (for or against private prosecution) would only arise when a decision has been taken one way or the other. Here as it appears no decision has yet been taken.....It is necessary to remind ourselves that an A-G or DPP or any other officer of the A-G's department in exercising the power conferred in section 191 of the constitution performs a quasi-judicial function. The known procedure is for the police who has a public duty so to do to conduct a detailed investigation into a crime committed and submit the report of such investigation to the Attorney-General or any of his officers to enable them consider and decide on the merit of the report so as to determine the justification for undertaking a prosecution or declining to. It is conceded that in the appropriate circumstances the report of investigation by a private prosecutor may be useful. In carrying out this great and complex assignment the AG or DPP or any member of the staff so delegated, is not expected to act on any rule of thumb. He is not expected to be the product of a solid and judgment taking account of the provision of section 191 (iii) of the Constitution besides the evidences available to it.

How do we construe the statement credited to the DPP? I have myself had the privilege of going through the materials submitted to the DPP and made available to the court. I must say it appears one sided as nothing is there to show what the account of the proposed suspects are, to provide a balanced view of the accusation.

If therefore in that situation, the DPP defers the exercise of his discretionary power, he would, in my considered view appear to have exercised that discretion judiciously. Refusal is not the same as deferment. It is an applicant on a refusal that qualifies to apply not an applicant whose request is deferred. After all there is no time limit for the exercise of power vested on the A-G or DPP to prosecute, although one would expect such power to be exercised within a reasonable time.

Even if one considers the reasonableness of time, I would say that the incident that gave birth to the death of the late Dele Giwa is not only unique in its form but also complex and would require sufficient time to conduct detailed and balanced investigation, a report on which the appropriate authority would reasonably act. The timing here appears hasty and premature. It appears impulsive without giving reasonable time and chance for a detailed and balanced investigation into this sordid incident.

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In the circumstances and having regard to the review made above, it is my ruling that this (ex-parte) application is misconceived and it is therefore dismissed. Leave to apply for mandamus is hereby refused."

Gani Fawehinmi was undeterred by the above decision of Chief Judge of Lagos State, then, Justice Candido Johnson. He went to Court of Appeals and the judgment was upheld. The Court of Appeal then consisted of Idris Kutigi JCA, Owolabi Kolawole JCA, and Nnaemeka Agu JCA; their points of determination were:

- (a) Whether the appellant (Gani Fawehinmi) had made out a 'prima facie' case to entitle him to the leave sought from the High Court.
- (b) Whether the learned Chief Judge was right in law in dismissing the appellant's ex-parte application.
- (c) Whether the Appellant had 'locus standi'.

Nnaemeka Agu JCA, as he then was, after carefully examining the issues with his fellow Justices of Court of Appeal (JCA) all in agreement, wrote on their behalf the following:

"The result of all I have just said is that the 'locus standi' of the appellant must have to be examined and decided in the light of Section 6(6) (b) of the 1979 Constitution. He can only have a locus if the matter involves a determination of his civil rights and obligations. In this country, the result of all the cases is that the common law concept that a person who has a locus and can sue is only one who has a legal right, or whose legal right has been adversely effected or who has suffered or is in imminent danger of suffering an injury, damages or detriment personal to himself. This is the result of all the decided cases including Adesanya's case (Supra). Thomas and Mrs. V. Olufosoye (1986) I.N.W.L.R.669....Indeed the definition of mandamus in section 18(5) of the High Court Law of Lagos State contemplates the existence of such personal and private interest before the order can be issued. It provides as follows:

'For the purpose of this section 'mandamus' means the order of mandamus made action commanding the fulfillment by a person of a quasi-public duty in which another person has a personal and private interest. Such personal and private interest has not been shown. It is clear that neither the fact that the appellant was a friend and counsel for the deceased, as he deposed to in his affidavit in support, nor the fact that he is seeking to be a private prosecutor if the respondent takes action under Section 342 of the criminal procedure law for what I have said, is sufficient to give him a 'locus standi.'

'For this reason, I should strike out the appeal on the ground that the appellant has no 'locus standi'."

On further examination of other issues, he wrote:

"Although at the stage, what is being sought is not the order of mandamus itself but leave to apply for it, the court cannot ignore the fact that in the end, if the application for the order is made, its grant must have to be made discretionary...." He went further to state that, "On these principles, it would be wrong to say that the function of the learned C.J at that stage was merely to be satisfied about compliance with the rules..... I believe that the learned C. J. was right. For the general rule is that before the applicant is entitled to the order, he must have addressed a direct, distinct and specific demand or request to the respondent to do a duty imposed upon him by law and the respondent must have unequivocally either expressly or by necessary implication, manifested his refusal not to comply....The right of a private prosecutor to prosecute under Section 342 of the Criminal Procedure Act is completely subordinated to the duty, function and right of the Attorney General in that behalf. This point is underscored by the powers conferred upon him to, at any stage of the proceedings, take over and continue with any prosecutions, including one commenced by a private prosecutor. As it is so and in view of the guarantee of personal liberty in the constitution, the decision to prosecute must be a serious and solemn function, which the Honorable Attorney General might not allow himself to be stampeded into."

The above explained why the Court of Appeals struck out the case as lacking 'locus standi'.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi refused to accept the ruling and filed case SC.43/1987 in the Supreme Court, asking the apex court to determine:

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- (a) Whether the appellant had a 'locus standi'.
- (b) Whether the appellant had established a 'prima facie' case entitling him to leave to apply for mandamus; and
- (c) Whether the Court of Appeal considered and determined the merits of the substantive application for mandamus on the consideration of the ex-parte application for leave and if so whether the approach of the Court of Appeal was wrong.

The lead judgment on the case was written by A. O. Obaseki JSC (Justice of the Supreme Court). It took him about thirty-two pages of presentation, and in it he allowed the appeal of the appellant and set aside the decisions of the Court of Appeal and the High Court. He also granted leave for the appellant for an order of mandamus. Not that the Court of appeal and the High Court erred in their respective judgments but because, the Supreme Court observed that they focused on certain issues not yet before them. Justice Obaseki, JSC in his judgment stated:

"The Court of Appeal erred in law in striking out the appeal on the ground that the appellant has no locus standi." (The Particulars of Error; the learned Justices of the Court of Appeal misdirected themselves in law and thereby came to a wrong conclusion when they said): "Therefore a private person who takes out a mandamus to compel a public functionary to prosecute or to give himself a fiat to prosecute must first show that he has a locus standi."

Obaseki JSC went further:

"The learned justices of the Court of Appeal erred in law in considering and determining the merits of the substantive application for mandamus (yet to be filed) instead of restricting themselves to the consideration of the ex-parte application for leave to apply for mandamus which was the matter before the High Court in relation to which an appeal was lodged."

Other JSC members at the time the late Mohammed Bello, then Chief Justice of Nigeria; Kayode Eso, JSC (rtd.); late Augustine Nnamani, JSC; Muhammed Lawal Uwais, JSC (later became the Chief Justice of Nigeria, and now retired); Abubakar Wali, JSC (rtd.); and E. Babasanya Craig, JSC (rtd.) who went along the line of judgment essayed by Obaseki, and was clearly articulated by Craig JSC on page thirteen (13) of his judgment, he wrote:

"In regard to the issue of prima facie case, Chief Fawehinmi has stated that a prima facie case is made when an applicant brings the application in the form required by Order 35r.1 of the Lagos High Court Rules, and shows due compliance with Section 342 of the Criminal Procedure Law. This is not quite right. In my view, a distinction should be made between making a prima facie case to the DPP to enable him endorse the information under Section 342 of the CPL and making a 'prima facie' to the court to enable the court grant leave to apply for an order of mandamus.... In the first instance, when the applicant presents to a law officer all the documents (i.e. information.... and recognizance) required to be produced under Section 342(a) and (b) of the Criminal Procedure Law, he has thereby made out a case and is entitled to demand that the law officer should endorse the information as required by law.... But in the latter case, an applicant does not make out a prima facie case merely by presenting to the court documents which he had tendered to the law officer. To make out a prima facie case before the court, the applicant should in my view, disclose in his affidavit sufficient facts which would make the court want to hear the other side. The facts disclosed would of course depend on the peculiar nature of the application. But the court remains the sole judge of whether not sufficient facts have been disclosed to warrant the other party being called upon. In all this, the court is guided by its judicial discretion."

And the highly respected Justice Kayode Eso followed with this averrement: Nnaemeka Agu, JCA (who later went to the Supreme Court) referred to this and said (of course with the constraints of the earlier decisions of this court), 'It is this public interest and zeal that complicate the problem of courts in such a case (such as the instant one). Yet what the justice courts are bound and have sworn to administer is justice according to law, completely devoid of bias or sentiments.... I agree that neither bias nor sentiment should filter into justice. Indeed, once that happens, it ceases to be justice, yet the interpretation placed by the courts, once it is non-biased, non-sentimental should be broad enough to bring out the true essence of justice according to law. A narrow interpretation, straight-jacketed on the fear of a judge not being a legislator, into the confines of words which might even be equivocal, is, with respect, a negation of the true essence of justice'.

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Simply put, the Supreme Courts directed that the case be returned to the Lagos High Courts, but that the Chief Judge of Lagos State who heard the first case must recuse himself, while another Justice hears the case. This argument was further elucidated by Babasanya Craig, JCS who wrote that:

"In conclusion, I hold that the appellant has failed to make out a *prima facie* case for leave to apply for an order of mandamus and his application for such order is refused. In the result, the appeal fails and it is dismissed."

As directed by the Supreme Court, Gani Fawehinmi, took the case back to Lagos High Court, presided by Justice Longe whose judgment was announced on February 23, 1988, as reported by The Guardian Express of same day under the caption 'TOGUN, AKILU CAN'T BE TRIED-COURT RULES.' "The two army security officers, Col. Haliru Akilu and Lt. Col. A. K. Togun, charged with the murder of **Dele Giwa**, cannot be tried, an Ikeja high Court ruled this morning....for seventy five minutes, Justice Longe based his squashing order on the following:

- Â· That the information supplied by prosecution lacked merit both in form and substance.
- Â· That information for their trial was not properly filed by prosecution.
- Â· That the trial of the security officers would amount to an abuse of the process and that there was no link between the death of Mr. **dele Giwa** on October 19, 1986 and the security officers.....

The encounter between the security officers and the late **Dele Giwa** shortly before his death, happened while the security officers were performing their duties, adding that the trial cannot therefore be based on that.....He however observed that Mrs. Fadayomi needed not have filed any charges against the security officers when she had satisfied herself that the information supplied to her disclosed no offence against the accused....the Attorney General should have entered a 'nolle-prosequi' or withdraw the charges against the accused." The Justice further said that,

"The Attorney General did not oppose the objection raised by counsel to the 'accused' persons, Chief Rotimi Williams, on the ground that the information was filed by private prosecutor when the information had not been completed and especially when the 'INFORMATION IMPLICATED ONE OF THE PROSECUTION WITNESSES' that what the prosecution should produce should include evident information that the 'accused' killed the deceased, that the killing was unlawful and that the evidence to be adduced must be cogent to the linking of the killing of **Dele Giwa**.....there must be certainty in the evidence available for the prosecution of the two security chiefs.....that he therefore admit the objections raised by Chief Rotimi Williams for the 'accused' that the proof of evidence before the Court was mere HEARSAY.... Based on the evidence available before the court, it will be an abuse of the process of court to call the two security chiefs for trial. The information is therefore quashed accordingly."

The information on the whole mandamus appeared finished since Gani Fawehinmi never appealed against this judgment. He could have opted for libel, in which case he must be commanded by the Court to present his chief/lead witness; in this case Kayode Soyinka, however, he opted not to do so, and probably fearing that Kayode Soyinka's testimony may not hold water. Therefore, his attempt to bring up the same issue at the Oputa Panel was legally childish, ridiculous, and outrightly mischievous in character. This kind of legal antecedents may have informed the decision reached by the Supreme Court not to open the case. As clearly stated, he could have appealed Justice Longe's decision or filed for a libel against the duo.

(Court Proceedings culled from existing court records in Lagos state High Court, Federal Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court of Nigeria).

The single evidence Gani based his accusation on was 'hearsay' and it was supplied by Mr. Kayode Soyinka, a friend of **Giwa**, and London Bureau Chief, immediately after the explosion, therefore the following questions are indeed begging for answers and, I and many Nigerians need assistance in resolving them:

(1) Kayode Soyinka was the only man on record with **Giwa** at the time of the incident; why should what he claimed to have happened be accepted or believed? By virtue of being alone with **Giwa**, he becomes the principal suspect, yet, he refused to submit himself for additional interrogation by the Police, instead he fled to London, where,

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according to Ray Ekpu, is more important than resolving the more serious issues about the explosion that caused Giwa's death.

(2) Kayode Soyinka's earlier statement to the world was that he was deaf from ear-perforation resulting from the blast; how did he converse on the phone with the press, especially, the BBC correspondent? Who called who on the phone first and why was his information to BBC in conflict with the one given to Nigeria press? Why did he run away without trace from Nigeria and who is he hiding from? Gani Fawehinmi could have put him into protective custody if his life was in danger.

(3) Investigators suggested that Giwa, may not have opened the parcel before it exploded; Guardian Express of October 22nd 1986, published in the front page "New Clue....could have been a time bomb or remote control." If it was timed, the explosion must certainly contain remnants of a watch or small clock; if this is not the case, it must then be remotely controlled, and if that was the case, is it possible that that parcel was a rehearsed cue for Kayode to leave the scene before the detonation because...

(4) Kayode narrated that the intensity of the blast was such that the table was blown up, Dele's two legs were virtually blown, a big fire ensued, there was smoke everywhere, the ceiling was blown up plus all other damages, yet, he was having breakfast with Giwa, and sitting at arms length to be able to read the inscription on the envelope and observe the Presidential Seal. If that was the case, how come Kayode never sustained any other injuries except the bursting of his ear drums which miraculously healed within hours, enabling him to have full press interviews....it doesn't really make medical sense; he claimed to have been thrown to the other side of the room and even became unconscious. Yet, he rushed out of the room to meet Giwa's wife in the sitting room; on another account he said that she was rushing to the study; and, yet, on another account he said that she was sitting down; and that Giwa's son Billy said that he (Billy) was with Giwa's wife (his step mother) discussing something when Kayode emerged. And Kayode, in the same unconscious state of mind was able to rush outside to call for a taxi to help take Giwa's body to the hospital; this really sounds like a mixture of badly constructed stories....the flavor is very strange.

(5) It has also been suggested by explosion experts that Kayode probably, noticing the excitement on Giwa's face for having received a parcel supposedly from the President, quietly moved to a corner and activated the bomb which he could have planted in Giwa's favorite sitting place, since he was a guest for some days before the incident and, that of course explains why he sustained only ear perforation without any body injury caused from collateral damage of the explosion. It is still too simple to simply dismiss and attribute his not sustaining any other injuries to act of miracle. Even the legendary Nigerian overseer's don't intend to give him that credit.

(6) In the sketch version of the BBC interview, Kayode was quoted as saying "When I saw him, it was apparent that the bomb must have had a major impact on his two thighs. I mean, that is obvious partly because of the way he held the brown envelope, it was directly on top of his thigh." Yet, he was unconscious and conscious at the same time and to make such close observation as to the placement of the envelope on Giwa's laps. He must have been sitting very close to Giwa, therefore, when Giwa opened the envelope potentiating the explosion, he (Kayode) could have been killed too; except if the theory of an already planted bomb is to be believed.

(7) Another troubling episode occurred at the gate before the delivery of the parcel. On live television Gani sponsored a rendition of what happened on that fateful Sunday morning; the rehearsal indicated that a car from which Giwa's gatekeeper collected the parcel from, parked on the other side of the road and that the gatekeeper crossed the road to collect the envelope. Please is this normal of a security-gatekeeper to do, or could it be that the gatekeeper knew and recognized the occupant (s) in the vehicle and thus acted as he did? It was also revealed that Ray Ekpu's gatekeeper was around the house during that particular incident of parcel collection. How far was Ray Ekpu's house from that of Giwa? What was Ray's gatekeeper doing in Giwa's house that early? When did Ray hear about the explosion to hurriedly convene a press conference attended by Gani, where they accused the government of complicity even before the police were alerted?

Question came from my numerous discussions with Brig. Gen. A.K. Togun (rtd.), one of the accused, and also from Togun's book 'Dele Giwa: My Story'

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Fellow Nigerians', there are thousands of questions that beg to be answered, and this writing cannot accommodate them all. However, it is worthy to note that it is virtually impossible to have witnessed at close range such an explosion and all one suffered was bursting of the ear drum, which incidentally healed within 72 hours but enabled the same patient to have a telephone conversation with BBC before the healing occurred. The miraculous-cure is highly dubious.

The international community is not oblivious to the tempestuous ways and notoriety of the country's corruption and ingenuity at forgery; therefore, that an envelope, according to Kayode Soyinka (the only eye witness) bore the inscriptions of "Office of the President of Nigeria" does not really mean that it came from there. **Giwa**'s son Billy was of age to read the same inscription, yet, he never collaborated or commented on such observation.

Those who still believe that the security chiefs under directives from the amiable General Ibrahim B. Babangida, GCFR, had a hand in this dastardly act--though entitled to their state of minds--are not sincere to themselves and probably lack the objective capacity required to understand that law is based on FACTS, not SENTIMENTS or HEARSAY. Cases are adjudicated on facts only.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN would have made his case had he allowed the hands of justice to investigate the case properly by even challenging the government then to allow a team of Interpol to collaborate with the Nigerian Police Force in their investigations of the crime scene. Unfortunately, his sealing-off the scene for more than ten days may have contaminated the crime scene and deprived the investigators their rights to collect analyzable evidence to apprehend the real people that killed **Giwa**.

In the meantime as we wait for new information to come out, the late Gani failed to also make a case for Chief Bola Ige, Harry Marshall, Aminaosari Dikibo, Funsho Williams, Dr. Daramola, Architect Ugwu, Victor Nwankwo, Prof. Chimere Ikoku, and all the other unresolved dastardly murders that happened from 1999-2007; and has continued to happen till date. Before Gani died, he did not blame the security chiefs, and former President Obasanjo, and State Governors in whose State it happened?

Yes, Oputa Panel 'circus' came; we were thrilled by the spectacular display of emotions, and Gani's 'improvised explosive devices' (IEDs). Gen. Babangida, under the advisement of his lawyers, went to the Supreme Court to protect himself against these IEDs, and the ebullient Justices ruled that Oputa Panel was unconstitutional. Period. You may not like it, but it is the law, and Gani knows that too.

General Babangida, as far as the evidence submitted, never did order the killing of **Dele Giwa** or any other person(s). Brig. Generals Haliru Akilu and A.K. Togun (both retired) equally had no need or reasons to kill **Dele Giwa**.

Going by **Dele Giwa**'s business style and antecedents, especially given that the man proved not to be a saint as can be deduced from his column in Concord Newspaper, after the military overthrow of President Shehu Shagari, in 1983.

Only Mr. **Giwa** and, possibly, Kayode Soyinka knows what kinds of deals the publisher may have been involved in/with that caused his untimely, though, God-approved death. May his soul and that of others mentioned above rest in perfect peace, and may only God judge their killers.

"It is about issues, not individuals." Let us keep talking and discussing. To my readers, keep reading and have fun doing it. To my traducers, kindly go to pepper-soup joints and discuss the points made here; otherwise, go to heaven!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

The Sun (Nigeria)

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### **Body**

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Hallelujah!!! Let me start by giving thanks and all the glories to our Father. A Father like no father. He who created us and gave us life in abundance. He who preserved us all through this journey of life. He who shielded us from the snares of death and from the great pandemic that disrupted the world in 2020 and took away lives too many to count. Beloved, let me wish you a truly happy New Year.

Look at your neighbour eye ball to eye ball. Shake hands and say: "Congratulations for surviving 2020, the dreadful year of Covid-19. In 2021, we shall sing Redemption Song."

Today's column is for my friend and brother Dr. Emmanuel-Sunny Ojeagbase who clocked 70 on December 31, 2020. As I write this column, plans are on the way to organize a 70th birthday ZOOM party for him. I cannot wait to write this piece after the birthday party. To meet the deadline for this column, I just have to go with what I have. In this age of advanced technology, I sent Dr. Ojeagbase a birthday greetings on WhatsApp: "To God be the glory. Happy 70th birthday to a great man of God and a great man of Journalism. I rejoice with you on reaching this landmark age. My prayer is that you will see more and more years in good health and prosperity. You are a survivor because the Lord is in your corner. Continually, you will be a winner to the glory of He who sent you. Happy birthday."

He replied: "Thank you, my brother, Mike. Thank you for ALWAYS being there. I thank GOD for letting our paths cross. May GOD continue to bless you and your wonderful family every day of your life. Love you!"

So, how did our paths cross such that we became "neighbours" sharing the upper floors of two three-bedroom flats in Egbedore area of Lagos, in those days of humble beginnings? It's a long story which started from Kaduna where I was the Chief Correspondent of Chief MKO Abiola's Concord newspaper group and I wrote for the legendary editor of the then Sunday Concord the late Dele Giwa compelling articles which dazzled him, such that he created for me

## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

a column called "Reporter's Notebook" where I started as a columnist. Then for Sunny Ojeagbase who was the Sports Editor of Sunday Concord, I also wrote a piece on Diego Maradona that impressed him and got it published. From Kaduna, Dele Giwa arranged my being brought down to Lagos to work directly under him. There I became close to Ojeagbase living next to each along Akowonjo Road, Egbeda. From Concord, he moved to The Guardian as Sports Editor.

At that Egbeda flat in 1984, we witnessed the births of our children. Then one day, Ojeagbase had this divine call to start Nigeria's first sports newspaper. It was the great motivational speaker Ubong King who said: "A man with a vision is a mad man until the vision comes to pass." Ubong King did not live to see 2021. He died on December 26, 2020 at the age of 48. May his soul rest in perfect peace. And may the souls of all the millions who died last year rest in peace.

When Ojeagbase had this vision, this burning zeal to start a sports newspaper, I was the first person he approached. He came into my room with a letter of resignation which he asked me to go and drop at The Guardian. I was hesitant. I was thinking: Is he thinking right? Does this guy want to commit suicide?

For the typical journalist who is used to being paid a monthly salary, who hadn't imbibed the spirit of entrepreneurship, leaving paid employment was akin to suicide. I was a bit hesitant in going to drop the resignation letter. The whole episode reminded me of when King Arthur in his dying days asked Sir Bedivere to go and throw his sword, Excalibur, into the lake but he declined. As a kid, I was fond of reading Arthurian legends. Like Sir Bedivere, I resisted but eventually submitted the resignation letter and the rest is history. Ojeagbase, armed with nothing, went to start Sports Souvenir, Nigeria's first sports newspaper which he was selling with his wife and children at the National Stadium, Surulere, during big matches. From there, God blessed him and the business grew, leading to Complete Sports and the array of international sports magazines and newspapers making him the undisputed King of Nigeria's Sport Journalism.

Ojeagbase writes in his memoirs: "The first time I deliberately took a faith-based, life-altering decision, knowing I was depending solely on GOD in taking the step, was when I boldly decided to start our sports publishing business without a single penny in my bank account. Before then, I had tried every method I knew to raise capital for the business. But none of them worked. Then, in October 1984, I was confronted with a big hurdle...a hard choice. The choice was that I either kept my sports editor job and adjusted to receiving lesser pay, or I quit the job and launched the sports publishing business without seed capital. I opted for the latter, putting my faith in GOD to see me through. It was a risky decision, no doubt. And I almost lost everything because of that single action, including social standing, prestige and self-worth. But in the end, the GOD I trust proved Himself to be dependable! The publishing business endured all the initial hardship that came its way. This business has been existing for more than 30 years now. And it is going very strong to the glory of Almighty GOD, our Sustainer and Great Provider."

The story of Dr. Ojeagbase goes beyond sports. It is the story of a survivor. If you read his book, "Testimony of a Kidney Failure Survivor," you will read about the "Secrets That Helped Me Overcome Sure Death and Prove the Faithfulness of GOD!"

His story is like the story of Job. A man who battled satan and won. A man of God afflicted with life-threatening illness like diabetes and kidney failure but survived it all to write about his experiences. Trusting in faith healing, Dr. Ojeagbase one day, without telling his trusted wife, decided audaciously to do away with all his diabetes drugs. He writes: "There is a bridge linking Amuwo to Okota. As we approached the bridge, I told the driver to park the car at the foot of the bridge to discharge my 'cargo' without telling anyone what it was. As I threw away the cellophane bag containing my diabetes medication in the stream running under that bridge, I reaffirmed my trust in GOD that what He said in the Bible that I believe, will come to pass in my life."

That action nearly cost him his life, but for God. Many years after, a doctor forced him to return to his diabetes drugs. From kidney transplant in India to dialysis treatment in Lagos and Atlanta USA, God has miraculously rescued Dr. Ojeagbase from the shadows of death. And God has blessed him with a faithful wife Pastor (Mrs.) Esther Ojeagbase who is a big part of the Ojeagbase story. That he has lived to see 70 years is by God's love, goodness and mercy to a servant who has trusted in Him. A man whose story will take many books to write. A

## 70 years of Ojeagbaseism

man who has mentored many. A quintessential self-made man who survived death as a teenage soldier during the Nigeria Civil War to a legendary sports **journalist**, to a motivator, to the progenitor of Information Marketing and Internet Entrepreneurship in Nigeria, to a kidney survivor, to an Evangelist preaching the Good News of salvation.

The post 70 years of Ojeagbaseism appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## Reviewing parallax view of heroism

The Guardian

August 27, 2023 Sunday

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# TheGuardian

**Length:** 1418 words

**Byline:** Nsikak Ekanem

## **Body**

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This piece which may be viewed as a review of Ray Ekpu's column in Newswatch edition of November 2, 1987, got inspiration from separate actions recently taken by two group of persons that tend to refute thematic message conveyed in that column. They are Ukanafun Professionals' Association, otherwise called UK-Pro, and Uyo Book Club.

Peopled by few indigenes of Ukanafun local council residing in some Nigerian cities and in the Diaspora, the UK-Pro is making quest through advocacy and socio-cultural orientation for commensurate, comprehensive and sustainable development of Ukanafun community, where Ekpu hails from. Founded by Udeme Nana, a Mass Communication scholar with passionate drive for advancement of intellectualism, Uyo Book Club is on speedy drive to rejuvenate reading culture, which is dangerously speeding on reverse gear.

On August 6, Uyo Book Club put together a "special reading session" in honour of Ekpu, whose birthday anniversary was due that Sunday. The modest gathering was intellectually stimulating and socially hilarious.

Almost everyone in the Shakespeare Room at Watbridge hotel where the event took place took pride in having certain unique identification with Ekpu. This writer, who was accorded a privilege to read some excerpts of Ekpu's published works, got a marked recognition not because of doing anything spectacular but only on account of being the only person at the event that attended one of the two primary schools that Ekpu passed through – Qua Iboe Church Group School Ikot Akpa Idem in present day Ukanafun.

Given the fact that he has not appeared in his weekly column in The Guardian, Daily Independent and Daily Sun in recent time, what probably would have been Ekpu's take on the trending issue of "let the poor breathe" has been missed at the moment. But as timelessness, if not prophetic, as the works of every creative and inspirational writer remain, Ekpu's position resurfaced that Sunday and gave a soothing balm to readers who have been flipping pages and searching website of newspapers for his view on how those who are rich through political offices think of the "poor" who have been the worst hit from pangs of anti-people policies and the prodding of those in power.

## Reviewing parallax view of heroism

"Nigeria's New Religion" in Newswatch issue of November 16, 1987, which I read some portions not unconsciously, dwelt on the plan by the Ibrahim Babangida-led federal government "to jack up the prices" of petroleum products through subsidy removal.

The column's currency remains intact: "As the cost of these services go up, so as the frustration of lower income Nigerians, a. k. a. the poor. The poor, regrettably, have been at the receiving end of ministerial jokes. Poor bashing has, in recent times, become the favourite pastime of some ministers who have, in the public profile and statements, managed to exhibit suffocating arrogance of colonial administrators by putting their ministerial feet in their ministerial mouths."

He added that government "is about the welfare of the people, rich and poor alike." Asserting that the poor and the weak constitute Nigeria's largest population, Ekpu sermonised that "it is more of the poor and the weak that any sensitive government ought to cater for, since the rich and the powerful can adequately cater for themselves." The column concluded: "if nothing can be done to reduce the present suffering of Nigerians, nothing should be done to accentuate it."

While Uyo Book Club has had a very successful outing, the UK-Pro chaired by Prince Ekong Udom, which, early this year, mooted an idea of commemorating Ekpu's 50 years in journalism with a colloquium on the place of our villages in the global village, has started moving the plan from drawing board to its proposed site. By the time the UK-Pro's initiative comes into full implementation, it would add impetus to that of Uyo Book Club and other organizations and persons in refuting, to some degree, Ekpu's column of November 2, 1987, which had the headline, "Parallax view of Heroism."

Although Parallax view of Heroism appeared to be in remembrance of Dele Giwa, Ekpu's friend and first Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch, whose column, Parallax Snap, was suddenly restricted to achieve following his assassination on October 19, 1986, the piece was bemoaning African nations' attitude of "the proverbial cow that does not value her tail until she loses it." Ekpu mentioned Thomas Sankara, whom he said was "manifestly honest and manifestly committed to the liberation of the black person", Obafemi Awolowo, whose "political sagacity and economic pragmatism were virtually lost to most Nigerians while he lived" as well as Samora Machel, first President of Mozambique.

In the category of living legend then that the Nigerian society did not consider worth of honouring, Ekpu mentioned Wole Soyinka, Bala Usman, Gani Fawehinmi and Balarabe Musa. He concluded by decrying that our society "tends to have parallax view of heroism, the kind of view that permits the acknowledgement of a man's contribution to the society only when he is six feet down.

The renowned journalist from a remote village called Ikot Udo Ossiom in Akwa Ibom could be said to be one of the few persons that has not been caught in the cobweb of proverbial scriptural saying that prophets lack honour at their hometowns. When he was awarded 1987 International Editor of the year, the authority of his native local council in Ukanafun caused the people to roll out drums.

The Mass Communication department of Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic at Ikot Osurua is named after him. In 2021, Inoyo Toro Foundation, an exceptional NGO that has been pushing for eradication of poverty through empowerment of teachers and other professionals, endowed Ray Ekpu Award for Investigative Journalism in Akwa Ibom.

Until Nana came up with "Rare Ray", a tribute to Ekpu at 75, so many people were of the view that Ekpu has only been a thorn in the flesh of some Nigerian power brokers, who, in turn, used to pay him back by putting him in docks and behind bars time and again. From Nana's revelation, there have been other casualties on account of Ekpu's celebrity status in journalism.

This category of casualties, like victims of rape, may find difficult to narrate their ordeals. One of such person has been a final year Mass Communication student who was then glowing with freshly accoutrements of girlishness and joy of about bagging a college degree, as well as having a husband in-the-waiting. In pre-marriage interview by her suitor, she did not know anything about Ray Ekpu. The marriage proposal crashed abruptly.

## Reviewing parallax view of heroism

From a source worth relying on, one of the reasons Udom Inoyo, former Vice Chairman of Exxon Mobil companies in Nigeria and founder of Inoyo Toro Foundation, was coldly treated in the build-up to 2023 general elections by political establishment led by Udom Emmanuel was the foundation's institution of award in honour of Ekpu. The envy and contempt trailing that lofty gesture got worst in that the maiden edition of the award was won by Uyo-based ***journalist*** called Ekemini Simon, whose investigative reports sometimes brought alleged illicit act of the Akwa Ibom State government to public attention.

Notwithstanding few exceptions, Parallax view of Heroism still holds sway in many instances. Although he played substantial role in the creation of Kogi State in 1991, Yakubu Mohammed, another highflying ***journalist*** and co-founder of Newswatch, seems to be given identification of an outcast by the powers-that-be in the state. At a certain time, Ekpu himself was once given some sort of pariah recognition by certain persons at top echelon of societal scheme of things in Akwa Ibom.

Ekpu has been attributing his relative success and professional accomplishment to God, and not any extraordinary actions of his. It could be added that God or divine power functions most times on humans through instrumentality of other humans or other earthly beings. Let the instruments of such honour keep functioning.

Ekanem sent this piece through [nsikak4media@gmail.com](mailto:nsikak4media@gmail.com)

In this article Prince Ekong Udom

Ray Ekpu

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Reviewing parallax view of heroism

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## **Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar**

This Day

October 23, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 2713 words

### **Body**

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Tinubu, Atiku's Run and 'Quench' Campaigns

Please, if this is not a serious season, I would have been laughing all over the place. These grandpas are in a race to defeat nature. They have insisted that they are strong and ready. They have showed us themselves riding bicycles, jogging, dancing and the only thing left is for them to release sex tapes so we know that they are fully fit. In fact, the other day, one lady on Instagram challenged Tinubu to rounds of heavy sex. I quickly offered to replace him, stating my credentials as a man who has friends in APC but she declined, insisting that it was Tinubu she wanted. This one wants to kill our candidate o.

Anyways, these two Babas, once they do one small campaign, they will run abroad to refuel and come back. Last week, Atiku ran to France. Fani-Kayode alleged that he collapsed and that na drip they used to carry him inside plane. Dino released a video of Atiku eating in one canteen in France and asking us 'if this place looks like a hospital?'

Tinubu had just come back from his refuelling the other day. You see, for me, I really do not have anything against old men aspiring because the problem with the complexity of this country is not the one that teenagers with no pubic hair will solve.

But if we are going to go for old men, not brittle-legged men who look like small breeze from Bar Beach will blow them away. This is not about riding stationary unplugged bicycles or jogging with oversized tracksuits and dancing like they have put staples in their knees like Atiku the other day.

Are we not tired of sickly old men? From Yar'Adua though to Buhari and now these two? Which kind of leaders are we throwing up? Sooner than you know it, we will now be having a budget for creche at Aso Rock so that our President will be taking feeding bottles in between meetings.

Nigeria is just a big circus.

## Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar

## Jimi Agbaje's Cunny Homecoming

Did I just see a report that my egbon Jimi Agbaje was on his way back to APC? In the report, I saw him smiling and saying he was very happy to finally come back 'home'. Mbok, the question is, did you ever go anywhere in the first place? Na posting you go na. You were on national assignment to PDP simple and work don finish and you have been recalled home.

Throughout Mr. Agbaje's two time attempt at the Lagos seat, he had been dogged with accusations of being a 'mole' in PDP. He usually used to fight very strenuously to deny the accusations. In a meeting with him at his campaign office during those heady days, I had asked him and he mumbled somethings. Anyways, we are very happy that he has come back home after serving his party meritoriously in his posting.

This Nigeria na scam. All of us na real scam. Kai!

## Abike Dabiri-Erewa and the 'Ode' in Us

Mummy lost her temper the other day on Twitter and it took the personality of the well-respected Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili to caution her. But mummy had lost it and returned by asking that one where she was when they were calling her names on Twitter.

She was so uncouth almost like a Shomolu market woman as she ranted all over the place. She was asking if she was the one that sent us to traffic drugs and if we were there when they were all over the place begging that we should not be killed in faraway Asian countries and all of that. Typical catfight o.

The fact is that she will not be cautioned especially as this attitude is very unbecoming of a high-ranking government official. She acted as if she was put there to do us a favour. Very negative messianic tendency from an untrained and by accident diplomat.

No be this Abike wey we dey see for NTA News? Now she is seeing herself like United Nations top diplomat cascading the world and causing more confusion everywhere. From Abidjan to Brazil and South Africa to Thailand, mummy is everywhere, putting mouth. Once something happens even before the better trained and well-suited foreign office people talk, she don talk.

This her diaspora office, mbok is it a parallel Ministry of External Affairs because me I am not understanding it again. Who carries on diplomatic business on Twitter abusing people up and down.

She is kuku correct. If we are not all 'ode' why would she be in that office in the first place let alone of being representative of the millions of Nigerians in the diaspora with little or no training. Na we be the 'ode'. Thank you.

## Yahaya Bello, You See Yourself?

Bro, you see yourself, now BUA said they are no longer interested in the huge expanse of land you offered them. I have read somewhere that when the Kogi State House of Assembly summoned them to find out why they hadn't paid for the land or taken possession, those ones said "sorry, we are no longer interested."

Who will be when they can just wake up one morning and enter their canoe - you know the whole place is flooded - and come and shut down the place claiming ownership. The drama with Obajana just ended with the federal government's intervention. That was sick. It was a crazy turn. Even if they gave Bello that factory, will he even know how to handle the toilet bowl let alone running a multi-billion-dollar investment.

Every responsible government is begging for investments especially at this time when unemployment is even at its highest and the one major one you have in your state, you are doing cowboy and Indian with them and then you will now be expecting others to come and take a risk.

Mbok, e be like say the state will gain more from you following madam to the GYM daily to keep you busy till your tenure is over. Mbok, I tire.

### **Omoyele Sowore, Leave Dele Giwa Out of It**

Mr. Sowore is a friend. At least we chat on Whatsapp about this and that. This is not to say that the next time they want to arrest him, anybody should come and ask me any question o. I don't know him like that. We just chat once in a while when I am bored o.

Anyways, recently he sent me a post stating that he wants to throw up the **Dele Giwa** issue again. I tell my brother why not focus. You have a presidential campaign you are running and you are not doing well at all, na **Dele Giwa** you want to go and unearth?

I said to him, why not wait till you win and then use presidential powers to seek justice. As expected, he disagreed. You know he can argue and he no dey gree. I continued, "bro the youths who are throwing up Peter Obi and making him the issue were not even born when the man was unfortunately killed by the enemies of this country."

Those ones have immediate issues they want resolved. I continued, you should ride on them and build a bridge to Peter Obi since politics is all about compromise and negotiations. "Ahhhhh" he screamed, "I knew that was where you were going to. I am not an establishment person. You are an Obi man," he concluded.

Obi wey dey wear cheap shoe? I am not an Obi man o. I told him that if he was going to be taken seriously, he should build a base and use that as leverage to negotiate himself into power. "At least, if you work hard enough, you can get an ambassadorial posting to Jamaica so you can better understand the uses of medical marijuana, something close to your chest."

The man no gree o and I leave am go check one sexy picture one young sweet person sent to me.

For me, I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Sowore dey use this presidential run as immunity against his friends at the DSS and all those people that like to disturb him. Simple. Abi who dey arrest presidential candidate?

### **Ooni of Ife: The Polygamist Committee Reacts**

Last week, I had mentioned, although very briefly, my concerns on the ongoing collection of wives by the highly revered king. Well, this week, the Polygamist Committee of which I am a bona fide member, has released a press release on the back of the announcement that the Ooni would be taking his fifth wife.

Let me reproduce the press release here verbatim:

"Ooni of Ife - setting up to give polygamy a bad name

We in the polygamist committee have been watching with growing concern the recent activities of the great Ooni of Ife. The highly revered monarch in the last few weeks has been collecting wives the way farmers pick cotton in the fields. As at the last count, the well-respected monarch would have pulled in at least three new wives all within a few weeks.

While watching very closely these activities, we would first like to advise parents to keep their daughters, especially the light-skinned ones away from Ife and his immediate environs until we are very sure of what is going on.

The ancient and sacred institution of polygamy is a well respected and highly disciplined initiative guided by specific rules aimed at conferring dignity and respect to all involved especially the women who find themselves very lucky to be chosen.

This doesn't seem to be the case in Ife as we are witnessing a corraling of women into a union that is at best shaky.

After two attempts at marriage in which both ended colourfully, we remain highly skeptical that the great ruler has empowered himself through, learning, tutelage and research on the very intricate web that is polygamy.

Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar

We fail to see the maturity needed to steer responsibly a polygamous setting seeing the way and manner these marriages are being contracted.

This is making us in the committee really worried that an implosion which appears inevitable will go a long way in giving our association a bad name.

It is in this wise that we advise the Ooni to suspend further marriages and subject himself to training and tutelage before continuing with this exercise.

We in the committee have resolved to put in place a robust and comprehensive training programme that will take him through the rudiments of polygamy.

Subjects like emotional maturity, emotional balancing, sexual stamina, the joys of sex toys - because he won't have time to go round, in-law management, conflict resolution and rift management, among others.

We will also put his wives through the same training which will involve - self pleasure, humility and respect, conflict management, jealousy management, juju 101 among others.

Works by such great polygamists like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, MKO Abiola, Alafin of Oyo and Oba Tejuoso would be made available.

Lastly, the Polygamist Committee remain fearful of the situation and would like to distance itself from Ife for now except the great monarch agrees to subject himself and his wives to the 30-day training.

We wish him and his new wives well even as we seek his understanding of our position.

Thank you

Duke of Shomolu

Gen. Secretary

Polygamist Committee"

ASUU President and the Night of a Thousand Laughs

The whole thing has come down to this. Asking for transport fare after holding the country down for over eight months. It was always clear from the start that the strike would not achieve anything. Asking for trillions from a government that is broke and insisting on being paid it all was always a class act in tom foolery.

Now that a court has asked them to return to class, they are now asking for transport fare. You see both sides - government and ASUU are just taking the country for a ride and leaving our kids to suffer and the system in dire straits.

They both know the solution but are too corrupted to face it squarely. Sell the schools simple and end this periodic debacle. This is just a brief interlude which I can swear with everything I hold dear, that we will still see this same strike on the same issues.

If ASUU no call strike in the next six months, I will go celibate and for an Ibibio man to say this you know I am not saying this lightly. I tell you. Jokers.

Eyimofe Atake: When Pedigree Meets the Arts

You will not believe that I have never met this fine gentleman physically. But I have met his very beautiful wife, Dorothy. We once attended a course at the Lagos Business School but that was years ago.

## Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar

I, however, have been following his brilliant career and much more importantly his fashion sense. He drips and has the carriage to carry those beautiful pieces.

Anyways, during the week, I reached out. I am bringing my play Ogiame Erejuwa II to Lagos this December and as a prominent Itsekiri young man, I reached out. He immediately jumped on the train. The fact that the very rich and colourful story was coming to Lagos was a huge pull for him. He had supported the first showing in Warri and did not need too much push to join Amaju Pinnick and Julius Rone this time again.

So, guys, if you suddenly get to the gates of the Muson Hall and the gates are flung open for you to enter free to see the 80-man cast on stage with some of the most beautiful costumes you will ever see in your life, just kneel down on the spot and send a little prayer to Mr. Atake.

When pedigree meets the arts - I tell you.

### Peter Obi: A Wonderful Sighting

My brother, Rufai Oseni, was having a tribute session for his late father and he invited me. I made it a point of duty to attend since I really do not attend such things. The wahala is usually too much and you know these Yoruba people, they will not serve Afang. Everything is Ewedu and Amala although the women who will be shaking their big bums and be daring you, usually make up for the huge disappointment that is their owambe parties.

But this one was different. Rufai is now the nation's conscience. His take on national issues has thrown him up as our own 'truth speaker'. Furthermore, he is fronting my media campaign for my December plays. We are staging an unprecedented four play series over four weekends and Rufai is the main person fronting both TV and radio campaigns. So, you see why I had to attend, make he no change him mind.

That was how I walked in and saw great writers, Jahman Anikulapo, Dr. Rueben Abati, Udeme Ufot and my brother Austin Ebose, Managing Director at Anchor Insurance. Then my other brother Timi George walked in. Timi is the Managing Director of FBN Custodian. Great guy.

As the usual Amala landed, I looked up and saw him. That was Peter Obi in his usual black outfit. Me, I even wondered how many of that black outfit he has abi na only one that they will be doing wash and dry for him. That dressing abeg is not presidential, na wetin dem dey wear go wake keep for your landlord. Not what presidential hopefuls wear.

Anyways, I imagined what the photo optics will do to my ego and to the many babes who look up to me as a huge influential Nigerian. So I called Rufai, I said, "bro can you introduce me to Mr. Obi?" He said sure.

He took me to the table. As we approached, I saw Jandor. That one was looking at me to come and greet him. Me, to come and look at 'lightweight' politician when we are walking towards Peter Obi? I made it a point to ask my intern who was with me to help me greet Jandor and snap picture with am, while I take my time and get presidential aspirant picture.

That was how Rufai introduced me to Mr. Obi. "This is Edgar, he is the Duke of Shomolu and a columnist with THISDAY." The whole hall was admiring and envying me o. My brother, Kola Adeshina of Sahara Group was beside him and looked up immediately he heard my voice. I just give am 'face' make he do like he nor know me. You know why? As Obi don hear columnists, he don stand up with respect so I didn't want Kola to dey ask me in front of Obi if that shoe he dash me size me. You know, since Kola gave me the shoe, I have not seen him. So, I just 'bone' him and put my serious journalist face on.

"Mr. Obi, I am indeed very privileged to meet you."

Those were the exact words Vice President Osinbajo told me when he came for my Play Awo. So, I save am to use am again. So I unleashed on Mr Obi those words and he smiled in his spare part dealer smile and said, "Oh a pleasure Mr. Duke."

Loud Whispers with Joseph Edgar

So I said, "Oya let us take picture" and he agreed.

As we turned, I noticed his shoe. Kai, this shoe no fine o. Which kind shoe is Labour Party presidential hopeful wearing like this? This shoe be like a cross between Cortina and rainboot. Very ugly and black. With this kind shoe, this man fit no get my vote o. He no see the shoe Udeme Ufot and Kola Adeshina wear beside am? Na wa o.

Well, what concerns me, I am not a Labour Party card-carrying member. I just hinted at my photographer to snap above the waist. Let's leave the shoe out. No energy to explain anything to anybody.

Was nice meeting Mr. Obi though. His humility was gratifying and his sense of warmth was enveloping. But that shoe sha. Kai.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

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## **Dele Giwa - Still No Clue Yet On Killers [analysis]**

Leadership (Abuja)

October 20, 2011 Thursday

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**Length:** 1346 words

**Byline:** Olaolu Oladipo

### **Body**

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Consummate journalist, **Dele Giwa** was killed exactly 25 years ago in his Ikeja, Lagos home. In this piece, examines the life and times of the slain newshound and the difficulties of bringing culprits to book.

Yesterday marked the 25th anniversary of the death of the mercurial and fearless journalist, Mr. **Dele Giwa** having been gruesomely assassinated by parcel bomb precisely on the 19 October 1986. Giwa, the pioneer editor and co-founder of Newswatch magazine was killed via a parcel bomb in his Ikeja home two days after he reportedly honoured an invitation from men of the State Security Service (SSS).

Though details of what informed the invitation and the answers provided remain in the realm of speculation, it is commonly believed that Giwa might have been a guest of security agents on account of some of the incisive stories published in the magazine.

On that fateful Sunday, Billy, the product of an earlier marriage to Senator Florence Ita Giwa brought a parcel to his father, from the messenger of death who reportedly rode on a bike to the Talabi Street residence of the Giwas. The victim was reportedly having his breakfast with a friend when death came calling.

In the end, the deafening explosion from the parcel of death tore through the lower part of his body, thus putting an abrupt end to the life of one of the nation's finest journalists. Reports have it that his wife, Funmi, and infant daughter were upstairs when the bomb exploded, and were unharmed.

With over two and a half decade since the unfortunate incidence, his death has continued to be a riddle that has defied all known human logic to crack. Like similar other high profile assassinations, Giwa's killers may never be known and brought to book.

Since then, other journalists have been killed in controversial and brutal manner with the state looking helpless in bringing culprits to book. Others who have shared the same cruel fate with Giwa include Baguada Kaltho, the then Kano State correspondent of The News Magazine, who was also blown to shreds by a bomb in Hamdela Hotel, Kaduna in 1996. Like that of Giwa, his death still remains a mystery till date.

The then Kogi correspondent of Concord Newspapers, Mr. Alifa Daniels, only managed to escape death in 1992 in Lokoja, but could not escape the acid bath by yet-to-be identified assailants. Another journalist, Bayo Ohu of

## Dele Giwa - Still No Clue Yet On Killers [analysis]

Guardian newspaper on September 20, 2009 was killed under a controversial manner in his home when suspected assassins silenced him with bullets.

One disturbing and common trend about the murder of these journalists is the fact that security agencies and all those charged with providing security to the Nigerian citizens have not been able to fish out even one of the perpetrators of these crimes.

The ripples generated by **Giwa**'s assassination resulted in deafening calls for an inquest into the incidence. The calls arose largely from the gruesome manner the killers carried out their dastardly act. Prior to the act, the nation was yet to witness such callous way of snuffing life out of people.

Nigerians from far and near rose in unison to mourn a consummate newshound who within a very short period of his career set a template for the practice of modern journalism in the country. Many wondered, and still do why a high flying and accomplished **journalist** would be cut down in his prime. The then military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida was put under intense pressure to fish out the killers of **Giwa**. This prompted the then Minister of Information; Prince Tony Momoh to come out with the official position of the government on the issue.

When prodded by **Giwa**'s colleagues who by then have felt a deep sense of loss, Momoh, who had initially supported the call later, opted to back out saying "A special probe would serve no useful purpose". The position rather than assuage the feelings of Nigerians further lend credence to the belief that the killing might have been orchestrated within the government.

Members of the human rights community such as the now late Chief Ganiyu Oyesola Fawehinmi, SAN, pointed accusing fingers at former Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd.), and his security chiefs Brigadier Halilu Akilu, and Colonel Babatunde Togun (both retired) of having a hand in the killing.

To underscore his determination to unmask the killers, the late legal luminary in his quest for justice even went as far as trying to secure an order to sue the security chiefs, an attempt that yielded no fruit as a Lagos High Court exonerated them for lack of evidence.

The human rights lawyer was imprisoned on a number of times in the course of seeking justice by trying to prosecute some prominent heads of security organisations that were believed to have been involved in the murder. Although police investigated the murder, no one was ever prosecuted.

Still not satisfied, Fawehinmi went to the appellate courts where he also lost. He utilized the window provided by government by seeking redress at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission presided over by Justice Chukwudifu Oputa.

Being the country's leader at the time; General Ibrahim Babangida, refused to testify before the commission about the **Giwa** murder, insisting that he might not get a fair hearing, prompting many to peddle all manner of tales regarding the real killers of the **journalist**.

Observers believe rightly that his testimony at the commission would put an end to speculations of his involvement (if any) in the murder. Commenting on his inability to attend, the former leader blamed it on the perception that the citizens have formed an opinion and that his attendance would not make much difference in changing the perception.

Expressing his frustrations, veteran **journalist** and former managing director /editor-in-chief of Tribune Newspapers, Mr. Felix A. Adenaike asserted that killers of the slain editor would never be found.

Speaking recently, Adenaike, stated that the killers would remain at large except the perpetrators are arrested by their conscience and confessed openly. Adenaike made the remark as the reviewer of the book, jogging in the jungle, the Newswatch story edited by Ray Ekpu, the Chief Executive Officer and Editor-In-Chief of Newswatch to commemorate the 25th anniversary of its founding.

## Dele Giwa - Still No Clue Yet On Killers [analysis]

For the late **journalist**, who was born on 16 March 1947 to a humble background working in the palace of the late Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the then Ooni of Ife. He attended Local Authority Modern School in Ile-Ife, gaining admission to Oduduwa College, also in Ile-Ife from where he travelled to the United States of America (USA) for his higher education.

Upon his return to the country in 1976 when the then Managing Director of the Daily Times, Chief Patrick Cole invited him home, **Giwa** became the features editor of the paper, this helped him raise the writing art to a height of cutting edge excellence and dynamism.

At the then Africa's most prestigious newspaper, his fame rose rapidly prompting the late business mogul turned politician, Chief Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola to invite him to join in starting the Concord Group of Newspapers.

He became the Sunday Concord Editor. His image was larger than life as he moved gradually to become a household name in Nigeria. Unfortunately, disagreement crept into the relationship between **Dele Giwa** and his employer, leading to his resignation from the paper.

Being a dynamic personality, became part of the quartet that founded Newswatch the first news magazine solely owned by journalists in post-independence Nigeria. **Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed established Newswatch in 1984 with the first edition hitting the news stand on January 28, 1985. Nigeria couldn't tap from his talents fully because a year later, a deadly package delivered to his home snuffed life out of the ebullient **journalist**.

Though the Federal Government in 2008 named streets after **Giwa**, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Ken Saro Wiwa in the Federal Capital Territory- Abuja, observers are of the opinion that the only way to get redress is for culprits in the murder to be brought to book!

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2011

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## So Long A Reading Session For Ray Ekpu

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

August 20, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1599 words

**Byline:** Nsikak Ekanem

### **Body**

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NSIKAK EKANEM

The "special reading session" put together on August 6 in Uyo "to celebrate Ray Ekpu", who clocked 75 that day, was designed by Uyo Book Club, the organiser of the event to be an occasion of "literary tribute to a quintessential public intellectual" but the characteristics at the modest ceremony transcended pouring of praises to the veteran journalist and co-founder of Newswatch magazine.

Situated at the heart of Akwa Ibom State capital, Watbridge hotel, where the event was held, is dotted with landmark signatures of intellectual inclination. Within the premises, the event was precisely at Shakespeare room, where pictures hanging on the wall - Shakespeare, Chinua Achebe, Nelson Mandela, Wole Soyinka and Chimamanda Adichie- speak volume of intellectual spicing at the hospitality facility.

The session was an opportunity to savour Ekpu's prose style which came through reading of excerpts of some of his published works in several Newswatch editions. The mentioning by almost everyone in the hall of having one form of identification with the International Editor of the year 1987 lit up the reading session with hilarity, snippets of personal odysseys, agenda setting and mentoring.

Senator Ekong Sampson, who was first trained to be a journalist but veered off into politics even with a PhD in Law, used the occasion to unassumingly distance himself from the "let the poor breathe" parlance trending from the corridors of power in Abuja to remotest villages in every part of the country. He dedicated a four-stanza of 28 lines poem titled, "My Pen is Pregnant" to Ekpu.

Setting a tone for the discourse, Udeme Nana, a Mass Communication scholar and founder of Uyo Book Club, who hailed Ekpu for his humility, which he said made him the only person in the hall calling the former editor of Sunday Times with his first name. According to him, "Ray's words dropped honey and are any reader's delight."

## So Long A Reading Session For Ray Ekpu

Tracing from Ekpu's parental background, place of birth, primary and secondary schools he attended, Nana exemplified him as a case study that one's nativity, however remote, is not enough to hinder anyone from growing to recognizable height in the globe. He said that Ekpu "competed and stood head to head with his contemporaries." But with nostalgic reminiscences of the past, Anietie Usen, former General Editor of Newswatch and author of Village Boy, alluded to Achebe that "There was a Country".

Seeing journalism as "the most dangerous career in Nigeria", Nana said Ekpu "stands tall in journalism not only in Nigeria but also in the world". Saying that Ekpu has been writing for the past 50 years, the former Director of Press in the governorship administration of Victor Attah in Akwa Ibom, rationalised the essence of the event with admonition that "people must learn to celebrate their icons in their lifetime' and not roll out the drums when they die." He added: "To be alive to celebrate a milestone birthday at 75 years is a blessing not to be trifled with".

### POLL

With sobriety voice, Augustine Okon, co-founder of now rested ADC airline gave revelation of the genesis of his lineage with Ekpu thus: "Ray gave me my first shot to limelight. His story about the rot in Nigeria Airline, where I held sway as Fleet Manager, published on the back page of Sunday Times, spurred me into founding ADC Airline. Today I stand fulfilled as Ibom Air is the grand child of ADC courtesy of Captain Mfon Udom".

ADC (Aviation Development Company) was registered in 1984. It acquired its first airplane in 1991 and started flying as ADC Airlines. With reference to Mfon Udom, one of the directors of the ADC airline, who is currently the chief executive officer of Ibom Air, Okon rhetorically remarked: "Without Ray's story of me, would there have been an ADC (and, by extension, Ibom Air)?"

Ezekiel Nya-Etok, an architect and 2023 governorship candidate of African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Akwa Ibom, traced the story of his cutting-edge in the architectural profession to Ekpu's morale-boosting drive even at a time he was struggling to eke out a living in some other ventures.

Martins Akpan, a medical doctor and author of The Crumb Eaters narrated how he trekked a long distance for several hours during his national youth service days in search of News Stand for Newswatch maiden edition in 1985 because of his passionate interest in reading Ekpu and his colleagues' works. He read Ekpu's famous "A Hollow Ritual" at the reading session.

In some sort of making re-telling his journey in journalism already chronicled in his book, Audacious Journalism, Usen recapped how **Dele Giwa**, the first Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch and Ekpu influenced his decision to leave The Punch newspaper, where his annual salary was N4, 800, for Newswatch's N4, 300 per annum. According to the Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State, he was instantly employed in Newswatch without going through formal interview or any other procedural formalities for employment. Nyak-Etok mentored the younger generation that it is the pursuit of excellence, and "not sense of entitlement", that does the game in career development.

With direct address to "Leaders", the senator representing Akwa Ibom South offered advice to those in the political class and others who might have been at discomfiture of journalistic works and intellectual pieces alike: "Don't maim the poet./Don't hang men of letters./Pamper them, for/ Writers are prophets./Scribble their sins on scrolls/Of praise instead./Live among sculptors of conscience."

Apparently referring to the timelessness of some intellectual pieces, including that of Ekpu, the PDP senator asserted that "Truth never expires/Even if it lives like/ An orphan in a thatched house."

Avoiding direct usage of metonymic axiom that "the pen is mightier than the sword", but with exclamation of "what a tyrant" the pen profession is made of, he said the pen industry "Locks, unlocks super highways" and that "The pen speaks many languages" just "In one majesty."

Cautioning public office holders on the path to avoid, Sampson, who has been a council chairman, state legislator and commissioner in Akwa Ibom before moving up to Nigeria's upper legislative chamber in the nation's capital,

## So Long A Reading Session For Ray Ekpu

said: "Beware of cheer leaders?" He believes that praise-singers are "Always there for hire." Including himself with the pronoun "We", he reasoned that those in public offices are "Safer with attack dogs/ Than makers of false earth."

On the place of the poor in the societal scheme of things, Ekpu's expression in his column in Newswatch edition of November 16, 1987, was made current. With reference to plan by the then administration of Ibrahim Babangida to remove subsidies in petroleum products, he had stated: "As the cost of these services go up, so as the frustration of lower income Nigerians, a. k. a. the poor. The poor, regrettably, have been at the receiving end of ministerial jokes. Poor bashing has, in recent times, become the favourite pastime of some ministers who have, in the public profile and statements, managed to exhibit suffocating arrogance of colonial administrators by putting their ministerial feet in their ministerial mouths."

After rapt attention to speakers at the event, 27-year old Jennifer Pius, a broadcaster, rendered Ekpu's journalism trajectory in a poem. She described the septuagenarian as "a man who wrote his wrath with the hope for better country" and "cared more about straightening curves in politically mismanaged funds or restructuring dilapidated infrastructures."

Regarding his mentorship and benefactor's role to a number of persons, she stated: "This man called Ray Ekpu has only lived seven decades and five years but his tales has outlived centuries already."

The poem added: "The Village Boy has his chapter, well scripted for the rays beamed on him by Ray Ekpu". Referring to the six times the former chairman of Editorial board of National Concord is said to have been detained, Jennifer said Ekpu "feared no prison bars or court sentences/Yet stooped to build others into stardom and beaming his rays in dark bays".

However, it was observed that some speakers at the event were muttering "Happy birthday" with reserved apprehension following fear that the "birthday boy" might have been struck down by advanced age-induced ailment. In fact, when Brendan Inyang, a brand artist, remarked prayerfully with a wish for the former president of the Commonwealth Journalists Association to live up to 120 years, not a few persons at the event, though chorusing "Amen", murmured with seeming derision. But when Ekpu's baritone voice bellowed with a "thank-you, thank-you .." through loudspeaker on a telephone conversation made by Nya-Etok, the audience got enlivened with body language indicating that Inyang's prayer was not unrealistic and unanswerable.

Inspired by tales of humble beginning of Ekpu and other professionals that spoke at the event, Goodness Nnaji, a Real Estate consultant, who is in her 20s, appeared to have got a boost. In a brief interface with this reporter, Nnaji, who is addressed by some as "Madam Real Estate", was beaming with hope that it is a matter of time her career got blossomed.

Participants at the event cut across academics, lawyers, medical doctors, authors, farmers, aeronautics engineers, pilots, fashion designers, among others.

From accounts of some of the participants, there seems to be a consensus of opinion that the reading ceremony for the celebrated **journalist** was one event that was full of, but not limited to, exertion of intellectualism.

Ekpu

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023



## **25 Years After, Dele Giwa Rests On, As His Killers Remain Restless** **[analysis]**

This Day (Lagos)

October 20, 2011 Thursday

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**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:** Chiemelie Ezeobi, Ojo Maduekwe and Abiodun Adeleke

### **Body**

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While Wednesday marked the 25th anniversary of the death of the media maven, **Dele Giwa**, it also showcased the defect in the nation's justice system as his killers have remained masked and largely unknown.

It is therefore an undeniable fact to state that the murder of the late veteran **journalist** is one of the longest unresolved murder cases in Nigeria, what with the cooler to which the case has long been thrown into.

Born in March 16, 1947, **Giwa** was a regenerate **journalist** who had a burning desire to revolutionise the entire country with his fiery pen. But his guts and zest were a twin offence to the powers that be. It is believed that he incurred the wrath of his killers on account of his brand of journalism.

**Giwa** got murdered at his No. 25 Talabi Street, Ikeja, Lagos on Sunday, October 19, 1986 through a letter bomb, making him the first victim of letter-bomb death in Nigeria.

In honour of the slain hero, the Lagos State chapter of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Wednesday organised a symposium tagged, "Hazards of Journalism Profession and the Challenge of the Freedom of Information Law".

Also, family and friends of the deceased **journalist** held a memorial service at the Archbishop Vining Memorial Cathedral, GRA Ikeja, Lagos.

Speaking to THISDAY after the church service, the deceased's wife and foremost politician, Senator Florence Ita-**Giwa**, when asked if there was any way the government could have handled the matter better, she parried the question, noting that despite everything, she still had much to thank God for.

She said: "Like we all know, it was a parcel bomb that killed my late husband but asides that, I would not want to talk much on the circumstances surrounding his death."

"Despite everything, the kids are abroad and some of them are in school and they are all doing well as I talk with them almost every day." She however said she would not in any way influence any of her children if they choose to veer into the same career that brutally killed their father, adding that it would be their individual decision.

## 25 Years After, Dele Giwa Rests On, As His Killers Remain Restless [analysis]

Mr. Kayode Soyinka, who narrowly survived the blast as he was with Giwa when the parcel bomb was opened, lamented that although he survived, his late friend, Dele, did not. He narrated that they were at the deceased's house having breakfast when the missive came in.

Soyinka, then the London Bureau Chief of Newswatch magazine, later fled to the United Kingdom on exile for about eight after the blast. He however came back after his self-imposed exile to join the murky waters of politics. He was a former governorship aspirant in Ogun State in the 2011 elections.

He described the late veteran as an inspirational story for all to learn from. According to him, "although I was trained in the newsroom, Dele Giwa was an inspiration to all that knew him and all that were in the field", adding that, "he was a very courageous and brave man and it is very sad that we have to lose some someone of his calibre. In fact, he was a genius."

During his sermon, Venerable Joseph Odedeji eulogised Giwa as one who stood for the truth.

According to him, Giwa had built a legacy of truth for himself which has endured even after 25 years.

He said: "We are here to celebrate a person who stood for the truth and has left us an enduring legacy. While brother Giwa is enjoying his life in peace, those that killed him are certainly not living a peaceful life.

"This memorial service is to remember the good he did while on earth. The book of Proverbs said that sweet is the remembrance of the righteous and same could be said of Dele Giwa even though he was brutally murdered."

Speaking at the symposium, NUJ Chairman, Lagos State chapter, Mr. Deji Elumoye, restated the union's commitment to continue being vocal and condemnatory of the gruesome way and manner Giwa died until justice runs its course.

Elumoye urged the government as a matter of necessity to revisit all unsolved murders of journalists from 1986 till date using Giwa's murder as a backdrop.

Also speaking on the recent arrest of some editors of The Nation Newspaper, the NUJ National President, Mallam Mohammed Garba, lamented how the simple wrongs of journalists are treated as criminal offence, stressing that it is not acceptable.

The President, Nigeria Guild of Editors/Guest Speaker, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye, noted that the spirit of the new law (Fol) ensures openness, transparency and accountability of public funds.

He noted that, "with this law, we are not yet in the Promised Land but we are far from Egypt. My worry is that once the journalist has vowed to use the law, he must follow due process."

Urging the NUJ to earmark October 19 annually to honour all journalists that were killed in the line of duty, co-founder, Newswatch magazine, Mr. Dan Agbese said: "The Nation Newspaper broke news that has garnered controversy on whether it is either true or false.

The business of journalism and news reporting entails that we as a corporate entity representing other newspapers should help The Nation to prove the credibility of the story."

Also speaking, human rights activist and lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana, lamented that in Nigeria, class segregation comes into play in any crime case.

He said unlike in the United States where the law is no respecter of persons, the reverse is the case in Nigeria where the big-man-syndrome operates, warning that any society that operates otherwise is dead.

According to reports, Giwa was said to be at the breakfast table with one of his colleagues when his son Billy Giwa came in with a white sealed envelope addressed to the deceased.

## 25 Years After, Dele Giwa Rests On, As His Killers Remain Restless [analysis]

**Giwa** was also said to have divulged whom the letter bomb came from, although no names were mentioned, rather a designation of office.

The explosion which could have claimed his son was averted by fate which sent the 16-year-old Billy out of the room.

The late Fawehinmi had filed about 38 court cases with several court appearances all in his zeal to see that the culprits were brought to justice.

However, hopes were rife in 2001, when the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa panel was set up to review the death of **Giwa**.

After investigations led by a senior police officer, Abubakar Tsav, no culprit was fingered in **Giwa**'s death which caused so much furore in the populace. However, over the years, the nation seems to have moved on with anything hardly still said about the case.

**Giwa** attended the Local Authority Modern School in Lagere, Ile-Ife and then Oduduwa College, Ile Ife. After his degree in English and Communication Arts at the University of Brooklyn, he worked with Daily Times before veering to Sunday Times. From there, he moved to the late Moshood Abiola's paper; the National Concord.

Although he practised from 1979 to 1986, he made his mark and in the process, revolutionised journalism.

Burning with zeal for better reportage in 1984, **Giwa** and fellow journalists Ray Ekpu, Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed founded the Newswatch Magazine, the publication which has recently been sold to Jimoh Ibrahim, a business man.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2011

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## **Agent From Abuja: An Unending Nigerian Story**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

July 22, 2020 Wednesday

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**Length:** 692 words

**Byline:** Our Correspondents

### **Body**

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In the race to create excellent movies and lasting entertainment, many filmmakers forget that one of the primary objectives of any film is to educate and contribute to the body of art that is a country's filmography.

For some filmmakers in Nigeria though, even when they remember this key objective, they focus on the safer issues in society: pure drama, the regular vicissitudes of life as a Nigerian, and stories of love. But as a nation, we all know that there are deeper issues to tackle, and by ignoring these issues, careful filmmakers do the Nigerian audience a disservice.

**ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW OVER 2,000 NIGERIAN MEN ARE NOW NATURALLY OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!**

That cannot be said of Ade Adepegba though, the writer, director and editor of the film, Agent From Abuja.

An Afrocentric political thriller, the 2020 film follows the story of four young idealistic Nigerians in London, UK who kidnap a Nigerian politician to recover stolen millions to help people back in their homeland. The politician, who is a former state Governor has fled Nigeria in the aftermath of a failed assassination by an unnamed security agency. He arrives in London only to be kidnapped.

#### **ALSO READ**

True to his type, the politician uses mind games to try and turn the four kidnappers against one another. But like every good movie, there is a twist, and the deadlier enemy is among the young kidnappers. One of them is an undercover agent with orders to recover documents, kill the governor and leave no witnesses.

In the course of the film, not only are the harsh realities of politics brought to bear in a fictional manner, the writer draws on existing Nigerian tragedies brought about by political issues. The reference to the brutal assassination of foremost Nigerian ***journalist***, ***Dele Giwa*** and erudite lawyer and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige gives the audience hope that political martyrs are not forgotten in Nigeria.

## Agent From Abuja : An Unending Nigerian Story

This, coupled with the revelations of the level of power and the corruption that exists in the hearts and hands of many in governance, is the picture the filmmaker paints.

Agent From Abuja is not just another film to be added to the scores of movies produced for Nigeria daily and marketed at 51, Iweka Road, Onitsha. Those are only good for cementing Nigeria's Nollywood as the third biggest film industry in the world. But with the making of Agent From Abuja, a truly relatable movie shot with the artistry of a master motion picture maker, Nigeria's literature of factual films that are a representation of the political truths grow a step higher.

Asides some varying African accents too far from Nigerians' language nuances and a few small continuity errors, the film passes its message clearly. Such includes a message of corruption even within an agency dedicated to security and justice; the blind religiosity that can become a devout human beings pitfall; renewed dependence of today's youth on what is comfortable and the wishy-washy way the nation's leaders run its affairs.

Just like the actual Nigerian story, the movie ends with no defined resolution, happy ending or eventual solution. The survivors of the kidnap situation cannot be trusted to deliver the acquired resources, and just as it constantly happens in the real world, the idealistic youths become a part of the corrupt cycle. In its ending, the movie puts all these corrupt qualities into play to raise many questions that no one can truthfully answer.

The five-man cast film stars Victor Power, Chris Machari, Toheeb Ibrahim, Yvonne Hays and Sokari Erekosima.

Agent From Abuja is now available on Amazon.

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/24/159546363549.jpeg>

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/29/159546363593.jpeg>

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**Load-Date:** July 23, 2020



## **Dele Giwa's Assassination - the Verdict of History**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 19, 2016

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**Length:** 2228 words

**Byline:** Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed

### **Body**

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October 19 this year marks the 30th anniversary of the gory assassination of **Dele Giwa**, the first Editor in Chief of Newswatch, Nigeria's path-breaking newsmagazine. **Dele**'s life was cynically shortened by the novel method of a parcel bomb that was delivered to his house at No. 25 Talabi Street, Ikeja, Lagos on Sunday October 19, 1986 at mid-day.

Since then a lot of water has passed under the bridge. The matter has continued to be in the laser glare of the public eye. Those who did the dirty job may have thought that killing the famous **journalist** will be a quick job, quickly done and quickly forgotten. Yes, it was quickly done but obviously not quickly forgotten: thirty years down the road the matter is not dead. It is alive and well and not ready to die any time soon.

However, over the last 15 years or so a man who played a tangential, supervisory role in the matter, Chris Omeben, has been doing his ineffectual best to mislead the public on the matter by playing footsie with the facts. Mr. Omeben who retired as Deputy Inspector General of Police in 1989 is now the Archbishop of Jesus Families Ministries. He will be 81 years old on October 27 this year.

With a frisson of surprise this man has been effing and jeffing apparently championing the cause of his sponsors but his sloppy analysis is not receiving a storm of applause from the public. It is apparent that the public knows that this man is a truth-shredder. While he has the intuitive freedom to lie we have the obligatory duty to put the facts before the public, since he has been pointing accusing fingers in various directions. These include Florence Ita **Giwa**, **Dele**'s ex-wife, Kayode Soyinka, Newswatch London Bureau Chief at the time and **Dele**'s colleagues, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed. His flippant gyration on the matter therefore deserves a multilateral response so that his lies will not be inadvertently validated and the hard earned reputations of innocent people are not brought down by his swinging axe.

(1)Kayode Soyinka: Kayode Soyinka was the London Bureau Chief of Newswatch. He was in Lagos for an official business and lodged at **Dele**'s residence. Omeben has sought, vainly, to pin the assassination on him simply because he was in the study together with **Dele** when the parcel bomb exploded. Omeben says he sent out people to locate him but he could not be found. "We later learnt that he went out of the country through Idi-Iroko." This is a farrago of lies.

Here are the facts: Kayode was sitting opposite **Dele** when his son Billy delivered the parcel to his father. When the parcel exploded at **Dele**'s attempt to open it, Kayode was thrown on the floor. His ears were damaged and he was

## Dele Giwa's Assassination - the Verdict of History

hospitalized at First Foundation Hospital in Ikejawhere **Dele** was rushed to after the incident. For more than a year Kayode's ears were dysfunctional.

Mr. Omeben says that Kayode left the room where he and **Dele** were as soon as Billy **Giwa** brought in the parcel. He says Kayode stayed out until the parcel exploded. "It was while he was there in an adjacent room that the parcel detonated; the metal partition separating the dinning room and the kitchen was destroyed. Lies! Omeben thinks that since the two men were said to have just had breakfast, the breakfast session was in the dinning room. And dinning rooms are more often than not near the kitchen. This is pure conjecture. They had their breakfast in the study, not in the dinning room and the study was not near the dinning room or kitchen.

Kayode was never in hiding. After the bomb explosion which rendered **Dele**'s residence uninhabitable. Kayode and members of **Dele**'s family moved into Ray Ekpu's wing of the building. **Dele** and Ray lived in this twin duplex. Infact, Kayode was interviewed by several newspapers during the period that he was in Nigeria; he was interviewed by the Police at least twice and he submitted written statements to them; he attended **Dele**'s burial at Ugbekpe Ekperi in Edo State along with other Newswatch staff.

Mr. Omeben has said that Newswatch directors shielded Kayode from being arrested by the police. This is a lie. Throughout the period of this incident Kayode was available. He was not a fugitive from justice. He was a victim of the dastardly act. If we prevented Kayode from being arrested by the police (and we deny it vehemently) why did the Police not arrest us for obstruction?

If Kayode was considered a suspect in the matter why have the Police not arrested him since then because criminal cases are not time barred.Kayode has come to Nigeria very many times in the past 30 years without the police accosting him. Twice, he contested elections for the governorship of Ogun State, campaigning there for months on each occasion. Why was he not arrested by the Police?

The allegation that Kayode escaped from the country through the NADECO route at Idi Iroko is nonsense. Kayode left Nigeria through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport on British Caledonian Airways accompanied by his wife and children who had to join him in Nigeria when they heard of the incident. This information can be crosschecked with the various authorities at the Murtala Muhammed Airport.

Before Kayode left Nigeria on Sunday November 16, 1986 the Police had come the day before, that is Saturday November 15, 1986 asking him to make a statement on his movement between the day of the bomb blast and the time of his discharge from the hospital. He did. But curiously and fully aware that Kayode had left Nigeria the day before the police came on Monday November 17, 1986 to say they had some more questions for Kayode. A letter signed by A. Kaltungo, Deputy Commissioner of Police was delivered to Ray Ekpu. The letter asked Kayode to report to the Police on Wednesday November 19, 1986. Ray replied to the letter that same day informing the police (as if they didn't know) that Kayode had returned to London. He gave the police Kayode's London address and phone numbers. It is elementary wisdom that no one could sit in a room where he knew a bomb was going to explode except he is a suicide bomber. And Kayode was not one. He had a wife and children and a flourishing career. His demographics do not fit into a sensible analyst's silhouette of a suicide bomber.

For every crime there must be a motive. Why would Kayode want to kill his Editor in Chief? If he killed **Dele** he would never have become the next Editor in Chief of the magazine. He would have had to kill Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed, Soji Akinrinade, Nosa Igiebor, **Dele** Omotunde, Onome Osifo Whisky and a few other senior editorial staff to get to the Editor in Chief's chair.

It is curious that a policeman who retired as a Deputy Inspector General of Police does not know that a murder allegation does not expire and that even if Kayode lives in London, Interpol could have got him to come to Nigeria and answer for the alleged crime if the Nigeria Police had concrete information on his involvement.

(2)Newswatch Directors: Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and YakubuMohammed. Mr. Omeben has alleged a couple of times that there was boardroom politics in Newswatch where the board members would want to eliminate themselves. The external board members of Newswatch were all successful businessmen who only invested in

### Dele Giwa's Assassination - the Verdict of History

Newswatch because we the executive directors - Ray, Dan, Yakubu - were their friends. There was nothing for them to fight for in Newswatch.

But Mr. Omeben has mentioned the three of us a few times by namemaking allegations or insinuations that tend to give the impression that we were suspects in the case. This is a most uncharitable, wicked and despicable piece of defamation. In the first place, we never had any crisis of notable dimension that could have warranted the existence of a plot to kill our friend and business partner. If we killed Dele what would we get? His Newswatch shares? We have our own. His wife? We have our own. His children? We have our own. The position of Editor in Chief? Most unlikely for four reasons: (a) Each of the four of us had been editor of a newspaper or two before we came together so the editorial chair did not offer such an overwhelming attraction for any of us to harbour the thought of physically eliminating our friend and business partner (b) All the four of us were on the same salary and allowances. No one earned higher and no one earned lower than the other. (c) The positions in Newswatch at its inception were determined by Ray and Yakubu. Both of them decided that since Dele and Dan were unfairly treated in their last offices in Concord and New Nigerian, it was wise to assert our confidence in the two of them by offering them the positions of Editor in Chief and Managing Director respectively. Ray and Yakubu opted to be called Executive Editors. It was not a mark of anybody's superiority or inferiority because we all took active part in the editorial activities of the magazine and had equal shares (15 percent) in the company. It was meant to be a confidence booster for the two men. (d) The three of us believe in the inviolability of friendship. We see it as a bank account to which you must continue to make deposits so that it can grow. It is a sacred relationship, a present of unquantifiable value that you must give to yourself. So our world view does not include killing your friend for whatever reason. No reason is good enough for "friend-ticide." A lot of people ask us what is the magic behind our strong relationship of almost 40 years. The answer: friendship. We retired from Newswatch on May 5, 2011 but we are still together today, why? Friendship.

Since that fateful day of October 19, 1986 our lawyer, Chief GaniFawehinmi, had made every effort, using the mechanism of the courts from High Court to the Supreme Court to bring the suspects to justice. At every turn that resolute and indefatigable fighter was harassed, assaulted, charged to court on trumped up charges so as to kill the matter.

Every effort was made by the Babangida government to kill the magazine and render us jobless by the proscription of the magazine in April 1987 on spurious charges. Our corporate and personal accounts were frozen. We continued to pursue the assassination issue with as much vigour as we could. On September 11, 1987 we wrote a letter to the then Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Muhammu Gambo, reminding him about the Dele Giwa matter. We never got even the courtesy of a response from Alhaji Gambo. We also appeared at the Oputa panel with Chief Fawehinmi in Lagos and Abuja in pursuit of justice.

Murder is a criminal matter. Isn't it curious, therefore, that people who are accused of murder should seek to run away from the opportunity to clear their "good names." We would have thought they would embrace such an opportunity warmly instead of engaging in legal gymnastics

Worthy of note is the fact that Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, the investigating Police Officer, had testified at the Oputa panel on July 3, 2001 in Abuja. He told the panel that in his interim report he had recommended that Col. Halilu Akili and Lt. Col. A.K.Togun should be made available for interrogation and voice identification. He also recommended that their special privileges should be withdrawn so that a search could be conducted in their offices and residences for items of evidential value. The case file was submitted to Mr. Omeben. He never returned the case file to Mr. Tsav, nor did he reassign the case to someone else. He simply sat on the matter until he retired.

Since his retirement Mr. Omeben has been claiming that we had very powerful links in government so we were able to block the investigation. This view is quite flattering but it is patently false. We had no such influence otherwise we would have blocked the proscription of the magazine, our serial detentions for spurious reasons, the freezing of our accounts. Mr. Omeben's words are aflame with dishonesty. He is evidently a truth shredder who works as an echo chamber of his sponsors. But truth is like pregnancy: you can't hide it for too long.

### Dele Giwa's Assassination - the Verdict of History

During the Oputa panel deliberations in 2001 Ibrahim Babangida, Akilu and Togun went to court and obtained an order restraining the Commission from summoning them to appear before it. Justice Oputa said that the Commission had the power to issue arrest warrants for the trio but decided against this "in the interest of national reconciliation."

Murder is a criminal matter. Isn't it curious, therefore, that people who are accused of murder should seek to run away from the opportunity to clear their "good names." We would have thought they would embrace such an opportunity warmly instead of engaging in legal gymnastics.

However, the panel in its report stated: "As for the case of **Dele Giwa** we are of the view that beyond the legal technicalities that some of the key witnesses clung to, the federal government should be encouraged to reopen this case for proper investigation." It stated further: "On General Ibrahim Babangida, we are of the view that there is evidence to suggest that he and the two security chiefs, Brigadier General Halilu Akilu and Col. A.K.Togun are accountable for the death of **Dele Giwa** by letter bomb. We recommend that this case be reopened for further investigation in the public interest."

We urge the Buhari government to reopen the matter and ensure that the growing scourge of assassinations in the country is guillotined.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2016

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## **Agent From Abuja: An Unending Nigerian Story**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

July 24, 2020 Friday

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**Length:** 660 words

**Byline:** Tomi Falade

### **Body**

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the race to create excellent movies and lasting entertainment, many filmmakers forget that one of the primary objectives of any film is to educate and contribute to the body of art that is a country's filmography.

For some filmmakers in Nigeria though, even when they remember this key objective, they focus on the safer issues in society: pure drama, the regular vicissitudes of life as a Nigerian, and stories of love. But as a nation, we all know that there are deeper issues to tackle, and by ignoring these issues, careful filmmakers do the Nigerian audience a disservice.

That cannot be said of Ade Adepegba though, the writer, director and editor of the film, Agent From Abuja.

ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW OVER 2,000 NIGERIAN MEN ARE NOW NATURALLY OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!

An Afrocentric political thriller, the 2020 film follows the story of four young idealistic Nigerians in London, UK who kidnap a Nigerian politician to recover stolen millions to help people back in their homeland. The politician, who is a former state Governor has fled Nigeria in the aftermath of a failed assassination by an unnamed security agency. He arrives in London only to be kidnapped.

True to his type, the politician uses mind games to try and turn the four kidnappers against one another. But like every good movie, there is a twist, and the deadlier enemy is among the young kidnappers. One of them is an undercover agent with orders to recover documents, kill the governor and leave no witnesses.

### ALSO READ

In the course of the film, not only are the harsh realities of politics brought to bear in a fictional manner, the writer draws on existing Nigerian tragedies brought about by political issues. The reference to the brutal assassination of foremost Nigerian ***journalist***, ***Dele Giwa*** and erudite lawyer and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige gives the audience hope that political martyrs are not forgotten in Nigeria.

## Agent From Abuja : An Unending Nigerian Story

This, coupled with the revelations of the level of power and the corruption that exists in the hearts and hands of many in governance, is the picture the filmmaker paints.

Agent From Abuja is not just another film to be added to the scores of movies produced for Nigeria daily and marketed at 51, Iweka Road, Onitsha. Those are only good for cementing Nigeria's Nollywood as the third biggest film industry in the world. But with the making of Agent From Abuja, a truly relatable movie shot with the artistry of a master motion picture maker, Nigeria's literature of factual films that are a representation of the political truths grow a step higher.

Asides some varying African accents too far from Nigerians' language nuances and a few small continuity errors, the film passes its message clearly. Such includes a message of corruption even within an agency dedicated to security and justice; the blind religiosity that can become a devout human beings pitfall; renewed dependence of today's youth on what is comfortable and the wishy-washy way the nation's leaders run its affairs.

Just like the actual Nigerian story, the movie ends with no defined resolution, happy ending or eventual solution. The survivors of the kidnap situation cannot be trusted to deliver the acquired resources, and just as it constantly happens in the real world, the idealistic youths become a part of the corrupt cycle. In its ending, the movie puts all these corrupt qualities into play to raise many questions that no one can truthfully answer.

The five-man cast film stars Victor Power, Chris Machari, Toheeb Ibrahim, Yvonne Hays and Sokari Erekosima.

The five-man cast film stars Victor Power, Chris Machari, Toheeb Ibrahim, Yvonne Hays and Sokari Erekosima and is produced by Kuramo Bay Filmworks.

Agent From Abuja is now available on Amazon.

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/1/159565025494.jpeg>

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/76/159565025496.jpeg>

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/61/159565025496.jpeg>

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2020

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## **Media Trust Chairman, Others Get Newswatch Awards**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

December 9, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 297 words

**Byline:** Mohammed Shosanya

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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The Chairman of Media Trust Limited Malam Kabiru Yusuf and 17 others were Tuesday given awards by Newswatch Communications Limited for their outstanding contributions to the journalism profession in the country.

They were given the awards at Newswatch's 25th anniversary dinner held at Planet One in Maryland, Lagos.

Other personalities who got awards include the late human rights activist, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Publisher of Vanguard Newspaper Sam Amuka, Managing Director of Insight Communications Biodun Sobanjo, former president of the Nigerian Union of Journalists Funke Fadugba and Tolu Ogunkoya. Others include Yemi Ogunbiyi and Niyi Alonge.

Earlier in his welcome address, Chairman of Newswatch Communications Limited Mr.Ray Ekpu said the personalities were given the awards as a reward for being friends of Newswatch and journalism in Nigeria.

Ekpu, who recounted the ordeals the magazine has passed through since it began 25years ago, thanked Nigerians for their continued support even when one of its arrowheads, Dele Giwa, was killed through a parcel bomb.

He disclosed that as a way of immortalizing Dele Giwa, the company had concluded plans to erect his marble statue in his village in Edo State.

He said the company had also instituted an award in four universities in the country offering Mass Communication in honour of the late journalist. N50,000 will go to the best students in each of the universities for five years.

Ekpu further said the company would continue to publish the magazine with more incisive, analytical and thought provoking content in order to keep the memory of Dele Giwa alive.

In his remarks, Chairman of Newswatch Board of Directors, Chief Alex Akinyele described the magazine as a piece which has stood the test of time in spite of several ordeals.

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2010

Media Trust Chairman, Others Get Newswatch Awards

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## Tompolo and the Niger Delta oil thieves

The Guardian

October 17, 2022 Monday

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# TheGuardian

Length: 1213 words

## Body

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In his sermon titled, A Tough and Tender Heart, Martin Luther King Jr., wrote, "the strong man holds in a living blend strongly marked opposites. The idealists are not usually realistic, and the realists are not usually idealistic&hellip; but life at its best is a creative synthesis of opposites in a fruitful harmony." Dr. Martin should know, he was a blend of strongly marked opposites.

Tompolo has been reviled for precisely this quality which Rev. Martin Luther King Jr identifies as the mark of strong men. In the last few weeks, it has been open season on Tompolo for accepting to fight the crude oil thieves in the Niger delta who are despoiling our environment and degrading our economic capacity.

Unsurprisingly, the media has been at the very forefront of the fight, from baiting him with threats of a creek war which has not materialised, to disinterring the bodies of mute allegations of crime long since judicially interred. The surprise is the laziness of the allegations, but then it is not surprising. The media in Nigeria is more appropriately known for its feeding frenzy than its investigative tendencies, since the death of the iconic Dele Giwa. And don't get me wrong the likes of Nosa Igiebor, Dimgba Igwe, Dele Olojede, Waziri etc took after his footsteps but those footsteps have now petered out.

The laziness of the allegations against Tompolo border on what the Americans would refer to as asininity. Take the allegations by several editorial boards of newspapers including The Guardian Newspapers repeating the canards that Tompolo earlier stole from the government because he was wrongly charged with crimes he did not commit and was cleared by the courts, and there are no appeals against the judgments. Just because he could not be convicted in a court of law, he must be convicted in the court of rumour mongers. Anyone but a lazy press could have investigated the cases or the back stories to the cases. There is no question that

Tompolo was charged with allegations of crime. The ensuing legal battle lasted over five years but he was vindicated.

First the back story, Tompolo had a vision of quickly industrialising the Niger Delta and after careful analysis came to the conclusion that there was a convergence of interests between the region and the Nation and it was not in oil, but maritime development. As is the case with him, he chose a team with pedigree to steer this process. The team identified the weaknesses in the system and tried to overcome them. The Nation had no degree awarding

## Tompolo and the Niger Delta oil thieves

institution for maritime training, the nearest was in faraway Cairo, so Nigeria needed a full-blown maritime university. The Nation had no maritime domain awareness so we needed a strengthened entity to bolster maritime domain awareness, we had no grade level dry docking facility so we needed a World class dry dock, etc. But how are we to pay for these, since the Federal Government had no money to invest in these highly capital-intensive projects? The solution lay in public private sector partnership where Government invests zero kobo and reaps massive dollar rewards.

As is customary with Tompolo, he moved with zeal. A deal was struck with NIMASA to provide it with 12 military grade vessels for high sea patrol and maritime domain awareness on the basis of no cure no pay. Investments in excess of \$60 million was made and the process began to pay off. What did we hear? Why is Government paying Tompolo so much money? Next thing, the contract was technically suspended with the imposition of criminal charges, itself a violation of the terms of the contract. The contract was never formally terminated, till today. By the way, for those who followed the story, Nigeria thereafter had to pay an Israeli company \$165 million for something she earlier pay zero kobo for. We are still awaiting the returns on Nigeria's money. Importantly, no one, not even the lazy editorial boards are asking why is maritime domain awareness, a matter of national security, in the hands of foreigners?

But Tompolo is the villain, for trying to solve a peculiar Nigerian problem and double the villain for succeeding, hence the hysteria. Surprisingly, no one is asking why Nigeria had to spend so much for what it needed to spend nothing only a couple years ago. Or why the investment is not yielding even with the multi-million dollar spent? Nigerian journalists don't ask those types of questions, because those types of questions and the answers they may lead to don't sell newspapers. Comparative analysis, investigative journalism and the like, allegedly bore Nigerian readers and no newspaper house wants to go bankrupt. Easier, to allege sleaze, make up a story, look for easy targets and make a villain of them and if they don't comply by being as bad as you wish they were, no harm in trying your hand at graffiti.

That's how you put foot on your family's table, it's all in a day's job. It's not as bad as the politicians who are stealing money in bags. Why should a ***journalist*** care about the national interest if the politicians don't. It is important that Nigerians understand the rationale for much journalistic endeavour in Nigeria today is stomach infrastructure. The company associated with Tompolo in the fight against the abuse of our maritime domain was prosecuted along with Tompolo on charges that it has benefited unduly from the public private sector arrangement with the Government. At the time the case commenced, it was in its third year in a ten-year contract. Assuming it had indeed benefitted unduly from the contract, which was eventually proved to be untrue, it had seven years of value to give and the government could have recouped 3 years of losses from seven years of adjustments, no?

A person has to be asinine to stop a contract that was giving him 150% on the mere suspicion that he may have lost 3% Of 150% when he has 7 more years from which to benefit and recover the 3% alleged to have been lost in 3 years. Asininity. But it happened.

It was the allegation of 3% loss that Tompolo's accusers could not prove in court for 5 years and had their case dismissed at the no case submission stage. Lawyers and interested persons know what a no case submission means. For others, it means you had a suspicion which was examined by the court and it turned out that you were wrong. It's a normal human occurrence to assume that someone was trying to slight you if you feel disrespected. What isn't normal is to insist you were disrespected after you were handed proof you were wrong. So, assume someone accused you of disrespecting them, but as it turns out were undergoing some personal tragedy and were absent minded. Now your friend reports you to your circle of friends, who constitute a 'committee' to investigate your disrespect. You tell them about the personal tragedy that left you distraught. They investigate your alibi of personal tragedy. It holds up. They ask you and your friend to shake hands. It was all a misunderstanding. That's normal. You shake hands and make up.

To be continued tomorrow

Dr. Bebenimibo is media consultant to High Chief Government Ekpmupolo (Tompolo)

In this article Niger Delta

## Tompson and the Niger Delta oil thieves

oil thieves

Tompson

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2022 GUARDIAN Newspapers.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

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## **Between church and World Cup finals**

The Sun (Nigeria)

December 23, 2022 Friday

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**Length:** 1088 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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In life, we are sometimes faced with making a difficult choice between two desirable or undesirable alternatives. Among students of literature, it's called Sophie's Choice. I first read about it in the Parallax Snaps column of my editor and mentor, the legendary **Dele Giwa**.

Sophie's Choice is the title of a novel by the American writer William Styron in which a mother is forced to make the painful decision of which of her children will die. It became a movie which won the actress Meryl Streep her first Academy Award for Best Actress. I pray that you will not be pushed into a dire strait where you will have to choose which of your children to sacrifice.

Last Sunday, the Qatar World Cup climaxed into a suspense-filled finale to produce one of the finest finals ever witnessed in the history of the World Cup. An encounter between two soccer giants: Argentina and France. A duel between two Paris Saint-Germain FC teammates: Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe. Two extraordinary strikers and living legends of the beautiful game of football. Two mesmerizing goal poachers who carried the hopes and aspirations of their countries to win the World Cup.

As a **journalist**, columnist and a lover of football, I knew my readers would feel so disappointed not reading my take on the World Cup finals—with all its twist and turns. Nothing was going to stop me from watching and reporting on the denouement of this soccer fiesta which according to FIFA has been the "best ever" World Cup. Nothing was going to stop me. Nothing! So I thought.

Then came this invitation to read one of the Bible lessons at our church's Christmas Carol service on the very day of the World Cup. What a mighty clash! The World Cup was to start at four o'clock in the evening, whereas the Christmas Carol was to kick off at five o'clock. Just as I was figuring how to kill two birds with one stone, a phone

## Between church and World Cup finals

call from Baba Ayodele, our chairman and leader of the Elders' Group came, reminding me of the need to be in church on time. You can imagine how I felt.

"The World Cup sir," I blurted out what was uppermost on my mind. "I just have to watch this important game and cover it in my column. This is the World Cup finals."

"Elder Mike, what is more important than the work of God?" Baba fired back like a chiding father to a prodigal son. "Can't they record it for you?"

His headmaster-like style reminded me of my late friend, Pastor Dimgba Igwe who never cared a hoot about football and its associated madness. World Cup or no World Cup, Pastor Dimgba Igwe would have said the same thing: "The things of God must come first. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6: 33."

I gave Baba my word to be in church by five o'clock. Since the match was starting by 4 o'clock, at least I would watch the first half and zoom straight to church thereafter.

Meanwhile, I had been praying all along for Lionel Messi. For God, the all merciful to show Messi mercy and to finally give Messi this elusive Holy Grail of a World Cup to be the crowning glory of all his terrestrial superlative achievements in the field of football. It wasn't as if I wanted Argentina to win but Messi in particular. I wasn't alone in this.

Before I left home, Argentina was leading 2-0. Thanks to the clocklike precision of a well-taken Messi penalty and a Messi-involved goal scored by Angel Di Maria shortly after. It was Messi all the way!

As I drove to church, it was with the assurance and faith that Argentina had already won based on how it dominated the first half. It was almost like a walkover with France against the ropes being pummelled boxing-like by Argentina. But in football, it's never over until it's over.

Inside the church, I enjoyed the Carol service, the timeless and evocative Christmas songs I had heard all my 70 years on earth, the singing and dancing to commemorate the greatest event in human history: how God's Son came to the world in human form, grew up like any of us, was crucified, died and resurrected for the atonement of our sins. For our sake, God sacrificed His only Son in the divine ultimate Sophie's Choice so that "anyone who believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

In church, my mortal mind was still out there, wondering who had won the World Cup. I was tempted to surreptitiously steal a glance at my phone and the result shocked me: Argentina 2, France 2.

Eventually, I was called to the pulpit where I read from Matthew 2: 9-11. It was the story of the Three Wise men: "When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh."

Before I read the above passage I first had to capture the hearts of my listeners by confessing my Sophie's Choice experience. I then asked the congregation: "How many of you know that today is World Cup finals?" And behold, majority of hands were raised amidst a roar of applause. From the interaction, I even got to know that many of them inside church already knew the final scores, that Argentina had won 4-2 through penalty shootouts.

"Oh, I didn't know you all are accomplices," I said, pointing my finger at them humorously to evoke more laughter and applause. Then I prayed.

As you read this column, I pray the same prayer that I prayed for my listeners in the congregation. Like the Three Wise Men, God will give you wisdom to be able to face the challenges and opportunities of life. I pray that your star will shine like the star which the Wise Men saw. Whatever you are searching for, you will find it in Jesus name.

Between church and World Cup finals

Finally, like the Three Wise Men, may you find Jesus. And if you find Jesus, may there be a great turnaround in your life. May you never be the same again.

I wish you Merry Christmas and a glorious New Year of astounding achievements in 2023. May you and your children score great goals like Lionel Messi and Kylie Mbappe in all aspects of your life to win your own World Cup to the glory of God Almighty. In our forthcoming elections, may God who gave Messi victory give Nigeria and Nigerians their victory in the mighty name of Jesus, the name above all names.

Thank you, Lord!

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2022

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Imo guber: I didn't expect my application for review would be rejected - Ihedioha



## **Imo guber: I didn't expect my application for review would be rejected - Ihedioha**

Sunday Trust

March 8, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 669 words

### **Body**

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A former Governor of Imo State, Emeka Ihedioha, has expressed regrets over the judgement of the Supreme Court, which rejected his appeal for the review of the apex court's January 14 ruling that sacked him as the governor of the state.

Speaking for the first time on the March 3 court's ruling, Ihedioha said the judgement will have a long term implication on the country's jurisprudence.

He lauded his team of lawyers for raising the bar in legal arguments, stressing that he was amazed at 'how number four could become number one.'

'On Tuesday, 3rd March 2020, the Supreme Court of Nigeria gave a ruling rejecting our application to set aside its earlier judgement of 14th January 2020 on the Imo State governorship election.

'This is certainly not the outcome we wanted or we worked so hard for and I know how disappointed you must feel.

'While it is disheartening to note that your desire to introduce good governance has been halted, at least for now, it is also gratifying that our modest efforts have not gone unnoticed.

'I therefore feel a sense of pride and gratitude for the wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us,' he said.

Ihedioha, who thanked all those who played one role or another in his quest for justice, especially members of the diplomatic community for voicing their concerns for the stability of the country, commended the Chairman and members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for their vanguard role and leadership during this period.

He added: 'In particular, my special thanks go to all Imo citizens for their uncommon support, solidarity, and collective outrage. Never have a people been so united and committed to a cause.'

'You prayed, fasted, marched, protested and even cried. You sacrificed your time, resources, and endeavour for this just cause. On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand for justice and fairness.'

Imo gubernatorial election: I didn't expect my application for review would be rejected - Ihedioha

'Imo people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice. Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power.'

'I will forever be in the debt of Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of good conscience, who added their voice to condemn the injustice done in our case.'

'These are people unknown to me personally but who could not bear the illogic of turning number four to number one on the basis of a fraudulently procured result, and appealed to the Supreme Court to save itself and our judiciary.'

'Whatever may be the personal injury I suffer as a result of the miscarriage of justice, my main concern in this whole tragic episode is not about me. It has always been about the implications this judgement could have for the future of our democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count.'

'If institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, where lies the future of our democracy? That was why I sought a review of the Supreme Court judgement.'

'Even though justice was not served at the end, the well articulated dissenting judgement delivered by His Lordship, Justice Centus Nweze, has vindicated our stand. I am sure that history and posterity will be kind to him.'

'To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late journalist, Dele Giwa: 'No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary'.

'We believe that God will render the ultimate judgement. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands.'

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2020

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## **Journalist With A Heart: Nkanga Gets Reward For Courage**

Nigerian Tribune

March 16, 2019 Saturday

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Length: 659 words

### **Body**

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Multilingual investigative *journalist*, Peter Nkanga, has won the first ever Jamal Khashoggi Award for Courageous Journalism for 2019.

The award is an initiative of the US-based global human rights foundation, Inti Raymi Fund.

In a letter signed by Anas Talalqa, Human Rights Advisor at Inti Raymi Fund, the organisation congratulated Mr Nkanga for his selection for the award, noting that 'the award honours the brave journalists who expose abuse of power and corruption, share difficult truths, discuss taboo topics, and work in hostile environments.

'For true democracy to work, there must be a free press.'

Stephen Nkanga, also a former West Africa representative of the Committee to Protect Journalists, and winner of the online category of the Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting 2010, tweeted in excitement over the award:

'Today I was announced a winner of the 'Jamal Khashoggi Award for Courageous Journalism' by @IntiRaymiFund.

'I dedicate this award to all journalists and human rights defenders in #Africa. The struggle is real, but it is not over until We Win. #JusticeForJamal.'

A fierce advocate for press freedom, Peter has been at the forefront of the campaign for the rights of journalists in Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2018, he spearheaded the advocacy for the release of Jones Abiri, the publisher of Bayelsa State-based weekly paper, Weekly Source, who was arrested by operatives of the Directorate of State Security in July 2016.

He also coordinated the advocacy and protests in Nigeria on Jamal Khashoggi, the Saudi *journalist* who was murdered at the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 2, 2018.

According to Inti Raymi Fund, 'The Jamal Khashoggi Award (JKA) for Courageous Journalism was created in December 2018 to show people that journalists are not going to step aside, cannot be silenced, and deserve to be recognised for their strength in the face of adversity.'

## Journalist With A Heart: Nkanga Gets Reward For Courage

'(I have) mixed feelings: joy, happiness and a lot of sorrow. I was with the Committee to Protect Journalists based in New York for five years, and I left 2017. I'm no longer with them, but they will still work together to defend the rights of journalists worldwide,' he said in an interview with Channels Television.

How did he feel when he received the news? He said: 'I was pleased. I felt a sense of fulfillment that when you really give your best, you get rewarded. I felt that peace; that joy; but upon closer introspective reflection, I would say I felt sad; sad because though we might be saying it's a good thing, you have to remember the substance: a human being who could have been someone's father, anyone's brother, nephew or son walked into the one place where he would feel the safest in other country - your embassy, and instead of getting service which you have a right to by virtue of your nationality, you end up being hacked into pieces, like it's meat. And now we are hearing that his body was incinerated.'

'It's appalling; and that's why for me when I think about this award now, I think about: what are we Nigerians doing for our own who have suffered similar things. 32 years ago, **Dele Giwa** was killed via a parcel bomb - the same October, 1996. Thirty-three years we are entering, still nothing. It makes me worry we watch on Network Africa, we see wars everywhere; we see authoritarianism, we see totalitarianism, we see governments trying to perpetuate themselves as if it's monarchy. We see evil all around us.'

'And evil thrives when good people do nothing; but when good people do something, it's important also that they are encouraged so that they can do more, and other people (could) see them as a measuring yardstick, and say if they can do it, then I can do it.'

Interestingly, another Nigerian, United Kingdom-based Ayo Awokoya, was among the five journalists on the final shortlist for the award.

Others are Ben Mauk (United States of America), Paul Shalala from Zambia and Rabia Noor for Pakistan.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2019

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## Nollywood As Compass to National Questions

Vanguard (Lagos)

March 02, 2022

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**Length:** 953 words

**Byline:** Ngozi Emedolibe

### **Body**

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The modern film industry in Nigeria came to real reckoning when it became the purveyor of heavily-guarded information about the society, more like the investigative reporter. One can illustrate this with the film that (arguably) gave birth to the phenomenon called Nollywood: Living in Bondage.

Prior to the advent of the movie produced by Okey Ogunjiofor and Ken Nnebue, words were rife that emerging millionaires in the South East of Nigeria were probably living off the benefits of membership of certain secret cults. It was a perception, no one truly knew to what extent it held true.

Okey and Ken stepped in with the brilliant idea to address that information gap. The result was Living in Bondage, which not only established that there were secret cults but also highlighted the consequences of such fraternities as exemplified by the character, Andy, played by actor Kenneth Okonkwo.

Save from the storyline, which satisfied that information gap, there really was nothing to write home about the technical richness of the film, which is understandable, considering that the crew worked with the equipment their resources could afford at the time. Living in Bondage's storyline captivated a lot of people. It became a hit, availed fame for the actors, spawned sales and ignited a renewed interest in the movie industry as other producers simply jumped on the wagon to spin similar tales.

Overtime, the need to fill an information gap has produced other blockbusters, and Nollywood has done well in being the investigative reporter, in a playful and dramatic manner. Productions like Thunderbolt by Tunde Kelani, Issakaba directed by Lancelot Oduwa Imaseun in one way or the other played this cardinal role.

With the reinvention of the cinema culture in recent times, some films have continued on this path. There has been Last Flight to Abuja by Obi Emelonye, 93 Days by Steve Gukas, October 1 by Kunle Afolayan, and 76 by Izu Ojukwu; the other breakaway successes the industry has witnessed have come from the romantic-comedy genre.

On account of this, the film industry still yearns for authentic stories that can fill the information gap of the nation. This is why the announcement that BADAMASI: Portrait of a General, the biopic on Nigeria's former President, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida would premiere on June 12, 2021 at Cinewold, O2 Arena, London is evoking a lot of interests.

It ought to be so.

## Nollywood As Compass to National Questions

General Babangida occupies a unique rung in Nigeria's socio-political ladder. While being on everyone's face, he is also distant, mysterious, much like what Michael Jackson held for millions of his fans worldwide. The more you try to know him, the little you understand. So many issues about him have been contrived, distorted, perhaps hyped, leaving Nigerians with an obfuscate personality, yet many are still very eager to probe and understand him. Reputed to be a major participant in most (if not all) of the coups that have taken place in Nigeria, he is believed to be endowed with a unique vista of Nigeria's political space and his unpredictable nature when it comes to discussing same, roundly compounds issues for the people.

As a head of state, who chose to be addressed as military president, his reign oversaw some of the elemental points in Nigeria's history, most of which have remained fuzzy. From issues about the Nigeria-Biafra War, foiling of Dimka's coup, sacking of Shehu Shagari and Buhari, to the infamous Structural Adjustment Programme , assassination of famous *journalist*, *Dele Giwa* and the chaotic annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election, which left Nigerians with new lexicons, like 'impasse' and others, the story of Ibrahim Babangida cannot but leave so much to be desired. His background, outstandingly lowly, and how he rose to the zenith of political influence in Nigeria, makes him a subject for students of motivational speaking.

In reality, Nigerians have always been looking out for an autobiography from him, which would offer the needed explanations for some of these knotty issues in our socio-political history. This is largely why the film, BADAMASI: Portrait of a General, an authorised biopic by international filmmaker Obi Emelonye is today one of the most anticipated films ever in the history of Nollywood, which has given Nigeria the reputation of being the third largest film producing nation in the world. The thematic collage of drama, education and history therein, captures a larger segment of the society in contrast with the average Nollywood film.

For the regular fans of Nollywood films, the stellar cast, comprising Enyinna Nwigwe, Sani Danja, Ali Nuhu, Yakubu Mohammed, Kalu Ikeagwu, Okey Bakassi, Julius Agwu, Charles Inojie and Anthony Monjaro in this intense military drama, will be enthralling. Outside the regular Nollywood fans, it will avail the history-conscious individuals the opportunity to understand some of the most remarkable events that have shaped Nigeria's political and historical landscape, as seen through the eyes of some principal characters who participated in these epochal events.

With this in mind, it is understandable why Nigerians in London are eagerly looking forward to this première on a remarkable date (June 12, 2021) at the prestigious O2 Arena, which was to host Michael Jackson's ill-fated 'This is It' concert. Many influential Nigerians had reportedly tried to stop the premiere in the past by orchestrating death threats on the producer, but the time seems right now for the mother of all revelations because, in all fairness, Nigerians deserve to know who has done what in their turbulent history. Questions have been asked; answers are needed and may it serve as a compass to a better future for Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xa0



## **Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xA0**

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

July 16, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1981 words

### **Body**

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He bared his mind to Tony Ademiluyi on a plethora of issues ranging from his journey to journalism, the stories he did that won awards, his coverage of the June 12 crisis, years in exile, the controversy he courted in writing about the Chief Obafemi Awolowo legacy, the role of Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, literary accomplishments of Prof. Chinua Achebe, the technological disruption of the print media, and the misinterpretation of his Obi-tuary coinage in the last elections which nearly cost him his life.\xa0

Buzz Times: You studied history at the then University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University between 1980 and 1985 at a time when it was popular for art students to study law or the then newly created American-inspired mass communication. Why did you make the unpopular choice?

Sam Omatseye: I didn't know that it was unpopular. For me, it was fascinating. I envied eminent intellectuals who invoked history to illumine analysis and contemporary interventions. I witnessed Awolowo do it. I read pieces about it in newspapers. I also loved the power of avatars who loomed over the past and influence us today. I also was under the spell of my high school history teachers like Edeyan and Eshareture at Government College, Ughelli.i felt like history was a forest. I wanted to know where the leopards were hiding and where the squirrels squeaked.

Buzz Times: You started your journalism career as a reporter-researcher at the now-defunct Newswatch Magazine in 1987. What informed your choice of journalism as a career?

Sam Omatseye: It was a decision I made in my second year. Two people influenced my choice. **Dele Giwa** and Roger Rosenblatt. The latter more. The die was cast for me when I read Rosenblatt's prologue to Time magazine cover story on the death of Leonid Brezhnev. My first love was to be a university professor. Rosenblatt changed all that.

Buzz Times: You won the Nigerian Media Merit Award in 1991 for your coverage of Nigerian Military Air Crash in Ejigbo, Lagos. Can you tell us more about the award-winning story?

Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xA0

Sam Omatseye: It happened on a Sunday. I went to the office at Concord Press when someone passed the news to the office of a military air crash at Ejigbo. I tricked my way through military blockade into the forest swamp to see the plane. I carried some of the corpses before I was caught. I saw a classmate of mine at Federal School of Arts and Science who denied me. I was with a fellow, not a journalist, and we were beaten and subjected to barbaric drills. I felt worse than a Roman slave, more like a game animal. The soldiers had a field day. They were savages. A crowd watched impotent. They might have killed us if Abacha's convoy had not arrived. If it were today, it would have gone viral around the world. It was worse than Amakri, the journalist beaten in the old Rivers State.

Buzz Times: Are awards in journalism subjective? Can you be described as a great journalist if you never won an award?

Sam Omatseye: We should be wary of awards of any kind. They are great because they help create standards of excellence. We can't underestimate their value. We must realize that they boil down to the verdicts of a few human beings with prejudices and predilections. I have won my fair share of awards. I am, however, more interested in what I will write next. Let posterity decide who is a great journalist or writer.

Buzz Times: You covered the June 12 crisis while at the now-rested Concord, tell us the experience of covering the crisis.

Sam Omatseye: As Abiola's member of staff, I was an interested party as I was when Tinubu ran. My experience was when I was running the paper's Abuja bureau. They annulled the polls and the nation fell into turmoil. My life was in danger when the SSS detailed two cars to follow me around before I fled. Our paper was banned and I was living in hunger for a while. It was a terrible time.

Buzz Times: While in exile in the United States, you taught media and journalism at the Metropolitan State College of Denver between 1998 and 2006, tell us your experience while there. Also, were you a tenure-track academic?

Sam Omatseye: I taught part-time and also practised journalism full-time. I was a technology reporter with a top, now defunct, wireless magazine. It was fun writing for RCR Wireless News. All the tech apps we take for granted today I wrote about 20 years ago. It was fun teaching too, because I learned as I taught. Some Nigerian students came my way. I also turned my classes to cultural moments. I remember in one contemporary issues class in which I told how we slaughtered fowls and cows for parties and festivals in my country and how the Igbo has the most fun at Christmas. It was the eve of American thanksgiving. It was hilarious.

Buzz Times: While still in the US, you covered the wireless world with RCR Wireless News. Tell us about your experience with the newswire. Why aren't we seeing media moguls in Nigeria owing newswires to compete with the likes of Bloomberg, Thomson Reuters, Dow Jones etc?

Sam Omatseye: RCR Wireless News turned me into a technology nerd. I remember a dinner with some American journalists who worked with the Rocky Mountain News, and I started telling them about tech trends. One of them observed I was speaking another language because my narratives were steeped in tech terms and I forgot I was speaking to innocents. I remember what Thoreau said, that the vocations are conspiracy against the laity.

Indeed, tech reporting is a lacuna in journalism here. Investors are too locked into politics to see other virgin lands.

Buzz Times: You became the Pioneer Chairman Editorial Board of the Nation in 2006. Why did you pitch your tent with a progressive-leaning media house which was against the then-establishment at a time when politically motivated assassinations and murders were rife?

Sam Omatseye: All my life, I have been a progressive-leaning fellow. I could not change my hide, or hide it. Again, I covered Tinubu as senator and was fascinated by the flourish of his courage then and his subsequent role as a fulcrum of the fight against the military.

Buzz Times: Your article in your In Touch Column 'Awo Family without an Awo' generated a lot of brouhaha. Looking back in retrospect, can you say you were more sinned against than sinning?

Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xA0

Sam Omatseye: Indeed! The whole outcry was partisan. It was led by Ebenezer Babatope and Co and took advantage of the moment to slay me. Many invoked tribe over facts and used it as a platform to go after Tinubu. The sin was the medium, not the content of the article. My gratitude was that Mama Awolowo outlived the incident. If not, some would have called my pen a slayer. I thank Tinubu for sticking with me. He told me "Some people you know very well wanted me to fire you." It was a time of professional turncoats.

Buzz Times: You wrote 'The Biafran Ghost' which generated an avalanche of negative reactions from the Igbos as you were alleged to have attacked their hero, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu. Can you throw more light on this?

Sam Omatseye: That surprised me a great deal. It was in the early days of social media, and they tagged me anti-Igbo because I thought the Civil War might have been avoided. It became a hero-worshipping rabble making a hell out of Lazarus' drop of water. My phone was ringing every second for three weeks. Some asked me to leave the country for my safety. My driver was afraid to work.

Buzz Times: There is a joke in literary circles - Who is Africa's greatest writer? Wole Soyinka. What is his greatest work? Things Fall Apart. One of your articles seemed to suggest that Soyinka is greater than Achebe and it drew a lot of flak. Please clarify your stance.

Sam Omatseye: I also did not expect to draw a flak for that piece. Writing is a tricky affair. What you think may generate uproar and you wake up Monday a little out of ease it turns out a non-event. Some turned my piece on both writers into tribal warfare. I am neither Yoruba nor Igbo, although I have strong Yoruba ancestral links. I am Itsekiri. My mother was Urhobo. I wrote the piece as a consumer, not tribesman. I still stick to what I said in that piece. That does not diminish Achebe.

Buzz Times: You wrote an article Obi-tuary which was a pun on Peter Obi. The harmless coinage led to death threats and your going into hiding for about four months. Please throw more light on this.

Sam Omatseye: I can only say that I have been vindicated. Once the election expired, all the IPOB fellows have returned to their war shelters. They have returned to Kanu. When Obi was chief priest, the IPOB deity was in abeyance. They could coin names for Tinubu but how dare you touch their holy temple. What amazed me was how tribe turned egg heads into broken eggs, spilling odours of cant and hate. I was on my own then. The CP IGNORED my plea for protection. I had to pay for it when it was absolutely necessary.

Buzz Times: The internet and social media greatly disrupted the print media, which is now nearly obsolete globally. Will Artificial Intelligence finish off the media entirely and render mass unemployment among journalists?

Sam Omatseye: Print media will soon turn into an artefact. But we have to wait for this generation to pass. Advert revenues from people of my generation still keep us alive. Even that has dwindled. What traditional media will survive depends on how imagination can work with evolving technology. We cannot predict the future because we cannot predict technology. There is trepidation in the industry. It is a helpless era. Artificial Intelligence is going to ravage the future. It is scary for all trades. We can't see the crystal ball.

Buzz Times: You are a published author having written novels, poems, and plays. Can there be a reenactment of the literary renaissance that occurred in your youth in this present time, especially with social media distractions?

Sam Omatseye: Literature too is undergoing its own change. Time will tell if another burst of talent will create a great age. But we are always at the mercy of western endorsement. They tell us what is good. We need the sort of self-assertion that our music has brought. No one can tell us Burna Boy is bad music. It's the sort of independence we need in letters.

Buzz Times: What is your view on the students' loan act signed into law by President Bola Tinubu?

Sam Omatseye: it's a great idea. It is not just a loan but an economic policy. Let's wait for its implementation. It will allow those who cannot go to school have a shot. It is one of my favorite policies yet. It is a window of light for a generation if we take advantage

Controversial and multiple award-winning journalist, Sam Omatseye, tells his story\xA0

Buzz Times: What is your opinion on the 500-billion-naira palliative scheme put in place by President Bola Tinubu-led administration?

Sam Omatseye: It is taking from the rich and giving to the poor. It should not be seen in isolation. It is part of the war on poverty that includes infrastructure forays, farms and so on. The palliative money can be seen as a way to stimulate demand in the economy. I fear it might trigger inflation but this is a largely virgin economy, so the marketing boards could be useful here for inflation control and creating centres of demand.

Buzz Times: Most Nigerian Journalists tragically retire into poverty. How can this be averted?

Sam Omatseye: It is getting better. But as an industry we need leadership to hold owners to account.

Buzz Times: You anchor 'Platform' a political TV show. Tell us how you entered the world of broadcasting.

Sam Omatseye: Kudos goes to Dele Alake who brought the idea and TVC became my place of birth.

Buzz Times: At 62 you are now a senior citizen and have spent 36 years in the journalism profession. Will you write your memoirs anytime soon?

Sam Omatseye: Maybe on my days in Ughelli. Lots of great stories in boarding school. My formative years.

Buzz Times: Thank you very much for your time.

Sam Omatseye: You are welcome.

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2023

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## Human Rights Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

February 2, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 1461 words

**Byline:** Hameed Ajibola Jimoh Esq. -

### **Body**

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In Nigerian history, there have been some reported cases of human rights violation which had occurred in the past. Today, some of these similar breaches have come to be experienced. Only God Almighty could tell what happens tomorrow and how human rights will be respected by all and sundry. This paper aims at recalling some of these cases of human rights violation that had occurred in the past and those happening today as a parameter for determining and or curbing any of those violations from transplanting into the future.

Human rights have been said to be inviolable and inalienable rights of man, even God Almighty has by nature conferred some basic human rights on man, such as right to life, right to freedom of expression, right to freedom of liberty, right to the dignity of human person, right to freedom of association, right to conscience and religion, among others. Under the Nigerian Constitution, 1999 (as amended)-herein after referred to as the Constitution-, some of these rights have been codified in Chapter IV of the Constitution and are referred to as the 'Fundamental Rights'. Some human rights have been termed 'socio-economic rights' and have been codified in Chapter II of the Constitution which are generally (except in some certain exceptions) unenforceable or non-justiciable in our courts. The international laws on human rights have gone to recognize the importance of human rights by, first of all, having agreed as a treaty of member States or as a contract under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. Also, there are International Socio-Economic Rights which in my humble view, become binding on Nigeria (notwithstanding the Chapter II of the Constitution) by virtue of Nigeria signing same into law, which then makes same to become part of Nigerian laws.

Those rights provided under Chapter IV of the Constitution are as follows: right to life, right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of expression and the press, right to peaceful assembly and association, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria, compulsory acquisition of property (i.e. its limits) and the restriction on and derogation from those fundamental rights as well as Special jurisdiction of High Court and legal aid. While those rights are specifically guaranteed under Chapter IV of the Constitution, other international human rights laws have them provided in Articles, for instance, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the United Nations

## Human Rights Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. Provision of those human rights guaranteed under these laws is not just for fancy or camouflage rather, occasions in the past had justified their guarantee in our organic or Supreme laws for the purpose of safeguard. Victims and of course, past heroes of local and international communities had actually fought and paid with their lives and body through injuries sustained when those human rights were not guaranteed, the situation which gave rise to those rights to be guaranteed in every Constitution of every country and in international laws as a matter of importance.

The checks that this paper is making and of course, the questions that this paper is asking are: how were human rights yesterday?! While I was growing up, I heard about the assassination of the former Attorney-General of the Federation, Dele Giwa? What has happened in his case and how far about the investigation on those who denied him his right to life? How are our law enforcement agencies handling the criminal case file? I understand that up till this day, no justice has been obtained for him and his family.

There were reports online that between 1999 and 2012, there were about 100 high profile political killings in Nigeria. They are still all under investigation and not one has been resolved. Just as I had inquired above that 'Who killed Dele Giwa?'. Like other killings in Nigeria, we may never know! Also, in another report, in 2018, Nigeria was said to have been ranked 13 out of 14 countries in the 2018 Global Impunity Index released by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), making it the sixth time that Nigeria is featured on the index since 2008 that CPJ began to compile the list. There were cases of some journalists too who were killed and were denied their right to life without them or their family members securing justice among them were: 1. Bayo Ohu. He was said to be 45 years of age and an Assistant News Editor to The Guardian News Paper. He was reported to have been shot dead by unidentified assailants as he answered a knock at the front door of his house in Lagos on September 2009. The six assailants were reported to have taken his laptop and cell phone away, according to the journalist's relatives and local news reports. 2. Enenche Akogwu. 3. Fidelis Ikwuebe. 4. Nathan S. Dabak. 5. Sunday Gyang Bwede. 6. Okezie Amaruben. 7. Sam Nimfa-Jan. 8. Samson Boyi. 9. Tunde Oladepo. 10. Zakariya Isa, among others. There were other Nigerians that have been assaulted and unlawfully tortured, including journalists and activists, thereby denying them their right to personal dignity. I should, however, be quick to say that though the Nigeria Police Force and other Security Agencies of Government have been trying their efforts in resolving criminalities in the Nigerian societies, however, some of these miscreants have devised some techniques to get away with their heinous crimes without being noticed. People's support with the law enforcement agencies will also go a long way in the investigation and discovery of these hiding suspected criminals.

Today, killings have outgrown into insurgencies and killing by unsuspected gunmen or suspected herdsmen as reports have said, thereby killing thousands of innocent citizens and residents as well as travellers. Kidnapping for ransom and final killing of their hostage has become a profitable occupation to some miscreants. Political killings with brutality have desisted and or resisted pressures as a political woman, for instance, was burnt alive in the 2019 Kogi State Governorship Election. Also, just of recent in January 2020, one Abdul Fatahi Yusuf popularly as 'Oko-Oloyun', a trado-medical practitioner was assassinated somewhere on his way. Some lawyers have been detained and even tortured by some law enforcement agencies for representing their clients in their course of professional duties. Furthermore, today has experienced: disobedience to court orders by government, use of ex parte powers to remove a public officer from office, arbitrary arrest and detention in custody by some law enforcement agencies of government, discrimination on politics; religion; race; origin; ethnic or tribe, terrorism, denial of right to freedom of expression, media practitioners in partisan politics, jungle justice, etc. These are few among those violations of human rights that have been experienced today. All these happened in our lawful civil society!

Having said all the above, the questions that this paper is inquiring about are: how will tomorrow be if these and much more unmentioned are those cases of human rights situation yesterday and today?! What type of human rights are we expecting tomorrow? Will there be any human rights tomorrow? Will tomorrow not become like yesterday?! It is my belief and recommendation nevertheless, that the laws that we have of today can serve us well if we implement them. Respect for rule of law and orders made by courts will help. Corruption should be eradicated (because if there is corruption among us, we will not trust ourselves and if there is corruption in the judicial system, the executive will not obey its orders as well as others).

## Human Rights Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Finally, I humbly appeal to the government not to relent in checkmating and curtailing all criminalities that aim at denying innocent Nigerians their human rights. Nigerians too should continue to work together with the law enforcement agencies in order to assist in curbing crimes and criminalities. There should be continuous training on human rights for all government's security agencies so that they can understand the need for respect for human rights of any suspect. Also, all the above recommendations should be considered for necessary practice.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria! God bless Nigerian citizens! God bless Nigerian leadership!

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Technologies and Government's Roles in Tech Policies

**Load-Date:** February 2, 2020

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## Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 8, 2022 Tuesday

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**Length:** 2167 words

### **Body**

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A reporter with Vanguard newspaper, Tordue Henry Salem, was reported missing on October 13, 2021.

About a month later, Salem, who was then the newspaper's House of Representatives correspondent, was reported by the police to have been found dead in Abuja.

The announcement was trailed by conflicting tales from both the police and family members about how he died.

Till date, no security agency has been able to unravel the circumstances surrounding Salem's death. There is also no information that anyone is being prosecuted for the death.

While Salem's case represents one of such recent incidents of unresolved crimes against journalists, the first major reported killing of a journalist in the country was that of the founding Editor of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa.

Giwa was killed on October 19, 1986, in his house in Ikeja, Lagos, via a parcel bomb, with all accusing fingers pointing to the then-military government headed by General Ibrahim Babangida.

Like the Salem case, security agencies, rather than resolve the riddles thrown up by Giwa's murder, succeeded in muddling the waters. The Giwa case was also unresolved and no one was brought to book.

From the Giwa case to that of Salem, attacks on media practitioners have been sustained and perhaps, encouraged by the inability of state agents/agencies to bring perpetrators to book.

A recent report by a group, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), revealed that no less than 19 Nigerian journalists were brutally killed between May 29, 1999, and now, without conclusive investigation on their deaths and prosecution of the perpetrators.

The report equally showed that no less than 47 incidents of attacks against journalists, media workers and media houses occurred in the last year.

## Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists

In addition to the various international instruments guaranteeing media freedom, the Nigerian Constitution, particularly in Section 22 equally saddled the media with among others, the responsibility of ensuring accountability in public governance.

It provides that: 'The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter (Chapter two of the Constitution) and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people.'

The operations of the media also find favour within the purview of the globally recognised freedom of expression, which is a fundamental human right enjoyed by every person.

The freedom of information affords everyone the right to own opinions and the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas.

Besides the protection this right enjoys under the Nigerian Constitution, it is also protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), among others.

The Director of Public Prosecution of the Federation (DPPF), Mohammed Abubakar stressed the importance of the freedom of information to the effectiveness of the media in every society.

Abubakar said: 'For the journalists, this right (freedom of information) is very vital to their essential professional duties to seek out and share the truth.'

'Without this freedom, it is near impossible to interview citizens or request information from public officials.'

'Without this right, one cannot impart reliable and accurate information to people for them to make informed decisions about their lives.'

'At the end of the day, injustice and human rights abuses cannot be exposed,' Abubakar said.

Nigerian journalists as

angered species

Not only are cases of attack against journalists left unaddressed, the Nigerian state, as observed by the Programme Director, MRA, Ayode Longe, 10 years after the United Nations came out with the Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, has not taken any concrete action to stem the tide of wanton attacks against journalists and the media in the country.

The plan is a set of objectives, principles and actions developed by the member states of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board on 12 April 2012, intended to directly address the problem of journalists' safety and the problem of impunity.

The plan, which requires member states to among others, put in place measures to ensure the prevention of attacks on journalists, protection of media workers and prosecution of culprits, was aimed at creating a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, thus strengthening peace, democracy and sustainable development worldwide.

Longe said: 'We all know that the Federal Government has never made any serious effort to investigate attacks against journalists or to prosecute the perpetrators of such attacks.'

'Despite the dozens, even hundreds, of attacks against journalists that have been reported and documented by organisations like Media Rights Agenda and others over the years, we are yet to hear of any instance where a ***journalist*** has been killed in Nigeria and a serious investigation was conducted and the perpetrators arrested and prosecuted.'

## Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists

'This is a serious cause for concern for us because either wittingly or unwittingly, the impression is being given that it is okay to harm journalists in Nigeria and that whoever does so will get away with it because there will be no serious investigation into their actions and nothing will be done to them.'

He added that the MRA documented over 15 incidents in which officers of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) were the perpetrators, with thugs and unknown gunmen following closely the police in the number of attacks against journalists and media houses.

### Fear of escalation during 2023 elections

With the frightening state of affairs, there is heightening tension that attacks on journalists would escalate during next year's election season.

According to the International Press Centre (IPC), 74 attacks on journalists were recorded in the course of the 2019 elections.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that journalists covering gubernatorial and state assembly elections were detained, harassed, and assaulted by security agents across many states.

CPJ added that 'in January 2019, shortly before the polls, three journalists suffered life-threatening injuries from gunfire while covering a political rally in one of the states.'

### Ray of hope

The need to contextualise the fear of escalation in attacks on journalists during next year's election season and suggest ways to address it engaged experts during a two-day dialogue session in Abuja.

The event, put together by the office of the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, with support from the British Council, in commemoration of this year's edition of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

Speakers at the event, with the theme: 'Media, civil society and violence-free election in Nigeria,' which was held on November 1 and 2, noted, among others, the hostile environment in which journalists operate in the country and suggested possible ways media practitioners could safely navigate the dangerous terrain during the election season.

The speakers include Malami; the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mahmood Yakubu; the Special Adviser, Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, Femi Adesina; the Executive Secretary, National Human Rights Commission, Anthony Ojukwu; former Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Tonnie Iredia; the President, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (CSLS), Prof. Yemi Akinseye-George; the Vice Chancellor, Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State, Prof. Umaru Pate and Sam Kargbo.

Malami stressed the important role of the media in promoting democracy and their contribution to ensuring transparency in the electoral process.

He assured of the government's commitment to ending impunity for crimes against journalists and warned political players to tune down on political rhetorics capable of fuelling violence.

The AGF said: 'It is imperative to renew our call on those involved in the electioneering process to appreciate the fact that political activities are to be observed in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Law.'

'Let us join hands in making sure that all campaign utterances are humane and in conformity with global best practices, thereby contributing to a violence-free electoral process.'

## Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists

'We note with dismay, reports of some forms of attacks on journalists and voters by suspected hoodlums during elections in some parts of the country.

'The President Muhammadu Buhari-led Federal Government is committed to bringing to an end these undemocratic and uncultured activities through the administration of legally justifiable approaches on the perpetrators in order to serve as deterrence to others.

'I am pleased to say that the Federal and some State Governments have taken precautionary and proactive steps in taming the tide. Malami said.

Adesina urged the media to guide against falsehood in this election season, adding that President Buhari has promised to ensure free, fair and credible elections next year.

INEC Chairman, who was represented by Mohammed Haruna (a National Commissioner in INEC), noted that everything possible needed to be done to protect journalists during elections.

Yakubu, who noted that 45 journalists were killed last year globally, urged the Nigerian government to ensure that some ugly trends, which were emerging in the country, such as the closure of some media houses in Zamfara State, are addressed.

He identified some possible challenges to media freedom in 2023, noting that Nigerian journalists operate amid ethnic, religious and political intrigues compounded by poor funding, low remuneration, professional ethical breaches and corruption.

'Others are lack of resources and government pressure and potential surveillance (e.g Zamfara clampdown).

'Possible threats from state and non-state actors and ownership interference may force self-censorship for personal safety which will weaken investigative and data-driven journalism,' he said.

Pate noted that 'without well-informed, professional journalism that is well-protected, independent reporting and corruption or malpractices in elections cannot be exposed.'

As a way out, he demanded that governments at all levels 'should fulfil their responsibility to ensure that crimes against media professionals are investigated and prosecuted.'

He recommended the promotion and propagation of 'values that respect the media's vital role in promoting sustainable peace, democracy and credible elections in the country; emphasise the relationship between securing the safety of journalists and our freedoms.

'The media community should have the courage to overcome the strangulation of independent sources of information and financial pressures on editorial quality and critical news content,' Pate said.

Iredia urged the media to be resourceful, avoid partisanship and reject intemperate language.

He noted that the electorate is ignorant because social institutions are not allowed to function.

Iredia argued that the responsibility for voters' education should be taken from INEC and handed to appropriate government agencies like the media and the National Orientation Agency (NOA).

Prof. Akinseye-George (SAN), who was represented by Ester Ugo; Ojukwu (SAN) and Kargbo stressed the need for journalists to take the issue of safety seriously and urged security agencies to ensure the protection of media practitioners.

They highlighted the important roles the media and civil society groups play in promoting election transparency and accountability and urged them not to relent in their efforts.

## Tackling impunity for crimes against journalists

Kargbo added: 'The media and civil society must also extend their scrutiny to the electoral litigants and expose their underhand and overreaching activities that tend to undermine election tribunals.

'They must give a fair and accurate report of tribunal proceedings and must not constitute themselves into alternate tribunals by engaging in media trials.'

The DPPF, who was represented by an Assistant Director, Tamarantare Ali-Bozi, stressed the important roles prosecutors could play to curb impunity for crimes against journalists.

He said; 'Along with the Judiciary and security agencies, the prosecutor's role is essential in the prevention, protection and prosecution of culprits, to ensure journalists' safety.'

'By so doing, the prosecutor contributes to the building of a just and peaceful society and reinforce the rule of law and fundamental freedoms.'

Abubakar however noted that 'we all have a duty and obligation in conjunction with the prosecutor and other stakeholders in the justice sector, to ensure that perpetrators of electoral related crimes and crimes against journalists are fought to a standstill, not just for the sake of the journalists, but for a better society.'

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2022

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Zik's death story which turned out to be false, taught me a profound lesson -Azubuike Ishiekwene, ex-Punch  
Editor



## **Zik's death story which turned out to be false, taught me a profound lesson - Azubuike Ishiekwene, ex-Punch Editor**

Nigerian Tribune

July 22, 2023 Saturday

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**Length:** 1538 words

### **Body**

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I studied Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, even though I had been toying with the idea (of journalism) even before I entered the University of Lagos. I was the president of Gaskiya College press club. I also hosted the pirate press club, so to speak, in my higher school certificate (HSC) studies where the Principal at the time Mrs. Jelili, prohibited such things.

Finally, I enrolled to study Mass Communication after my HSC. My first real and direct contact with practice was in Part 2. During one of the long holidays, Professor Olatunji Dare, then Dr Olatunji Dare, gave me a note on the back of his card to Alhaji Najeem Jimoh who was then Editor of The Punch. I had said that I wanted to intern in a newspaper house for practical, hands-on experience. That was sometime in 1986. That was how it started. After my first degree, I went for the national youth service and returned to start formal practice in 1988/1989. I started in The Punch.

What was the real newsroom experience like when compared to the time of internship?

In the newsroom back then, the typist would type copies in triplicates or quadruples. You were more or less like the 'copy boy' - you would shift copies around in the newsroom and run errands. Occasionally, when you get good stories, you could publish in Evening Punch or so. However, as a full staff, my roles and responsibilities changed. I got the opportunity to do features, news reports and cover stories. It was quite gratifying for me back in the day, maybe because journalism was what I always wanted. I actually threw myself into it completely and I wanted to know everything as quickly as I could. I wasn't only interested in the news and features, I also took interest in the production of the newspaper itself. I also found this fascinating. Those were the days of 'cow-gum', galleyes, compugraphic machines, lithography and stories were filed in many instances by radio or telexes. Writing was basically in long hand. Yet, it was the only thing I wanted to do so I gave myself totally to it.

What was the newsroom atmosphere like? Did you wake up wanting to rush to work?

Zik's death story which turned out to be false, taught me a profound lesson -Azubuike Ishiekwene, ex-Punch Editor

We used to have gatekeepers. I don't know whether gatekeepers still exist. Maybe the word 'gatekeeper' has become obsolete because of the way content is obtained, processed and shared today. But back in the day, your first contacts were the desk heads or line editors. We had very powerful and influential line editors - either features or news editors. Early on in my career, most of us didn't have much direct contact with the editor. It was your news editor or the features editor or your line editor that you reported to directly. They were the ones who gave you assignments. You just needed to see the sort of thing that happened in the newsroom when reporters begin to return from their beats towards evening time. People like Mr. Dipo Onabanjo who was, at some point, deputy, and later a news editor in The Punch or Mr. Peter Ezeh or Mr. Demola Osinubi, who was deputy editor at the time, and later Editor. If these people gave you assignment, you had to get it done: no excuses. One of the frequent moments of trepidation was waiting for feedback from your line editor after submitting your copy. Sometimes, your copy would come back to you bleeding with red ink. Then you could get a tongue-lashing. If something happened on the main news at 4pm or late evening news and you had missed something which ought to have been in your report, God help you; or you wake up the next morning and found that you had missed a story on your beat or that you didn't particularly cover a story the way you should have, God help you.

Which of your early stories give you joy?

I can go way back to one I wrote for Evening Punch. I remember it particularly because it was one story that made me run quite some distance to the bus stop. It was first used in the Evening Punch and was promoted on Page One on the main paper the next day. I did not believe that here was my name in actual print in a national newspaper like Punch. After buying it at the news stand, I ran quite some distance way past the bus stop where I was supposed to catch my bus. I was so really excited. It was a story a visiting expatriate staff of Volkswagen who drowned in Tarkwa Bay, Lagos. I was beside myself with joy. That was one story I can't possibly forget.

The demolition of Maroko was another one. I covered the demolition and did not just news stories but also feature stories. It was a very difficult time for people there, waking up and finding you and your family were homeless! I was a ghetto boy. I grew up in Ajegunle so I really could connect with what was happening at that time. I did a number of features and in series.

Then, I guess to my discredit and shame, I was one of those who did the story of the so-called death of Nnamdi Azikiwe - the 'Zik was dead' story that turned out to be that Zik was not dead. You can imagine how embarrassed I was. It's also one that I cannot forget easily and it taught me a profound lesson. I was not the lead anchor of the story but I provided additional support and my name was listed as one of the writers. I remember that and also remember the lessons I learnt therefrom. Those were moments I can't forget easily.

How would you describe your rise from a reporter/writer to Editor and media manager?

It is a humbling experience. But keep in mind that no man can rise to the top of their profession all by themselves. Of course, I do agree that hardwork and diligence are very important but you must not also forget that you work with a team. You provide leadership at different levels. You also rise because of the collaboration work of others in the newsroom, those you work with. No one person gets all the credit for all of that. I think my case is not different. Over the years, I found that whatever you choose to do, God helping you and you apply yourself diligently, with the support of your team, family and friends and all of that, you can go as far as you want to go. From the get go, I never had any doubt in my mind what I wanted to do or what I wanted to make of my profession. You just needed to be persistent, and keep working to improve yourself.

When you compare journalism when you started and what it has become now, what would have been your wish for the profession?

I think it was Bob Marley who sang that 'every man thinks his burden is the heaviest'. If I adapt that, one can say that every generation tends to think that its own burden as a generation is the heaviest. I do not make light of what journalism practice has become or presume that journalism, 20 or 30 years ago was better. Every generation faces its own peculiar challenges. One should be humble enough to admit that. But, of course, the job is done differently today from how it was done then. It is also important to keep in mind that 20/30 years ago, especially before the

Zik's death story which turned out to be false, taught me a profound lesson -Azubuike Ishiekwene, ex-Punch  
Editor

advent of the internet and modern technology and research that has taken us to where we are, you also had far smaller audiences to engage than we have today. Also, we had a defined news cycle; it's nothing to be compared with today's 24/7 cycle.

I also think that, in a certain sense, I've heard people say and I think it was also true of me, that young people in school sort of depended on the press as a means of learning English language. I followed **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, for many years as a student; I worshipped at their altar, by which I mean that when they wrote their columns in Daily Times, Concord, or later, Newswatch, I adored every bit of their writing. I think that quality in Nigeria today is rarer. Of course, today there are more opportunities for exposure and the demonstration of your skills are far greater. Competition has also significantly increased the pressure on practitioners for quality. There are citizens who are journalists who never trained as journalists and who are doing a great job. It's a totally different space and the experiences are different. But there is no doubt in my mind at all that comparatively, the resources at the disposal of the modern **journalist** to get their job done is far greater and the knowledge is broader but then, all of these things ultimately depend on how you use them. That ultimately is the challenge. How are we able to learn with the resources and expand the knowledge we have at our disposal to improve the quality of our work.

Who are some of your colleagues with whom you toiled on the streets back then?

There are many of them. Peter Adebola is one of them. He lives in Canada now. Adebola and I were colleagues at the University of Lagos; Tunde Odediran, also. He has branched out from journalism to IT and is a certified IT specialist. Bukola Bandele and Tuope Oluwatukesi, too, then known as Tuope Omare, who is now a proprietress in Ibadan. I also had the fortune of being classmates with Mr. John Momoh during our first degree. He had done a diploma before he returned to study for a first degree. He was already a household name by the time and when I say that we were classmates, it does not mean that we are mates in terms of accomplishments. I recognise that. But we were classmates for the degree programme.

**Load-Date:** July 23, 2023

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## Obi And His Obedient Tyrants

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

July 20, 2022 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1128 words

**Byline:** CYRUS ADEMOLA

### **Body**

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CYRUS ADEMOLA

I've always believed that democracy is about robust and in-depth discussion; a discussion that fosters dissent and gives opposition the ample space to thrive; a discussion that promotes opposing views, even controversial ones. I've always believed that such freedom -freedom of speech, freedom to express oneself without fear or favour - is the beauty of democracy.

This belief is so general, so presumptive, so speculative that it needs no analysis. It needs no lithium test. It needs no scientific inquiry. It's the great speculation of the ages. It's the reason why men waged war against tyranny. It's the reason for every revolution against dictatorship. It's an inalienable right that brave men have died for and some have experienced the most vile, brutal and painful treatment of injustice from the evil powers of the world.

In this part of the world, this belief, this axiom, underscored the resilient spirits of men like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Tony Enahoro, Sir. Ahmadu Bello and other great men of yore, who fought tooth and nail to put an end to colonial rule and its suppressive imperial structure. After the fall of the first and second republics, it's this undying speculation of faith in democracy that led men like Pa. Okutokun, Sani Shehu, Prof. Wole Soyinka and many others into exile during the dark age of Abacha. Many whose names have been written in the sand of history and many who have been forgotten because no one is there to write their story and tell of their trial and triumph in the war against tyranny and dictatorship are part of those who have been lured by this great speculation - the belief that every man has the right to pursue life, liberty and his own happiness. Every man has the right to speak his mind.

My own uncle, Mr. Dare Babarinsa, veteran journalist and now columnist, embodied the living truth of this great speculation. He was one of those who fought tooth and nail against the preponderance of the Abacha's administration. He was one of the founders of Tell magazine. The magazine which quickly became the darling of many Nigerians after the heyday of Dele Giwa's Newswatch. His writings and publications became foreboding menace towards those who were enemies of truth. If the immortal words of George Orwell are true that "in the time

## Obi And His Obedient Tyrants

of universal deceit, truth telling becomes a revolutionary act", then my uncle and his coterie were revolutionists in their days.

Because this great speculation, this belief in the ability to hold a dissenting view is so ingrained in the soul and breast of every human, it becomes superfluous to try to prove it to anyone. It seems that anyone who disagrees with this line of thinking is a tyrant or tyrant in making. That's why it comes as a surprise to me when I saw the online trend of Peter Obi's supporters, particularly on Facebook and Twitter. Their intolerant, vicious, vitriolic and vile approach to any dissenting view is at best alarming and at worst repulsive. It's even more shocking that their candidate, a southeast politician, who was once the governor of Anambra State, appears to be a democrat and a peaceful man.

Even glancing at a distance, no one will mistake Peter Obi as someone who is vile or a stereotypical troublemaking politician. His charisma, calm smile and robust brilliant mind reveal him to be a gentleman who espouses the principles of civility and democracy. But such can't be said about his followers. His online supporters are condescending, vitriolic and sharp-tongued. They see any criticism against the man's policy as a personal vendetta. They view every dissent as an attack on their candidate. They want to ride the horse of tyranny to make their candidate the president.

In a world where you can't have a contrarian view, where every dissent is clampdown on with tyrannical disdain, little wonder it's being said that democracy indeed dies in darkness. This is the world of Obi mob supporters. It's heart-wrenching to watch.

A good example is their recent rampage against social media influencer and ex Jonathan aide, Reno Omokri. Needless to say, Omokri has been a vehement, open and unashamed supporter of the People Democratic Party's candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. According to Omokri, the APC has failed the country in leadership, governance and security. Also, he doesn't see Peter Obi winning the popular vote based on his political calculation and permutations. Hence, he's pitching his tent with PDP.

Now, for Peter Obi's supporters, Omokri has committed the unpardonable sin. Obi's supporters have tagged themselves #Obedient. And anyone who has decided not to be obedient to the cause of their political mascot is therefore an infidel. He doesn't deserve any human dignity. He doesn't deserve to be seen as a Nigerian. He's "an enemy of Nigerians." He's a pariah.

What's more, Omokri has sinned against heaven and earth. He should be removed from any social media space. That's the reason these little tyrants, these Orwellian thought-police have begun to campaign on Twitter for the removal of Omokri. Their groupthink philosophy is that if he doesn't agree with them, he doesn't deserve to have any social media platform to express his views. In the alternate reality of social media, he should be burnt in an outer court.

Omokri is not the only one that bears the brunt of holding an opposing view. Almost every influential Nigeria right now on Twitter is afraid to express their belief and campaign for their chosen candidate because of the fear that Obedient tyrants will come for them. They'll also lose their cyber space and end up an online nonentity. This is alarming.

For people who claim that they want to save Nigeria from the verge of tyranny, it's ironic and pathetic that they have become tyrants themselves. They've built around them an impenetrable bubble that doesn't permit anyone else in. This bubble is veiled and opaque that they themselves can't look outside and see their opposition as fellow humans, fellow Nigerians. After all, political theatre is a marketplace of ideas. If your idea is strong and convincing enough to resonate with the populace, why try to bully others into silence? Why try to stifle dissent?

Perhaps the reason could be that the ideas and ideals Peter Obi espouses are not strong enough in their own merit that there's a need to silence the opposition. Political candidate can't be superimposed on anyone. What we need aren't some online tyrants that call others names and threaten to deprive them of their social media space. What we need is a robust discussion about where our nation is going and who is more qualified to take us there. Enough of this mob rule.

## Obi And His Obedient Tyrants

\*Ademola, a freelance ***journalist***, writes from Lagos via Contact: [cyrusademola@gmail.com](mailto:cyrusademola@gmail.com)

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2022

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## **Press Freedom - Report Indicts Govt, Govs, Senators As Greatest Violators**

Vanguard (Lagos)

July 01, 2021

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**Length:** 968 words

**Byline:** Omeiza Ajayi and Fortune Eromosele

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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The Nigeria Union of Journalists NUJ and Media Foundation for West Africa have released a report detailing atrocities, murder, torture and rights abuses of journalists practising in Nigeria, naming the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, state governors, NASS members, politicians, security agencies, among others, as the biggest violators of press freedom.

The report, entitled "The State of Media Freedom in Nigeria", released at a briefing in Abuja yesterday, focused primarily on the last six years of President Buhari in power.

It listed journalists killed and those whose deaths were yet to be resolved as well as those harassed by State actors and beaten up in their line of duty. Media houses harassed by security operatives, were also included in the report.

National President of NUJ , Chris Isiguzo, while speaking during the presentation, said practising in Nigeria is becoming a dangerous venture and bemoaned the repeated harassment of journalists called on State actors to desist from such.

The report read: "Politicians have realized that to acquire power, either through legitimate means or through outright manipulations, they need to obtain the connivance of the media.

"And politicians and political office holders also know that to retain power, they require the support of the media, ditto those who wish to ascend to power.

"Even those whose positions are threatened suddenly realize the need to pocket the media. These elements have compounded the problems of the media.

"The media in Nigeria have suffered a number of setbacks over the years, with the obvious but unsuccessful attempts by government to control them. There are equally increased harassment and killings of journalists in the country.

"These acts are daily causing frustrations among media professionals in the country. Politicians, both in and out of government are increasingly filing legal cases against journalists who especially report on allegations of corruption, while security operatives have been used to block access for reporters in several areas.

## Press Freedom - Report Indicts Govt, Govs, Senators As Greatest Violators

"Acts of impunity against journalists, particularly murder, is the ultimate form of censorship. These unfortunately, are likely to continue unabated. From the murder of **Dele Giwa** in 1986 through a parcel bomb, the killers are yet to be fished out and brought to book.

"Since then several attacks have been recorded against journalists, in spite of the fact that attacks against journalists and media equipment are illegal under international humanitarian law and the Nigerian legal system.

"Clear signals indicate that such killings are sponsored by desperate politicians and high office holders who had things they wished kept secret.

"For the period being reviewed, 2016- 2020, we have recorded some of the highest levels of violence targeting journalists in the country. These statistics constitute an indictment of the poor record on democracy and rule of law in Nigeria.

"The lack of transparency, corruption and politics of exclusion often result in frustrations and violent rivalries, creating dangerous environments in which journalists become easy targets for powerful forces intent on suppressing dissent and evading public accountability.

"The increasing rate of violations of media professionals and members of their families, is a clear signal that journalists are now being deliberately targeted as a result of the work they do.

"At least 300 violations affecting about 500 journalists, media workers and media houses have been recorded in Nigeria under the regime of President Buhari.

"On April 11, 2016 around 3am, an unknown gunman kidnaped Tope Kuteyi, the Channels TV correspondent in Owerri from his home. The kidnapper later made a ransom demand of N15million.

"On December 2016, the Department of State Services in Lokoja, Kogi State, arrested Friday Ogungbemi, publisher of Policy and Lawmaker Magazine and detained him without trial.

"This action which was at the instance of Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State was another example of how prominent Nigerians react to Media scrutiny.

"Friday Ogungbemi's alleged crime was authoring an Editorial on the Chief of Staff to the Governor of Kogi State, Mr Edward Onoja.

"On January 17, 2017, the Borno State Police Command arrested and detained Inuwa Bwala, Publisher of National Trail newspaper in Abuja, at the instance of a top politician in 2016.

"This **Journalist** had to send an SOS to the Nigeria Union of Journalists and friends that there was a threat to his life in detention. It took the intervention of the Union to secure his release.

"On January 13, 2017, the Police CID in Area 10 Garki, Abuja, arrested and detained Desmond Utomwen, publisher of Freshnews, an online newspaper, at the instance of a serving Customs officer, Inspector Umaru Faru.

"Desmond was working on a story which allegedly was critical of the said officer. Desmond was released following the intervention of Police AIG Usman Shehu who received a complaint from the NUJ.

"The union demanded for a thorough investigation by the customs of the alleged corruption by Umaru Faru, but to no effect.

"On January 19, 2017, the police arrested Premium Times Publisher, Dapo Olorunyomi alongside the Judiciary Reporter, Evelyn Okakwu, and held them for several hours at Police Headquarters in Abuja.

"This was at the instance of the Chief of Army Staff then, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai who complained about defamation of character.

Press Freedom - Report Indicts Govt, Govs, Senators As Greatest Violators

"On April 19, 2017, some men of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Nigeria Police Force, arrested and detained Midat Joseph, correspondent of the Leadership newspaper for being critical of Kaduna State Government and the Governor Nasir el-Rufai's administration.

"The **journalist** later released on bail granted by a court after spending two nights at the Police cell."

Vanguard News Nigeria

**Load-Date:** July 1, 2021

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## **Shekarau Urges Journalists to Expose Bad Leaders**

Leadership (Abuja)

October 19, 2010 Tuesday

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**Length:** 335 words

**Byline:** Kazeem Akintunde

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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The governor of Kano State, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau, has urged journalists in the country to expose leaders that have contributed or are contributing to the problems the nation is facing today.

He also implored media practitioners to project those leaders that are doing their best in the upliftment of the society.

He disclosed this in Lagos at the public presentation of a book titled, "Murder of Dele Giwa, The Answered Question" written by Mr. Richard Akinnola, as part of activities lined up by the Nigeria Union of Journalists, (NUJ) to mark the 24th anniversary of the gruesome murder of Mr. Dele Giwa, the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch Magazine.

Alhaji Shekarau who was represented on the occasion by Barrister Haruna Dederi, the commissioner for Information, said it was by so doing that the ideals which Giwa believed in and died for would not be in vain.

He said if media practitioners continue to expose bad eggs in the society, the positive turn around of the country would be easier to achieve.

He described the late Dele Giwa as a fine and courageous journalist who was not afraid to pay the supreme sacrifice for what he believed in and urged his colleagues not to allow his memory to die.

"I plead with you to continue to expose bad eggs and at the same time, project those leaders that are doing good for the benefit of the nation," he said.

He also praised the contributions of the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi in exposing and attempting to bring to justice those that were behind the death of Giwa, adding that Nigeria would never forget him.

Shekarau later bought five copies of the book for N1 million.

The Chairman of the occasion, Professor Itsay Sagay, said 24 years after the death of Giwa, those that were behind his murder have not been brought to justice, warning that the culture of impunity should not be allowed to fester in the country again.

## Shekarau Urges Journalists to Expose Bad Leaders

Sagay said the only way to do that now was to ensure that free and fair elections are organised next year where the votes of the people would count.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2010

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## A peep into history (III)

Nigerian Tribune

May 21, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1840 words

### **Body**

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A young man was led into my office as the editor of The PUNCH one day decades ago; his name is Ibe Eresia-Eke (where is he now?), Executive Chairman (as title-crazy Nigerians often over-burden the title 'Chairman' as if, standing alone, it is not 'executive' enough!) of Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. He should be happy but he was not because fire was on his rooftop. His advert, which moved me to cause him to be interviewed, is as captured below titled 'Don't break IBB's heart' Please read:

'The temptation has been strong to write to the President, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, about the blatant and disgraceful use of State power to crush and annihilate opposition party governments in Rivers State. But knowing how much effort he has personally and gracefully invested in the democratic process, it may just be too heart-breaking if he knows that some powerful people in my state are now practically spreading petrol over his carefully-constructed edifice of democracy, ready to strike the match. The cases are legion now. Some of them have already been profusely reported especially in the Sunday magazine (TSM). And certainly, many more, even much more shocking, will be published by the fearless media outfits around, given the manner the power drunkards are carrying on.'

In the interest of our nation, however, it has become almost imperative to corroborate much of what the press is doing to fight the wild anti-democratic trends in our dear state. I will attempt to do this by recounting some experience that one has had lately as Chairman of Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, one of the LGA's controlled by the opposition party in Rivers State, but where can I start from; what do I state; what do I leave out, in this short piece? Anyway, let's just take a case and be brief.

During the councillors bye-elections of Saturday, 19th July, 1992, state force literally over-ran the LGA beating, intimidating indigenes of the area, and destroying properties. Naturally, people reached for the recesses of their houses to hide. Voters had to face the concern of escaping with life, a fortiori standing on the queue to vote. Of course, this sounds so much like fiction. It is almost incredible. But we can list even the numbers of vehicles employed in the operation, namely: RV 8119 DA, RV 8075 DA (both belonging to the Rivers State Transport Corporation). And to clear any stubborn doubts about the source of the vehicles, there was also a Toyota Jeep with registration number 25 RSVG 9. The vehicles, loaded with uniformed policemen and thugs, fired with the zeal of men on a State mission and armed to the teeth to do havoc to persons and property.

### A peep into history (III)

As you may have guessed, many indigenes, including those standing in the election on the platform of the opposition party, were bundled to far-away Port Harcourt, the seat of power, to be locked away and (to be)thoroughly tortured. The private house of Dr. Kingdom Ogbangba, Deputy Minority Leader in the State House of Assembly, was verily vandalised and damaged. Let us leave out things too obscene to be published in a respectable medium like this! Of course, you may already have guessed this: At the end of the day, 'election results' were announced and landslide victories were recorded. It may be reasonable to ask: What did the police in the area do when all this was being perpetrated? But what does a conscientious and upright police DPO and his men do in the face of 'superior onslaught', knowing the command structure of our police system? Indeed, as if to add salt to injury, shortly after an earlier DPO was transferred out of the area, probably for being uncooperative, his successor faces the same fate already. A local paper has, in fact, reported that the DPO has been threatened by kulaks with the right party connections with 'immediate transfer' from the LGA. Of course, much of all this only goes to corroborate and confirm reports of intention to destabilise; annihilate the local government controlled by the 'opposition party' and impeach its Chairman by 'all means possible'. Part of the strategy has been to spread all manner of calumny against the local government and its Chairman to cause disaffection in the local community, hoping to garner a major unrest within the area and then nullify the government and appoint a sole administrator. Given the grassroots support of the government, however, and the grace of Almighty God, none of their wishes have materialised.

But the fight is being intensified through all means as promised. Already police have reported that at least three of their most influential agents... have made very desperate efforts to use our councillors by offering them huge sums of money to sign a document containing cooked-up allegations against my person (the LG chairman). The reports have, in fact, pleaded with the police to 'commence thorough investigations to find out their financiers. I will not relent until their allegations against the Deputy Governor are proved' The outcome of the investigation has not reached my office but what is evident is that four formally loyal councillors have resigned. Many believe they fell for the huge financial inducements offered them. The whole game-plan is to weaken the numerical strength of the loyal councillors, inject their own men and, finally, impeach or turn me into a stooge taking instructions from Government House. Whether this works or not remains to be seen.

For good measure, let me add that given the devilish desperation with which they are purchasing their fancy 'by all means', whatever happens to me should be traced to them. To be sure, this tendency to deal with the LGA governments of the opposite parties all over the State is the same. But the import of all this comes once one extrapolates what is happening in Rivers State to all the states in the federation. Viewed from that perspective, it comes out clearly that the gravitation is towards annihilating the opposite parties even at the Local government level. Gradually, this tendency may infect the entire nation and two consequences are possible: That all should acquiesce and join one party or resist and fight back. Whichever way the reaction comes, it spells the end of democracy once again.

This is why I had thought that, maybe, IBB should not see this because given the investment in time, men and resources that have gone into erecting the democratic edifice this time; these trends may break his heart. But one thing is very certain, the security forces must do something fast to arrest the 'hoodlums against democracy' in whatever guise they may appear, be they deputy (or despotic) governors!

How did events eventually play out? That was during the unending transition to civil rule rigmarole of IBB beginning in the 1980s, which eventually climaxed in the June 12, 1993 elections which MKO Abiola won fair and square but which was annulled by the IBB junta, throwing the country into a political logjam or impasse that was not resolved until after five despotic years of the vilest dictator of them all, Gen. Sani Abacha, and the benevolent dictatorship of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, stained, however, with the death in detention of Abiola. With the benefit of hindsight today, can we not say that the confidence reposed by Eresia-Ike in IBB as the defender of democracy was misplaced, given that the self-same IBB annulled the freest and fairest election in the land, thereby wasting the huge resources expended on the process and truncating democracy? The shenanigans that caused Eresia-Ike to run from pillar to post took place some four decades ago: Can we say we have made appreciable progress or are we still trapped in the woods? Do opposition parties fare better today? I leave everyone to judge!

### A peep into history (III)

If he looks back today at his illustrious but chequered career, I think I can guess a few things that must have broken IBB's heart. One is the parcel bomb that killed the celebrated [journalist, Dele Giwa](#), on 19 October, 1986 during IBB's watch. The unresolved nature of the dastardly murder must be giving the former military president sleepless nights. More so if the reported last words of [Giwa](#): 'This must be from Mr. President' continues to ring in IBB's ears. The Major Gideon Gwaza Orkar coup of 22 April, 1990 is another incident that may give IBB heartbreak. IBB escaped by the whiskers but not before the coupists had taken him and his government to the cleaners. The terrible things said about IBB, if they continue to ring in his ears, may trouble his heart. The outgoing government of Gov. Samuel Ortom of Benue State must have opened old wounds and pointedly directed an arrow at IBB's heart when, last week, he announced a decision to honour Orkar by not only naming a street after him but by also justifying some of his allegations against IBB and his administration.

The 'SAP with a human face' letter written by former President Olusegun Obasanjo to IBB was said to have unsettled and rattled the gap-toothed self-styled military president. Not given to pulling punches, Obasanjo pummeled IBB and his government hard, accusing both of putting Nigerians through unthinkable suffering and unmitigated misery. Whenever IBB thinks of a man who hits you hard but you dare not hit him back, his heart may break. Next is the IMF debate during which Nigerians rejected the IMF loan and its conditions but IBB and Chief Olu Falae, at first IBB's Secretary to the Federal Government and later Minister of Finance; went ahead against popular opinion to accept the loan. That decision laid the foundation for the decimation of the Naira. If the national currency has lost a huge percentage of its old value today, the blame rests with IBB and Falae, aka Mr. SAP. Which conscientious leader will remember that and not suffer heartbreak?

I can go on and on! The execution, on 5 March, 1986, of Gen. Mamman Jiya Vasta, said to be a childhood and bosom friend of IBB, by the same IBB, cannot but give anyone a heartbreak, especially when, years later, Gen. Domkat Bali, who had announced to a bewildered nation the execution of the alleged coupists 'about an hour ago' was quoted as saying he was not sure they were right in the decision they took! Who will hear that and his heart will not break, especially each time the media decides to conduct interviews with Vatsa's widow and children that opened old wounds? IBB's decision to step aside on 27 August, 1993 was not an easy one. Reports had it that his wife and glamorous First Lady, Maryam, never brooked that. As editor of The PUNCH, we published a daily 'Countdown to Democracy... so and so days to go' which impeccable sources said enraged Maryam. 'Who told them we are going!' she was quoted as saying! But go, they did and could that not have broken IBB's heart? IBB stepped aside and has not been able to step back in ever since. Seeing Obasanjo and, next, Muhammadu Buhari achieve the feat of military Head of State and, later, civilian President, is that not enough to break IBB's heart?

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2023

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## Supreme Court Judgment Portends Grave Implications For Judiciary, Democracy, Electoral Process — Ihedioha

Nigerian Tribune

March 8, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 743 words

### **Body**

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Sacked governor of Imo State, Emeka Ihedioha, on Sunday, broke his silence over last Tuesday's Supreme Court judgment, noting that the judgment portended great implications for the nation's electoral process, the judicial system and the future of democracy.

According to Ihedioha, in a statement he personally signed, the future of democracy was particularly threatened if 'institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of the rule of law' thwarted the wishes of the people in a cynical manner.

Though Ihedioha decried that justice was still not served in the end, he pointed to the dissenting judgment delivered by Justice Centus Nweze as one that vindicated his stand that the Supreme Court judgement of 14th January 2020 should have been in his favour.

While noting that he was proud of having served out the genuine mandate given to him by Imo people, for a short while, Ihedioha said he hoped for the ultimate judgment by God and opportunities to serve people of Imo State.

He lampooned those 'rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people and brazenly stealing the people's mandate', noting that he took solace in God rendering the ultimate judgment.

It will be recalled that the Supreme Court had last week dismissed an application filed by Ihedioha asking it to set aside a judgement of 14th January 2020 that declared Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) the Imo State governor.

Though one out of seven justices dissented, the court, led by the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) Tanko Mohammed, had held that it lacked powers to sit on an appeal in its own judgment delivered on merit and in accordance with dictates of the law and justice.

The statement read, in parts, 'Whatever may be the personal injury I suffer as a result of the miscarriage of justice, my main concern in this whole tragic episode is not about me.'

'It has always been about the implications this judgement could have for the future of our democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count.'

Supreme Court Judgment Portends Grave Implications For Judiciary, Democracy, Electoral Process —  
Ihedioha

'If institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of the rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, where lies the future of our democracy? That was why I sought a review of the Supreme Court judgement.

'Even though justice was not served at the end, the well-articulated dissenting judgement delivered by His Lordship, Justice Centus Nweze, has vindicated our stand. I am sure that history and posterity will be kind to him.

'To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late ***journalist, Dele Giwa***: 'No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary'.

'We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands.

'While it is disheartening to note that your desire to introduce good governance has been halted, at least for now, it is also gratifying that our modest efforts have not gone unnoticed.

'I, therefore, feel a sense of pride and gratitude for the wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us.

'On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand justice and fairness. Imo people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice.

'Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power.

'I will forever be in the debt of Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of a good conscience, who added their voice to condemn the injustice done in our case.

'It has been a great privilege to serve the people of Imo State as Governor. I am proud to have been the recipient of their genuine mandate. I will forever cherish the support, solidarity and cooperation given to me during my tenure.

'My belief in the ultimate triumph and supremacy of the will of the people remains intact. But I am firmly resolved NEVER to give up on the struggle for a better Imo State. And for a better governed Nigeria.'

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2020



## Press Freedom: Report indicts FG, govs, NASS, others

The Sun (Nigeria)

June 30, 2021 Wednesday

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**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** Cyril

### **Body**

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From Fred Itua, Abuja

A report detailed atrocities, murder, torture and rights abuse of journalists practicing in Nigeria, has indicted the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, State Governors, National Assembly, politicians, security agencies, among others.

The report tagged: "The State of Media Freedom in Nigeria", and released by the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Media Foundation for West Africa, at a press conference in Abuja, focused primarily on the last six years of President Buhari.

The report listed journalists killed and whose deaths were yet to be resolved. It also listed journalists harassed by State actors and beaten up in their line of duty. Media houses harassed by security operatives, were not spared from the indictment.

National President of NUJ , Chris Isiguzo, while speaking on the contents of the report, said practicing in Nigeria is Beckingham dangerous venture. He bemoaned the repeated harassment of journalists.

Part of the report read: "Politicians have realised that to acquire power, either through legitimate means or through outright manipulations, they need to obtain the connivance of the media. And politicians and political office holders also know that to retain power, they require the support of the media, ditto those who wish to ascend to power.

"Even those whose positions are threatened suddenly realise the need to pocket the media. These elements have compounded the problems of the media. The media in Nigeria have suffered a number of setbacks over the years,

## Press Freedom: Report indicts FG, govs, NASS, others

with the obvious but unsuccessful attempts by government to control them. There are equally increased harassment and killings of journalists in the country.

"These acts are daily causing frustrations among media professionals in the country.

Politicians, both in and out of government are increasingly filing legal cases against journalists who especially report on allegations of corruption, while security operatives have been used to block access for reporters in several areas.

"Acts of impunity against journalists, particularly murder, is the ultimate form of censorship. These unfortunately, are likely to continue unabated. From the murder of **Dele Giwa** in 1986 through a parcel bomb, the killers are yet to be fished out and brought to book. Since then several attacks have been recorded against journalists, in spite of the fact that attacks against journalists and media equipment are illegal under international humanitarian law and the Nigerian legal system.

"Clear signals indicate that such killings are sponsored by desperate politicians and high office holders who had things they wished kept secret. For the period being reviewed, 2016- 2020, we have recorded some of the highest levels of violence

targeting journalists in the country. These statistics constitute an indictment of the poor record on democracy and rule of law in Nigeria.

"The lack of transparency, corruption and politics of exclusion often result in frustrations and violent rivalries, creating dangerous environments in which journalists become easy targets for powerful forces intent on suppressing dissent and evading public accountability.

"The increasing rate of violations of media professionals and members of their families, is a clear signal that journalists are now being deliberately targeted as a result of the work they do. At least 300 violations affecting about 500 journalists, media workers and media houses have been recorded in Nigeria under the regime of President Buhari.

"On April 11, 2016 around 3. Am, an unknown gunman kidnaped Tope Kuteye, the Channels TV correspondent in Owerri from his home. The kidnapper later made a ransom demand of N15million.

"On December 2016, the Department of State Service in Lokoja, Kogi State, arrested Friday Ogungemi, publisher of Policy and Lawmaker Magazine and detained him without trial. This action which was at the instance of Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State was another example of how prominent Nigerians react to Media scrutiny. Friday Ogungemi's alleged crime was authoring an Editorial on the Chief of Staff to the Governor of Kogi State, Mr Edward Onoja.

"On January 17, 2017, the Borno State Police Command arrested and detained Inuwa Bwala, Publisher of National Trial newspaper in Abuja, at the instance of a top politician in 2016. This **Journalist** had to send an SOS (Save Our Soul) to the Nigeria Union of Journalists and friends that there was threat to his life in detention. It took the intervention of the Union to secure his release.

"On January 13, 2017, the Police CID in Area 10 Garki, Abuja, arrested and detained Desmond Utomwen, publisher of Freshnews, an online newspaper, at the instance of a serving Customs officer, Inspector Umaru Faru. Desmond was working on a story which allegedly was critical of the said officer. Desmond was released following the intervention of Police AIG Usman Shehu who received a complaint from the NUJ. The Union demanded for a thorough investigation by the customs of the alleged corruption by Umaru Faru, but to no effect.

"On January 19, 2017, the police arrested Premium Times Publisher, Dapo Olorunyomi alongside the Judiciary Reporter, Evelyn Okakwu, and held them for several hours at Police Headquarters in

### Press Freedom: Report indicts FG, govs, NASS, others

Abuja. This was at the instance of the Chief of Army Staff then, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai who complained about defamation of character.

"On April 19, 2017, some men of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Nigeria Police Force, arrested and detained Midat Joseph, correspondent of the Leadership newspaper for being

critical of Kaduna State Government and the Governor Nasir el-Rufai's administration. The *journalist* later released on bail granted by a court after spending two nights at the Police cell."

The post Press Freedom: Report indicts FG, govs, NASS, others appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2021

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## Imo: God'll Judge Supreme Court Justices –Ihedioha

The Sun (Nigeria)

March 9, 2020 Monday

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**Length:** 747 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Godwin Tsa,

Emeka Ihedioha has handed over the Justices of the Supreme Court that truncated his seven months reign as governor of Imo State to God.

The court had on January 14, 2020 replaced him with Senator Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressive Congress (APC) after holding that his (Ihedioha) emergence was based on wrong computation by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The apex court had equally dismissed his application for the setting aside of the judgment in it's March 3 for lacking in merit.

But in a statement in Abuja, yesterday, the former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives said he has resigned his faith in God.

Ihedioha who described the judgment of the Supreme Court as a fraud said God will be the ultimate judge.

He, however, singled out Justice Centus Nweze who entered a dissenting judgment in his favour for praise.

The statement read: "On Tuesday 3rd March 2020, the Supreme Court of Nigeria gave a ruling rejecting our application to set aside its earlier judgement of 14th January 2020 on the Imo State governorship election. This is certainly not the outcome we wanted or we worked so hard for and I know how disappointed you must feel. While it is disheartening to note that your desire to introduce good governance has been halted, at least for now, it is also gratifying that our modest efforts have not gone unnoticed. I therefore feel a sense of pride and gratitude for the

## Imo : God'll Judge Supreme Court Justices –Ihedioha

wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us.

"Permit me to use this opportunity to thank all those who played one role or another in this historic quest for justice and truth. I must thank members of the diplomatic community for voicing their concerns for the stability of our country. I commend the Chairman and Members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for their vanguard role and leadership during this period.

"In particular, my special thanks go to all Imo citizens for their uncommon support, solidarity, and collective outrage. Never have a people been so united and committed to a cause. You prayed, fasted, marched, protested and even cried. You sacrificed your time, resources, and endeavour for this just cause. On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand for justice and fairness. Imo people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice. Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power.

"I will forever be in the debt of Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of good conscience, who added their voice to condemn the injustice done in our case. These are people unknown to me personally but who could not bear the illogic of turning number four to number one on the basis of a fraudulently procured result, and appealed to the Supreme Court to save itself and our judiciary.

"Whatever may be the personal injury I suffer as a result of the miscarriage of justice, my main concern in this whole tragic episode is not about me. It has always been about the implications this judgement could have for the future of our democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count. If institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, where lies the future of our democracy? That was why I sought a review of the Supreme Court judgement. Even though justice was not served at the end, the well articulated dissenting judgement delivered by His Lordship, Justice Centus Nweze, has vindicated our stand. I am sure that history and posterity will be kind to him.

"To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late journalist, Dele Giwa: "No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary'. We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands."

The post Imo: God'll Judge Supreme Court Justices –Ihedioha appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2020



## The road to the Sabres

The Punch

April 9, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1758 words

### Body

When I look back to 1996, the year I started my first job as a *journalist*, it feels like we were living in a prehistoric era. It is hard to believe that back then, our only work tools were a large dose of optimism with a pen and some paper, or what we called 'off-cuts' (roughly cut A4-size papers from huge reams of newsprint). Some of us had 'midgets' (micro tape recorders) or the Sony Walkman-type tape recorders, for interviews, but I did not know of any reporter who had a PC or a laptop. After we finished writing our stories in long hand, we gave the sheaf of papers to typesetters, who would type and print out for the sub-editors to knock into readable copies. The Internet was just an abstract concept you read about in foreign newspapers or magazines. We didn't even have emails.

However, all this would change over a few short years as the digitisation of media began and many newsrooms in Nigeria became computerised, making it mandatory for journalists to upskill to operate in the new environment. Soon, a laptop was an essential working tool, but it was the introduction of GSM telephony in 2001 that was truly revolutionary. The ability to communicate remotely with sources to access information on the move, and to do so in real time was a game changer. But it was only the beginning. In subsequent years, content convergence onto mobile and other devices meant that broadcasting, telecommunications and computing integrated into one device - enabled by rapidly improving Internet connectivity.

The pace of change is only accelerating. It seems like yesterday that we were marvelling at the innovations that mobile connectivity enabled, but today, the cutting-edge is so much more advanced. We live in a world where Artificial Intelligence and Augmented and Virtual Reality are moving into the mainstream and showing us things that many of us had never dreamed of. If ChatGPT can use natural language processing to interact with humans in a way that is indistinguishable from human-to-human interaction; if it can not only respond to questions, but produce creative content, write essays and codes, then what utility would there have been for me as an aspiring *journalist* in 1996? The value and skills I learnt and built a career on are being automated, but with progress comes risk. Not just to hundreds of millions of jobs, but to the integrity and reliability of information and to the role of the media.

According to Rijul Gupta, the tech entrepreneur founder of 'Deep Media,' a company striving to create ethical AI tools, the current capabilities of ChatGPT are just the early signs of what lies ahead. "We are currently only seeing text and images, very soon, not only will the pope be seen wearing a puffy jacket, there will be a video of him break-dancing in it - fully realistic," he said. In short, the fabric of truth and reality is being threatened, making it more and more difficult to distinguish between actuality and falsehood.

## The road to the Sabres

But moving on, while we leave Rijul Gupta and other capable minds in Silicon Valley and other tech hubs, to create ethical AI that would save our world from itself, I have been pondering where the Nigerian media sit in this digital bubble and what does it all mean for us?

State of play in Nigeria...

But sadly, as modernity and digitisation have rapidly altered the shape and structure of the industry, so we have seen an erosion of the ethos of the profession. Media without journalism is on the rise. There is a high birthrate but short life expectancy for publications and platforms in the industry. The Nigerian media space is in a state of flux, where it is difficult to grow and retain talent; invest in the future and institute good corporate governance culture to drive performance with integrity. Those in doubt should do a comparative analysis of newspapers across all tiers today. This will show that most publish the same government and corporate press releases and event photos - no more frequent scoops; no more exclusives for which leading lights like Gbolabo Ogunsanwo, Dele Giwa, et al were renowned.

Journalists cannot take the blame for this in isolation. Their ability to innovate, or simply operate according to best practice is a function of the environment within which they are employed. It is no surprise that they are demotivated when media owners owe people for months in salaries and other entitlements; when there are no opportunities or clear paths for career advancement, training, capacity building and self-improvement. All these are clear and present danger, even while the foundations of the profession itself are being threatened by the rise of Artificial Intelligence which I described in the opening paragraphs.

But with these challenges, comes an incredible opportunity. I don't think there has ever been a more important time to be a journalist. To uphold the centuries-old principles that should guide our profession and to ensure that the mass explosion of content and the automation coming behind it is balanced by the independent and investigative journalists that have made the fourth estate such an important pillar of our society.

The only way to approach this is to invest in technology and talent at the same time, ensuring that we produce quality content (original pieces and investigative stories) that people want to read. If we cannot maintain our audiences' attention through the platforms that they want to use, then what hope do we have of making this commercial? The polar opposites of this, or a dystopia of sorts, is what we presently have in the country.

The good news is that at this time of flux, and of opportunity, we have a growing population of young and enterprising media practitioners who are very comfortable with technology; they recognise the fact that 'content is king;' they understand the vast possibilities of digital communications and are determined to leverage it to scale the limitations of their society and peculiar circumstances.

In steps MTN Media Innovation Programme

At MTN, we recognise the incredible potential of this generation; of the confluence with emerging technology and the way that they crave applied technology to attain journalistic excellence, catch up with global trends and generally improve their storytelling techniques. How better to drive the emergence of leading digital solutions for Nigeria's progress and achieve shared prosperity than to invest in protecting the heritage and driving the future potential of the Nigerian media. We are committed to using our technology and assets to help build a better tomorrow and in furtherance of these efforts, in 2022, we started what we call the MTN Media Innovation Programme (MIP) in partnership with the Pan-Atlantic University (PAU), Lagos.

The MIP is a fellowship for journalists (media practitioners across the entire spectrum, including social media), and it is designed to help them build capacity at both professional and business levels. It is delivered over a six-month period as a certificate course. It combines theoretical rigour with practical workshops to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants in the areas of communications, technology, media effects, writing/reporting and general business management.

By empowering media practitioners to do their job better and drive innovation, we are seeking to build the much-needed sustainability in the industry. As we all know, innovation drives change and builds new approaches to

## The road to the Sabres

problem-solving and solution-oriented media practice for the benefit of humanity. Apart from equipping media stakeholders with the skills to adapt to the changing realities that guarantee career and financial success, we also thought to add international exposure to the training, which will broaden the scope of the participants. To this end, MIP includes a study visit to the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

We also recognise that to move the needle on this challenge, we need to take a long-term approach. The pilot phase of the MIP will run from 2022 to 2024, but our ambitions are much greater. We seek to establish a programme that can be seen in the same light as a Yale Fellowship, or a Desmond Tutu Fellowship, whose recipients play such an important role in shaping our world.

To do that, we needed to design a programme and curriculum that was inclusive, innovative and immersive. We selected 20 journalists representing each of Nigeria's geo-political zones as our first cohort, and we set ourselves the challenge of 'enabling accelerated transformation' through the programme. We built a teaching team featuring the best and brightest in Nigeria's academic, professional and media ecosystem - from the PAU to BusinessDay, Bloomberg, BBC, PUNCH, Premium Times; technology entrepreneurs and innovators building in the media space, as well as our own leadership team.

We took our fellows on immersive facility visits in Nigeria and South Africa, from experience centres to sub-sea cable landing stations, 5G demonstrations and to academic and corporate campuses; they saw the breadth of the ecosystem as it is currently structured.

After six intense months, our first group of fellows graduated. Both documentary and anecdotal evidence suggest the impact that we have been able to achieve, from improvements in writing and reporting skills to the way they leverage technology to improve output and product quality. These are still early days, but 2022 taught us that we have a structure that can work, build upon and if we are patient, achieve the ambitious transformational objectives we have set for ourselves.

The MTN MIP is the first of its kind in Nigeria - no other corporate organisation has ever invested so much in a sustainable and far-reaching capacity-building programme for journalists, where intended outcomes can be successfully tracked. We are incredibly excited about building on the platform we have created to make the 2023 cohort even more successful.

In recognition of the innovative approach to capacity development in the media, I was honoured to be awarded 'Innovator of the Year' at the 2023 IN2 SABRE awards, which was held at the PRovoke EMEA Summit in Gesellschaftshaus Palmengarten Frankfurt, Germany on Thursday, March 23, 2023. As MTN's project director for the MIP and lead liaison with the Nigerian media, the award is a personal recognition that I am incredibly proud to receive but represents the work and talent of a wider team that has worked tirelessly to make this happen.

...Aina is the Senior Manager, External Relations, MTN Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2023



## **The Nation flies highest with 10 prizes at NMMA**

The Nation (Nigeria)

December 15, 2017 Friday

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Length: 261 words

### **Body**

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The best reporters and writers are in The Nation and this is official.

With 10 coveted prizes at the prestigious Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMA), this newspaper's leadership in quality reportage has been reaffirmed. The Nation won the highest number of awards at the 27th NMMA on Wednesday night at the Muson Centre in Onikan, Lagos.

The prizes were from the 29 in the print media category. The Nation had 28 nominations, winning in 10 categories - the highest by any newspaper. The rest were shared among The Punch, New Telegraph, Nigerian Tribune, Business Day, The Sun, The Source and Vanguard.

Editor Gbenga Omotoso won the **Dele Giwa** Prize for Editor of the Year.

Vintage Press Chairman Wale Edun, in a message to Managing Director Victor Ifijeh, who broke the news to him, said:'Fantastic news. Congratulations all round. I salute the superb quality of our entire team'.

Winners all

Gbenga Omotoso- **Dele Giwa** Prize for Editor of the Year

Adekunle Yusuf- Alex Ibru Prize for Investigative Reporter of the Year

Taiwo Alimi - Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Prize for Sports Reporter of the Year

Emeka Ugwuanyi - Peter Odili Power Reporter of the Year

Seun Akioye - Olusegun Mimiko Prize for Foreign News Reporter of the Year

Uguru Okorie - Adamu Mu'azu Tourism Reporter of the Year

Collins Nweze - Union Bank Prize for Banking and Finance Reporter of the Year

Collins Nweze - Access Bank Prize for Capital Market Reporter of the Year

Innocent Duru - Abubakar Imam Prize for Newspaper Feature Writer of the Year

Betty Abbah- Cecil King Memorial Prize for Print **Journalist** of the Year

The Nation flies highest with 10 prizes at NMMA

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2017

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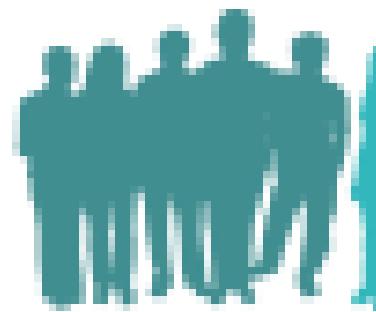


## **Ethical Dilemma, Journalism Practice and Remedies -By Taiwo Hassan**

Opinion Nigeria

January 1, 2023 Sunday

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### **...Addressing today's topical issues**

**Length:** 1560 words

**Byline:** Opinion Nigeria

### **Body**

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The ethical dilemma comes in different shades. It ranges from editors and journalists slanting a story to cover real issues by giving prominence to a good side of a story without balance, helping the government and other officials in disinformation propaganda to launder the image of the government, and receiving gratification to downplay news stories. The list is endless. Ethics is primarily being bound by a moral principle. The journalism profession has come a long way with its embedded moral codes. Many Journalists have lost their lives and other things they hold dear trying to uphold the ethics of the profession. Journalists as a social-actor in society interacting with other actors; must face conflict within these social relations. An ethical dilemma is a problem where a person has to choose between a moral and an immoral act either as a survival strategy or pressure to perform in order to achieve organisational objectives. Hence, there must be a clash between professional loyalties and certain interests that may undermine the credibility of journalists. It is a delicate balance that can seriously question objectivity.

As the issue of ethics is very important in the journalism profession in Nigeria, it is also relevant globally. Ethical dilemmas faced by journalists in different parts of the world are increasing and not abating accentuated by online and citizen journalism that leverage internet-influenced-ICT. The character of media organisations and journalists is defined clearly during a crisis that pitted one nation against another, or one section of society against the other. When media take sides in whatever way either in war or crisis situation knowing full well that every word written or

## Ethical Dilemma, Journalism Practice and Remedies -By Taiwo Hassan

spoken by them is a freely-given machete, bullet, bomb and ready-made tool in the hands of war actors to perpetrate further atrocities; the ethical and professional obligation of the media is to provide objective, accurate and balanced reporting during war, conflict or peace-time for people to make informed analysis, influence debate and volunteer their opinion and not for journalists and editors to distort or suppress information for certain motives. Just like what happened in 2nd World War where journalists and editors in Germany, Czech and Poland as well as the United States, United Kingdom and France during the 1930s and 1940s not only used the situation to feather their nest but also broke morals codes governing journalism profession to serve as propaganda tools that distorted facts to fan the ember of the war with devastating consequences. Media taking sides in the reportage of Yemen, Syrian and Russian-Ukrainian conflict abound. Online journalists are also not left out of this charade. Media houses and their journalists from the US, Europe, Africa and Asia demonstrate this. Using Europe and US as a typical example, the news angle about the war on VOA, CBS,

BBC, DW, and France 24 toe the line of the government. FOX and SKY New in the UK and SKY News-Australia toe another line by apportioning blames, politicizing and criticism of President Vladimir Zelensky for profiting from the war instead of offering solution journalism, giving audience balanced, human-angle and result-oriented reporting that will facilitate relief for children, women and families facing hunger and humanitarian crisis and not reportage skewed to the owner's interest and political leaning.

Contemporary ethical issues facing reporters and editors today are more complex, profound and devastating due to the power of the internet, smartphones and other digital platforms which have placed journalism in the hands of ordinary citizens to provide "exclusive news" "exclusive footage" or "breaking news" that is not easily confirmed or fact-checked. Ethical issues facing reporters and editors today globally are aggravated in the developing world especially, Nigeria where the ethical dilemma facing journalism professionals is so damning. When journalists are owed salary for months without knowing when it is going to be paid or how they are going to settle their bills, families need to be fed, rent to be paid and other needs to be taken care of ethical discipline will definitely take a back-sit. In fact, Nigerian journalists are poorly paid in terms of their total welfare package. Some earn as little as less than \$150 a month.

Journalists have found themselves in a difficult situation of balancing the demands of their survival and that of protecting the interest of the society in which they live vis-a-vis adhering to professional ethics. The question is: how does one expect journalists in this situation not to compromise, not to have a conflict of interests, not to behave unethically or expect him to remember any journalistic ethics or codes for that matter? Media houses that cannot pay salary resorts to arm-twisting their staff to look for sponsor either individual or organization; who can bankroll a programme in order to get paid from the sponsor's fees they attract to the station. It is a shame to see the wide income gap between reporters and their editorial bosses. Some reporters earn as little as 50,000 Naira (\$112) a month, and many of them are Master's degree holders. Apart from getting money from politicians who want favourable reports, the editors have perks they enjoyed.

The killing of late veteran **Journalist, Dele Giwa**, publisher of Tell Magazine through a letter bomb for upholding journalism ethics by refusing to compromise on what he uncovered through his investigation on the Military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida reportedly caused his assassination. The journalism profession is guided by truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity and accountability, objectivity, credibility and facts. But, who wants to die upholding any journalism ethics when his life, economic survival and that of his family is at stake considering the fact that no welfare package is on the ground to take care of one loved-ones when a **Journalist** passes away particularly, in a country like Nigeria. As it is better imagined than experienced, families left behind by dead or slain journalists are in the best position to tell of the abject poverty they found themselves following the passing of their breadwinners. The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) can hardly do much to help. Many of them have vowed not to ever allow their children to go into the journalism profession again.

Not toeing the line of reticence, I believe ethical dilemmas in journalism can be remedied. Though, as I said earlier, an ethical dilemma can be a survival strategy or pressure to perform in order to achieve organisational objectives. Ethical issues persist globally just like in Nigeria as a result of individual, organizational, environmental and societal challenges. It is imperative to empower and equip journalists to prepare for contemporary challenges and ethical

## Ethical Dilemma, Journalism Practice and Remedies -By Taiwo Hassan

dilemmas in the profession in terms of side vocation to break dependency syndrome for bribes to make them less amenable to unethical socio-economic inducements. Journalists must be adequately remunerated. For Journalists to perform their "constitutional roles and obligations, journalists must 'appear-well' and 'feed-well' to 'work-well'. Wages commensurate with other professions must be paid to journalists to boost their egos as professionals. Opportunities for career advancement and satisfaction should be created for average Journalists and not for editors alone.

Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Code of Journalism Practice needs to be reviewed to recognise socio-economic circumstances journalists found themselves in the line of duty so as to have a living-code that is able to take cognizance of journalists' survival strategy or work performance pressures as well as serves as checks on the excesses of journalists. The remedy is also to have NUJ which presently doubles as a trade union and professional body be solely professional body while a new body under NUJ would be a trade union arm fighting for the rights of journalists as regards the condition of service, salary payment etc. to take care of socio-economic induced-ethical dilemma faced by Journalists in tandem with "International Federation of Journalists" (IFJ) collective actions to support journalists to fight for fair pay, decent working conditions and in defence of their labour rights and also, in alignment with what the "Committee to Protect Journalists" does. ( an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom, and defends journalists' rights to report news safely without fear of reprisal.

In order not to call the objectivity of journalists to question, media men must stay within the professional ethics of the profession and also know how conflict and crisis stories should be written for online, print and electronic media without running into ethical potholes. Recognizing national security interest in the prohibition of information regarded as sensitive, offensive or subjudice and not personal interests; Journalists can balance their reportage independently not relying on press releases, press statements and other information issued by the government but by being professional in their journalistic endeavours.

Taiwo Hassan is from the Federal Ministry of Information, Radio House, Abuja (taiwohassan76@ yahoo.com)

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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## Favoured by Benevolent Gods...

This Day

December 11, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 1439 words

### **Body**

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Wole Olaoye

For some inexplicable reason, the first thought that came to my mind when I saw the title of Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi's memoirs, "The Road Never Forgets", was a quick throwback to Wole Soyinka's world-acclaimed play, "The Road". The word, road, has had a loaded meaning for me on various metaphorical levels since I acted in a production of the play in the early '70s at the SS Peter and Paul Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan, under the directorship of the inimitable amazon of theatre scholarship, Zulu Sofola.

But Ogunbiyi's road is a much happier one than that portrayed in Soyinka's The Road. From his birth in Kano through his thrilling sojourns in life to his 75th birthday, Ogunbiyi takes us on an exciting journey through the road of life populated by family, friends, foes and sundry stragglers. Underlying his rendition is a firm belief in his immutable destiny in which others have been assigned by Providence to play specific roles, for good or for ill, to steer him towards fulfilling the purpose for which he had been sent hither.

Ogunbiyi is a good storyteller. In lucid prose, he connects the dots of what, by any standard, has been a remarkable life in which various actors make their appearance on his stage, play their part and move on while he continues his journey on the road of life, a journey made tolerable by the understanding, forbearance and love of his wife, Sade. With admirable candour, he presents himself, not as a superman, but as a simple mortal with failings and missteps like everyone else.

He had started out in life with a hazy realisation of who he really was. Born in Kano to a Yoruba father and an Igbo mother, his first language was Hausa. Then, of course, he also spoke Igbo but very little Yoruba. Who really was the young Yemi - Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, or Wazobia.

Experts say that an identity crisis is a period of uncertainty or confusion in a person's life which occurs when a person's sense of identity becomes insecure and unstable. The affected person is questioning who he/she is and

### Favoured by Benevolent Gods...

his/her role in society. As noted by the famous developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson, the formation of identity is one of the most important conflicts that people face.

Ogunbiyi paints fascinating scenes of a happy childhood of masquerades, boyhood pranks and high academic expectations with the understanding that while his parents provided all his material needs, he was obliged to return good grades at school.

The decision to send him to secondary school in Western Region was to make a lasting impact on his life in such a way that it helped him resolve the question of who he really was. He had a kind of Obama moment when he met his grandmother in Ipara and was introduced to his rich Yoruba heritage and endless streams of relatives.

That section of the narrative reminded me of Barack Obama's own account of bonding with his Kenyan roots when he visited his grandmother in the village and realised that he was bearing a name with a rich heritage. In America, Obama was just another name; in Kenya, it was a name with recognition and illustrious ancestry. It was the same for Ogunbiyi when he made his first trip to Ipara. It was an umbilical reunion that bridged the identity gorge deep within his psyche.

The author admits that much in his Epilogue:

"So, on one level, this book is about self-identity.... Self-identity is a complex phenomenon that is sometimes based on the mundane quotidian forms of belonging that allow for a reflexive positioning of the self in a given cultural setting. These intuitive manifestations of self-identity may not be readily apparent. But they underpin the very essence of a totality of who we think we are since, ultimately, self-identity is also about self-perception".

The story of Ogunbiyi's life is one of a restless youth ever seeking new challenges, unfazed by the daunting obstacles before him. He started out as an academic and quickly rose through the dint of hard work to become a senior lecturer and Acting Head of Department. Fate intervened when he accepted Stanley Macebuh's offer to spend his sabbatical year at the newly established Guardian newspaper in Lagos. At the end of the period, he requested an extension of the sabbatical by one year. His request was rejected. He eventually chose to resign.

That was how the academic became, first at the Guardian, an editorial writer, then a *journalist*, an advertising executive, a director and then the managing director of Nigeria's oldest newspaper institution, the Daily Times. He was fired twice - at the Guardian and Daily Times. From then onwards, he resolved never again to accept any position from which he might be fired someday. That was how he set up his own company, TANUS. From every lemon thrown at him, Ogunbiyi has managed to make lemonade!

The author has had the privilege of forging close relationships with very senior academics, traditional rulers, military top brass and captains of industry. In several instances, it has also brought him fame and fortune. Ogunbiyi's life has been enriched by his association with Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Prof Ojetunji Aboyade, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Prof Biodun Jeyifo, *Dele Giwa*, General Babangida, Admiral Aikhomu, General Abacha and several others. Providence has positioned benevolent gods at every turn to help him crack the palm kernel of success.

Ogunbiyi uses the game of golf to take a philosophical look at life. According to him, "Unlike most sports, in golf you play against yourself to try and beat your previous record, which in turn forces you to train more and improve... Golf teaches us that sometimes, life doesn't go as planned."

Ogunbiyi's life story is also the life story of his wife, Sade, and other people who have impacted his journey on the road of life: Family, mentors, friends, colleagues, benefactors, detractors and others whose paths crossed his.

With this style, the author is able to present some famous personages in a new light. Through his lenses, we are able to appreciate the other unknown or uncelebrated qualities of people who have played critical roles in Nigeria. Take his portrait of the late statesman, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, for example. Ogunbiyi tested the widely held notion that the chief was an unbending puritanical dictator who sought to impose his spartan ways on other people, by lighting a cigar in the home of the political titan. While associates of the chief were aghast and judgmental, Chief

## Favoured by Benevolent Gods...

Awolowo only seized the moment to offer counsel: "That's okay! Yemi, you can have your cigar, even though I don't think it's good for your health."

Ogunbiyi's account of his relationship with General Ibrahim Babangida, the man whose government annulled the freest presidential ballot, the acclaimed June 12 elections, opens new vistas to understanding the enigmatic military politician. At once calculating, brilliant, charming and generous, Babangida's Achilles' heel was his penchant for trying to be everything to everybody. As Ogunbiyi notes:

"He was determined to shape his world and surroundings, make an impact, and leave a mark. He badly wanted to make a difference and be seen to walk on the right side of history.... Under pressure, presumably from his immediate constituency, he made grievous mistakes that cast an indelible shadow over his legacy. Simple as it may seem, he displayed the pitfalls of one of the basic tenets of leadership, which he certainly would have learnt in his earliest days as a soldier, namely that a leader does not tell different people what they want to hear...a leader cannot be everything to everyone...These errors underlie what might have been a laudable legacy of reforms and a lot more. And for that reason, it's just possible that with the benefit of hindsight and the passage of time, the fuller history of Nigeria might just be kinder to him".

My favourite story in the book is Ogunbiyi's account of the visit of Duro Ladipo, the legendary dramatist, to Ogunbiyi's flat in New York in the '70s. After dinner, Duro Ladipo didn't ask anyone's permission to take away the newly opened bottle of cognac. He simply said, "A i r'ajeku oro" (there can't be leftovers when the gods feast). Considering that Duro Ladipo has somehow come to be regarded as a personification of Shango, the god of Thunder, the Ogunbiyis painfully watched as the remainder of their cognac disappeared into the night with Shango.

The Road Never Forgets, Ogunbiyi's 516-page offering published by BOOKCRAFT, comes in 12 chapters and is deservedly dedicated to his wife, Iyalode Sade, and the rest of his family.

- Olaoye is a Public Relations consultant and veteran journalist.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

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## **Dele Giwa's Murder - Omeben Lied, I Gave Statements to Police Twice - Soyinka**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 29, 2015

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**Length:** 1151 words

### **Body**

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Former London Bureau Chief of Newswatch Magazine, Kayode Soyinka, who was present when Dele Giwa, the co-founder of the magazine was murdered in 1986 through a letter bomb, has dismissed as lies comments by a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, Chris Omeben, that he fled after the attack and was never questioned.

Omeben said on Monday that Soyinka was a prime suspect in the murder but the Newswatch management shielded him from being quizzed by the police.

Mr. Soyinka, who is now the publisher of Africa Today magazine, told Premium Times from his London base that he was questioned twice by the police after the incident and accused Omeben of deceit.

Labeling the retired police officer as a "disgrace" to the Nigerian Police, who worked with the former military regime to cover up the crime, Soyinka said: "I gave statements not once but twice to the same Nigerian Police he represents before I eventually left Nigeria. The first one was at the hospital where I was admitted - Dele's body was next door to me. That interrogation by a senior police officer whose name I cannot recall took place on the spot when the incident was still fresh. It was inside the hospital. Dele Olojede (publisher of defunct 234next newspaper) was beside me - he is alive, go and ask him," he said.

"The second statement I made when the police requested to see me again. It was made at the premises of Newswatch in Oregun Road in Lagos in the presence of the eminent lawyer Chief Gani Fawehinmi. I don't know why Omeben did not know about this and he is accusing me wrongly. The statement I made, and the ones made by Funmilayo (Dele's wife) and Billy, I believe, is now in public domain. Chief Gani Fawehinmi must have published them in the series of books he published on this subject before he died.

"So I don't understand why Omeben should tell Nigerians such a blatant lies. That is wickedness. He does not fear God at all. Thank God I am alive and I can respond to him. Can you imagine if I had died with Dele, Omeben and cohorts would have succeeded in putting cotton wool on the faces of Nigerians and sold a different story completely to them to exonerate those who did it," he added.

Mr. Soyinka recalled that Halilu Akilu called Mr. Giwa's house about three times within 24hours and spoke to Funmilayo, Dele's wife, to know how to get to the journalist's Ikeja home.

"On the Sunday of the bomb blast Dele had spoken to Akilu from his upstairs bedroom before coming down to have breakfast with me, to tell him that he heard he had called him on Saturday and asked why. The letter bomb was

## Dele Giwa's Murder - Omeben Lied, I Gave Statements to Police Twice - Soyinka

delivered to the house within 45 minutes after that early morning telephone discussion between Dele and Akilu. So who should be Omeben's 'principal suspect' then? Should it be me who was bombed with Dele? Or Akilu?

"Chris Omeben, who was a Deputy Inspector-General of Police, when the letter bomb blast occurred on October 19, 1986, is a complete disgrace to the Nigeria Police Force. He claimed to be an investigator of the bomb blast. Instead of protecting me, the survivor, who escaped death by a whisker, and by the very special grace of God, he is sadly and disgracefully trying to rewrite the script to make me, as he said, his 'principal suspect'.

"His 'principal suspect' should be Halilu Akilu, who called Dele's house about three times consecutively Saturday before the Sunday bombing and spoke to Funmilayo, Dele's wife, to ask for description of and direction to Dele's house in Ikeja.

"Omeben, said, and I quote: 'Soyinka knew what was coming and he left the room to hide behind the wall.' What a blatant lie? This man, who I understand is now a pastor, has no fear of God in him at all, making such bold erroneous statement like that on an issue of such sensitivity and accusing me, an innocent man - a victim and survivor of the bomb blast. He should ask God for forgiveness!

### **How Dele Giwa died**

"Dele and I were the only two people in the study when Dele's son Billy delivered the letter bomb to his father. It is very important here to remember that some unidentified people, who gave it to the security man at the gate, delivered the parcel bomb to Dele's house.

"The security man, while coming inside the compound with the parcel saw Billy (Dele's son) on the way and gave it to him. When Billy came to the study and delivered the parcel to his father, Dele looked at it and handed it over to me. I looked at it and was able to vividly see the inscription on the padded envelope and handed it back to him. He received it back from me, moved his recycling chair back slightly to face the window on his left, he held the envelope with both hands, and tried to tear it through the top left-hand corner. He had not really opened it up, if he did it was only very slightly. And boom!! The bomb exploded!"

"A big ball of fire occurred. It was a very powerful bomb explosion! The side of the envelope facing the iron-barred window blew up that window. The side facing Dele exploded on his chest and stomach. And the force that came out from the bottom of the envelope blew up his upper legs and badly affected lower part of his body. He did not die immediately. He died in the hospital.

"Now, you see the vivid description I have just given you - 29 years after the gory incident. If I ran into the toilet or hid myself behind the wall before the bomb exploded like our Mr Omeben will like the world, and particularly Nigerians, to believe, and as he is trying hard, very hard, to label me as the suspect, how would I have been able to know all this, and give this graphic description?

"That partly was what the Oputa Panel missed when it investigated this matter because they did not see it necessary at that time to invite me to give evidence and I was not invited.

So, Mr Omeben should get it now that I did not - and I repeat I did not - run away to toilet or hid behind a wall. I sat on my own chair right in front of Dele. Only the strong mahogany L-shaped desk on which we were eating our breakfast divided us. So I was literary inches away from him. The huge desk must have mobbed the force of the blast that would have done the damage on me up.

"But the force was so powerful and so powerful enough to still lift me off my chair. The chair itself collapsed. I was thrown on the floor by the exit door. I was momentarily unconscious. But regained consciousness, flung my spectacles off my face, and staggered out of the room. Yes, I received no cut on my body, but my nightgown was spattered with blood - Dele's blood - and I had burns on my forehead. And I smelt of burns.

Dele Giwa's Murder - Omeben Lied, I Gave Statements to Police Twice - Soyinka

"I thank God for sparing my life. I could have been killed on that day. My survival was a Biblical miracle. I told you that I held the letter bomb myself! What if I was the one that opened it? And I could easily have opened it myself. But I gave it back to Dele. That's why I believe my survival was the work of God. My own time was not up yet."

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2015

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## A peep into history - 3

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

May 21, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1951 words

### **Body**

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A young man was led into my office as the editor of The PUNCH one day decades ago; his name: Ibe Eresia-Eke (where is he now?), Executive Chairman (as title-crazy Nigerians often over-burden the title “Chairman” as if, standing alone, it is not “executive” enough!) of Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers state. He should be happy being an “Executive Chairman” but he was not because fire was on his rooftop. The advertisement notice he brought for publication, and which moved me to cause him to be interviewed, is as captured below. Titled “Don’t break IBB’s heart”, it speaks for itself, as they say. Please read:

“The temptation has been strong to write to the President, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, about the blatant and disgraceful use of State power to crush and annihilate opposition party governments in Rivers State. But knowing how much effort he has personally and gracefully invested in the democratic process, it may just be too heart-breaking if he knows that some powerful people in my state are now practically spreading petrol over his carefully-constructed edifice of democracy, ready to strike the match. The cases are legion now. Some of them have already been profusely reported, especially in the Sunday magazine (TSM). And, certainly, many more, even much more shocking, will be published by the fearless media outfits around, given the manner the power drunkards are carrying on.

In the interest of our nation, however, it has become almost imperative to corroborate much of what the press is doing to fight the wild anti-democratic trends in our dear state. I will attempt to do this by recounting some experience that one has had lately as Chairman of Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, one of the LGAs controlled by the opposition party in Rivers State, but where can I start; what do I state; what do I leave out in this short piece? Anyway, let’s just take a case and be brief.

During the councillors bye-elections of Saturday, 19th July, 1992, state force literally over-ran the LGA beating, intimidating indigenes of the area, and destroying properties. Naturally, people reached for the recesses of their homes to hide. Voters had to face the concern of escaping with life, a fortiori standing on the queue to vote. Of course, this sounds so much like fiction. It is almost incredible. But we can list even the numbers of vehicles employed in the operation, namely: RV 8119 DA, RV 8075 DA (both belonging to the Rivers State Transport Corporation). And to clear any stubborn doubts about the source of the vehicles, there was also a Toyota Jeep with

### A peep into history - 3

registration number 25 RSVG 9. The vehicles, loaded with uniformed policemen and thugs, fired with the zeal of men on a State mission and armed to the teeth to do havoc to persons and property.

As you may have guessed, many indigenes, including those standing in the election on the platform of the opposition party, were bundled to far-away Port Harcourt, the seat of power, to be locked away and (to be) thoroughly tortured. The private home of Dr. Kingdom Ogbangba, Deputy Minority Leader in the State House of Assembly, was verily vandalised. Let us leave out things too obscene to be published in a respectable medium like this! Of course, you may already have guessed this: At the end of the day, "election results" were announced and landslide victories were recorded!

It may be reasonable to ask: What did the police in the area do when all this was being perpetrated? But what does a conscientious and upright police DPO and his men do in the face of "superior onslaught", knowing the command structure of our police system? Indeed, as if to add salt to injury, shortly after an earlier DPO was transferred out of the area, probably for being uncooperative, his successor faces the same fate already. A local paper has, in fact, reported that the DPO has been threatened by kulaks with the right party connections with "immediate transfer" from the LGA.

Of course, much of all this only goes to corroborate and confirm reports of intention to destabilise; annihilate the local government controlled by the "opposition party" and impeach its Chairman by "all means possible". Part of the strategy has been to spread all manner of calumny against the local government and its Chairman to cause disaffection in the local community, hoping to garner a major unrest within the area and then nullify the government and appoint a sole administrator. Given the grassroots support of the government, however, and the grace of Almighty God, none of their wishes have materialised.

But the fight is being intensified through all means as promised. Already, police have reported that at least three of their most influential agents... have made very desperate efforts to use our councillors by offering them huge sums of money to sign a document containing cooked-up allegations against my person (the LG chairman). The reports have, in fact, pleaded with the police to "commence thorough investigations to find out their financiers. I will not relent until their allegations against the Deputy Governor are proved"

The outcome of the investigation has not reached my office but what is evident is that four formally loyal councillors have resigned. Many believe they fell for the huge financial inducements offered them. The whole game-plan is to weaken the numerical strength of the loyal councillors, inject their own men and, finally, impeach or turn me into a stooge taking instructions from Government House. Whether this works or not remains to be seen. For good measure, let me add that given the devilish desperation with which they are purchasing their fancy "by all means", whatever happens to me should be traced to them.

To be sure, this tendency to deal with the LGA governments of the opposite parties all over the State is the same. But the import of all this comes once one extrapolates what is happening in Rivers State to all the states in the federation. Viewed from that perspective, it comes out clearly that the gravitation is towards annihilating the opposition parties even at the Local government level. Gradually, this tendency may infect the entire nation and two consequences are possible: That all should acquiesce and join one party or resist and fight back. Whichever way the reaction comes, it spells the end of democracy once again.

This is why I had thought that, maybe, IBB should not see this because given the investment in time, men and resources that have gone into erecting the democratic edifice this time; these trends may break his heart. But one thing is very certain, the security forces must do something fast to arrest the "hoodlums against democracy" in whatever guise they may appear, be they deputy (or despotic) governors!"

How events eventually played out in that LG, I cannot now remember. Maybe, someone familiar with the story should fill us in. That was during the unending transition to civil rule rigmarole of IBB beginning in the 1980s, which eventually climaxed in the June 12, 1993 elections which MKO Abiola won fair and square but which was annulled by the IBB junta, throwing the country into a political logjam or impasse that was not resolved until after five despotic years of the vilest dictator of them all, Gen. Sani Abacha, and the benevolent dictatorship of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, stained, however, with the death in detention of Abiola.

## A peep into history - 3

With the benefit of hindsight today, can we not say that the confidence reposed by Eresia-Ike in IBB as the defender of democracy was misplaced, given that the self-same IBB annulled the freest and fairest election in the land, thereby wasting the huge resources expended on the process and truncating democracy? The shenanigans that caused Eresia-Ike to run from pillar to post took place some four decades ago: Can we say we have made appreciable progress or are we still trapped in the woods? Do opposition parties fare better today? I leave everyone to judge!

If he looks back today at his illustrious but chequered career, I think I can guess a few things that must have broken IBB's heart. One is the parcel bomb that killed the celebrated journalist, Dele Giwa, on 19 October, 1986 during IBB's watch. The unresolved nature of the dastardly murder must be giving the former military president sleepless nights. More so if the reported last words of Giwa: "This must be from Mr. President" continues to ring in IBB's ears.

The Major Gideon Gwaza Orkar coup of 22 April, 1990 is another incident that may give IBB heartbreak. IBB escaped by the whiskers but not before the coupists had taken him and his government to the cleaners. The terrible things said about IBB, if they continue to ring in his ears, may trouble his heart. The outgoing government of Gov. Samuel Ortom of Benue State must have opened old wounds and pointedly directed an arrow at IBB's heart when, last week, he announced a decision to honour Orkar by not only naming a street after him but by also justifying some of his allegations against IBB and his administration.

The "SAP with a human face" letter written by former President Olusegun Obasanjo to IBB was said to have unsettled and rattled the gap-toothed self-styled military president. Not given to pulling punches, Obasanjo pummeled IBB and his government hard, accusing both of putting Nigerians through unthinkable suffering and unmitigated misery. Whenever IBB thinks of a man who hits you hard but you dare not hit him back, his heart may break.

Next is the IMF debate during which Nigerians rejected the IMF loan and its conditions but IBB and Chief Olu Falae, at first IBB's Secretary to the Federal Government and later Minister of Finance; went ahead against popular opinion to accept the loan. That decision laid the foundation for the decimation of the Naira. If the national currency has lost a huge chunk of its old value today, the blame rests with IBB and Falae, aka Mr. SAP. Which conscientious leader will remember that and not suffer heartbreak?

I can go on and on! The execution, on 5 March, 1986, of Gen. Mamman Jiya Vasta, said to be a childhood and bosom friend of IBB, by the same IBB regime, cannot but give anyone a heartbreak, especially when, years later, Gen. Domkat Bali, the man who announced to a bewildered nation the execution of the alleged coupists "about an hour ago" was quoted as saying he was not sure they were right in the decision they took in executing the alleged coup plotters! Who will hear that and his heart will not break, especially each time the media decides to conduct interviews with Vatsa's widow and children that opened old wounds?

IBB's decision to step aside on 27 August, 1993 was not an easy one. Reports had it that his wife and glamorous First Lady, Maryam, never brooked the idea of their vacating power. As editor of The PUNCH, we published on the front page a daily "Countdown to Democracy... so and so days to go" which impeccable sources said enraged Maryam. "Who told them we are going?" she was quoted as saying! But go, they did! Could that not have broken IBB's heart?

IBB stepped aside and has not been able to step back in ever since. Seeing Obasanjo and, next, Muhammadu Buhari (IBB's arch enemies?) achieve the feat of military Head of State and, later, civilian President, is that not enough to break IBB's heart? TO BE CONTINUED.

\*Former Editor of PUNCH newspapers, Chairman of its Editorial Board and Deputy Editor-in-chief, BOLAWOLE was also the Managing Director/ Editor-in-chief of THE WESTERNER newsmagazine. He writes the ON THE LORD'S DAY column in the Sunday Tribune and TREASURES column in New Telegraph newspaper on Wednesdays. He is also a public affairs analyst on radio and television.

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## **My Mother Was In Labour For Eight Days, I Came Out Presumed Dead - Onayiga**

Nigerian Tribune

January 29, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 1671 words

### **Body**

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<Text>

Chief Moses Olugbenga Oludare Onayiga, journalist, media consultant and former board member of Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and Nigeria Press Council, is the Director of Vision Centre for Communication and Development Advocacy. He shared his life story with TUNDE ADELEKE.

How was life as a media professional in a government-owned electronic medium?

Quite challenging, but interesting. For 34 out of the 37 years that I served in the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN, otherwise known as Radio Nigeria, covering mostly political activities, I endeavoured to apply the basic principles of objectivity, fairness and accuracy as taught in the training school. The media organisation's management did not stop me from ensuring strict adherence to ethical standards. The Code of Ethics approved by the Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO) is very clear and any newsman worthy of being called a journalist must adhere to the provisions of the document which I would like to refer to as our 'professional bible.' One, therefore, strived to observe the highest standards of professionalism, maximum compliance with regulatory frameworks and deference to the public good and interest.

You covered politics, which can be very sensitive. How were you able to manage that?

Of course, the political desk remains a sensitive beat both in public and private media organisations because of the interests it generates. This is understandable because human beings are referred to as political animals and politics is the most-discussed topic by members of the public anytime, any day. By God's special grace, I successfully navigated the volatile terrain of political reporting in a public media organisation by being conscious of the reality of the ownership; weighing every word used in my reports, protecting the public interest and making objectivity my watchword. I make bold to say that in spite of the mindset of some members of the public (including some professional colleagues), no minister of information, permanent secretary, director-general or director of news ever dictated to me what and how to write or to tilt a particular political report written or edited by me. What obtains in

## My Mother Was In Labour For Eight Days, I Came Out Presumed Dead -Onayiga

many government-owned media houses is sheer overzealousness and self-censorship by supposed professionals in order to please the powers that be. I regard such as unnecessary, unethical and debasing.

Can you provide an insight into what sustained your interest as a journalist in a public corporation?

It is basically my passion for the noble profession of journalism. I recall that on my first day in the lecture hall of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism at Ogbia in Lagos in 1986, the then director, Mr Dotun Boluwade, made it clear to us that there was no money in the profession. He, however, assured us that we would make a mark in the society, dine and wine with kings and queens if we excelled. I also adopted Dele Giwa and Ray Ekuas my role models when they visited NIJ as guest lecturers in clean ash-coloured Mercedes Benz cars, dressed in glittering well-tailored suits of the same colour and shoes to match. That day, I said to myself, 'if these guys could look so good as journalists, then that is the way to go!' The late Mrs Remi Oyo, as an editor in the FRCN Network newsroom, also did a lot to inspire me.

Most importantly, I am a child of glory and destiny; I found favour in God and men. My bosses and colleagues took interest in me and they encouraged me, notwithstanding the challenges I encountered along the way. Indeed, I have told some friends that I will like to remain a journalist if I happen to come to the world again.

How was growing up?

I am from a polygamous home but had to be raised out of matrimony from age nine. My mother did everything humanly possible to raise my siblings and me to be responsible citizens. My dad is from Makun-Omi in the Ogun Waterside Local Government Area of Ogun State and my mum is from Igbotu in Ese-Odo Local Government Area of Ondo State. They were both Christians. Growing up was a bit rough. The setting was not ideal. You know the challenges associated with coming from a broken home. I had to live with my mum from age nine. Yes, she loved and catered for all her six children. But her relationship with me was extraordinary for obvious reasons.

Was there any special circumstance surrounding your birth?

I was a miracle child! My birth was astonishing. People who witnessed my birth still call me a miracle child. Having gone through an excruciating labour for eight days, everyone around gave up on my mum and me. The sleepy town of Igbotu, now in Ese-Odo Local Government Area of Ondo State, and its environs had no maternity home or any medical facility to attend to such a critical situation. Traditional birth attendants, Christian and Muslim clerics were brought from far and near to, at least, save the life of my mother. Eventually, in the early hours of Monday, 23rd November, 1959, those present were able to pull the baby out. Looking very weak and breathless, the baby was instantly put in a basket and thrown into a waste bin. I was presumed dead! The concern of those present was to save the life of my mother who was equally weak and gasping for breath.

How were you able to survive?

About 20 minutes after I was born, an elderly woman, known in the village as 'Iya Pupa' breezed in and was told that the baby came out dead. Surprisingly, she insisted on seeing the bin where the purported dead baby was thrown into. By the time the woman got there, an army of ants and other insects were already helping themselves to the baby's tender body. Iya Pupa noticed, however, that the newly born was warm and breathing faintly. She instantly sent for sand and a particular leaf from a nearby stream; scrubbed them on the body of the baby and alas, he responded. That was how God used the elderly woman to bring joy and celebration to the riverine community. So, you can now appreciate the basis for the special bond between my late mum and me.

I thank God that I did not allow my circumstance of being a product of a broken home to sway me into waywardness. Instead, it reinvigorated me to be determined to succeed in life and to ensure that I have an ideal family life.

How did that affect your education?

It was also a bit tough too. I was not privileged to enjoy the ideal straight primary-secondary-university education system. I had to take breaks intermittently. I attended UNA Primary School, Ebute-Metta, Lagos and later Trinity

### My Mother Was In Labour For Eight Days, I Came Out Presumed Dead -Onayiga

Secondary Technical School, Olodi-Apapa, also in Lagos. Thereafter, I got stuck and had to get a job; first, as a labourer at Berger Paints, Igamu and later as a telegrapher at the Posts and Telecommunications Department (P&T), Marina, Lagos. The interesting thing about my tertiary education is that I had to combine it with regular work. I did a two-year professional diploma course at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogbia, Lagos in 1986 and a Bachelor's degree in Journalism through distance learning.

Did you go beyond that?

To satisfy my desire to be lettered in the science of politics, having consistently covered the practice of politics for about three decades, I went back to school to obtain a degree in Political Science from the University of Abuja. I didn't stop there, I capped it with a master's degree in Media Arts from the same university. I equally attended courses in Journalism and Public Relations at reputable institutions in Great Britain, the United States and some other countries of the world. For instance, while serving as Chief Press Secretary to a Minister of Petroleum Resources in 1996, I attended an International Public Relations course in London which earned me a Diploma in Public Relations. It was coordinated by the world-renowned Public Relations expert and author, the late Professor Sam Black. I was also privileged to attend a certificate course in International Oil Supply, Transportation, Refining and Trading from the high-profile College of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Oxford, United Kingdom in 1997.

Can you throw more light on your career journey?

My career journey was exciting; fulfilling. The journey was worthwhile. I found favour in God and man. I tried to carve a niche for myself in the specialised field of political reporting. A few of the political events, issues and structures I covered included the late Ibrahim Waziri's Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) of the Second Republic, the 1983 general elections, the Second Republic House of Representatives, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of the defunct Third Republic, the proceedings and other activities of the Senate of the Third Republic and the National Republican Convention (NRC) throughout its existence. The coverage of the National Constitutional Conference of 1994 and the National Political Reform Conference of 2005 were assignments I found sensitive and challenging while pursuing, reporting and analysing politics.

In the light of your tough background and busy schedule as a reporter, how did you find time to love?

Well, as it is natural, I still found time for that. Indeed, mine was love at first sight. The moment I met my wife, I knew she would be my life partner because we blended so quickly - no pretences, no deceit. Indeed, our courtship lasted three months only. We met at the yearly Okosi Boat Regatta at Makun-Omi, Ogun Waterside Local Government Area. I thank Almighty God that I have no regrets about marrying my wife 37 years ago.

What turns you off in people and what are the pull factors?

I like people who are God-fearing, intelligent and hardworking. I get attracted by men and women who are focused and are positive minded. Moderation must also be your watchword if you are to be my friend. However, I avoid people who are not honest and are lazy. I abhor sadism. The 'can-do spirit' must be there if you are to be my friend.

How do you relax?

I do listen and dance to Nigerian and African music. I also enjoy swimming.

<P></Text>

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2023



## Why I sought review of Supreme Court judgement, by Ihedioha

The Nation (Nigeria)

March 9, 2020 Monday

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Length: 790 words

### **Body**

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Ousted Imo Governor Emeka Ihedioha has explained why he sought review of the Supreme Court judgement that declared Senator Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress as Governor

He said that apart from wanting to defend the mandate freely given to him by the people of the state, the major reason he sought the review of the Supreme Court judgement was to ensure the future implications were not too dire.

He however declared he had accepted the outcome of the judgement as part of life experiences for which he has become wiser.

The Apex Court on March 3rd, 2020 upheld its earlier decision, which sacked Ihedioha and declared Uzodinma as winner of the March 9, 2019 governorship election in the state.

But, in his first official reaction to that judgement, Ihedioha described the judgement as a 'tragic episode that thwarted the wishes of the people in a cynical manner'.

In a statement he personally issued on Sunday, Ihedioha said: 'Whatever may be the personal injury I suffer as a result of the miscarriage of justice, my main concern in this whole tragic episode is not about me. It has always been about the implications this judgement could have for the future of our democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count.'

'If institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, where lies the future of our democracy? That was why I sought a review of the Supreme Court judgement.'

'Even though justice was not served at the end, the well articulated dissenting judgement delivered by His Lordship, Justice Centus Nweze, has vindicated our stand. I am sure that history and posterity will be kind to him'.

He said he had accepted the trials and difficulties as part of life as they had enabled him to become wiser and more sympathetic to the plights of others in similar circumstances.

'But I am firmly resolved never to give up on the struggle for a better Imo State. And for a better governed Nigeria', he said.

He said the outcome of the judgement review was certainly not what the people of the state wanted or worked so hard for.

### Why I sought review of Supreme Court judgement, by Ihedioha

Ihedioha noted that while it was disheartening that their desire to introduce good governance had been halted, in the interim, he expressed happiness that the people's modest efforts had not gone unnoticed.

'I therefore feel a sense of pride and gratitude for the wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us.

'Permit me to use this opportunity to thank all those who played one role or another in this historic quest for justice and truth. I must thank members of the diplomatic community for voicing their concerns for the stability of our country. I commend the Chairman and Members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for their vanguard role and leadership during this period.

'In particular, my special thanks go to all Imo citizens for their uncommon support, solidarity, and collective outrage. Never have a people been so united and committed to a cause. You prayed, fasted, marched, protested and even cried. You sacrificed your time, resources, and endeavour for this just cause.

'On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand for justice and fairness. Imo people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice. Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power.

'I will forever be in the debt of Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of good conscience, who added their voice to condemn the injustice done in our case.

'These are people unknown to me personally but who could not bear the illogic of turning number four to number one on the basis of a fraudulently procured result, and appealed to the Supreme Court to save itself and our judiciary.

'To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late journalist, Dele Giwa: 'No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary'. We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands'.

He expressed appreciation to members of his legal team who pushed the frontiers of electoral jurisprudence to advance the nation's constitutional democracy.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2020



## Quadruple Heritage: The Drama of Post-Colonial Nigeria!

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

June 17, 2020 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1895 words

**Byline:** Justine John Dyikuk -

### **Body**

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In one of my columns "Labels as Instruments of War": A Post-COVID-19 Consideration," I made reference to Prof. Ali Mazrui's seminal thesis, The Triple Heritage – a film series premiered on BBC in 1986. Mazrui's work set out to challenge the negative effects of Europeanization on African values and thought patterns: "In that documentary project, the Kenyan-born academic who had a stint in the University of Jos, Nigeria fingered three major influences namely an indigenous heritage borne out of time and climate change, the heritage of Eurocentric capitalism forced on Africans by European colonialism and the spread of Islam by both jihad and evangelism as responsible for the menace. Mazrui who berated the West for regarding Africa as 'Recipient' rather than a 'Transmitter' lamented why leaders of Independent-Africa were unable to address the negative effects of this history."

While Mazrui was an unlucky beneficiary of Colonial Africa, most of us are children of Post Colonial Africa. This means that perspectives would defer. If the Kenyan-born The Triple Heritage theory is anything to go by, it is crucial to ask whether Nigeria has graduated from the college of being a 'Recipient' rather than a "Transmitter" nation or not. Well, it is up to the reader to decipher after these facts are laid bare. In this column, I want to argue that as a country, we are contending with what I call, "A Quadruple Heritage" which consists of militocracy or despotic governance, brain drain, Afghanistanism and collapse of the rule of law.

To start with, hopes were high when the founding fathers of Africa otherwise referred to as African nationalist leaders like Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Albert Luthuli (South Africa), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria) et al dared the colonialists to demand for the liberation of their people. With Ghana being the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence on 6th March 1957, followed by Guinea on 2nd October 1958 and Cameroon and Nigeria on 1st January 1960 and 1st October 1960 respectively, it was clear for the imperialists that they have overstayed their welcome. No thanks to colonial rule, Africa was raped of its natural resources. From Mozambique, Guinea and Ghana to Anglo, Botswana and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the story is the same. While lands were annexed and resources like gold, diamonds, tin, zirconium, coal, platinum, crude oil, columbite, cobalt, bauxite and others were shipped to Europe and the New World, countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe (the then Southern Rhodesia) suffered the apartheid regime.

## Quadruple Heritage: The Drama of Post-Colonial Nigeria !

First, the lowering of the Union Jack and hoisting of the Nigerian flag gave rise to the declaration of Nigeria as a sovereign independent state on 1st October 1960. To all intent and purposes, this signalled freedom, socio-economic and infrastructural gains. Sadly, no sooner had the Boeing 01:10:60 took off than the first military intervention occurred. Apparently, the coup d'état of 1963 put honey in the mouths of the Khaki boys who would exchange the barracks for city life (statecraft). To be sure, from the first republic to date, Nigeria has witnessed 8 military interventions: Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (16 January 1966 – 29 July 1966), Yakubu Gowon (1 August 1966 – 29 July 1975), Murtala Mohammed (29 July 1975 – 13 February 1976), Olusegun Obasanjo (13 February 1976 – 1 October 1979), Muhammadu Buhari (31 December 1983 – 27 August 1985), Ibrahim Babangida (27 August 1985 – 26 August 1993), Sani Abacha (17 November 1993 – 8 June 1998) and Abdulsalami Abubakar (8 June 1998 – 29 May 1999).

This is aside from the failed coups of Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu (January 15, 1966), Buka Sukar Dimka (13 February, 1976), Mamman Vatsa (December 17, 1985), Gideon Orkar (April 22, 1990) and Oladipo Diya (21 December, 1997). These military interventions in our fledgeling democracy militarized the populace. It created undemocratic hysteria and left the people traumatised and agitated. While Nigerians were trying to recover from this epilepsy, the same military that created the problems in the first place changed to Agbada/Babagira and returned as "repentant democrats." It is left to students of history, political science and mass communication to scan the "civilian" administrations of Olusegun Obasanjo and the incumbent Muhammadu Buhari on the ideals of democratic governance.

Second, while the democratic experiment lasted, Africa's finest brains kept populating the diaspora community. Here, the brain drain held sway. For example, some members of The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) which kept increasing the volume to send the Khaki men back to the barracks were speaking and writing while abroad. Since maximum dictators like Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha had zero tolerance for criticism or dissenting voices, many critics stayed away in order to canvas for a return democratic rule. To this end, academics who were supposed to stay back at home to fix the situation were recruited to work in greener pastures like Europe and America while the populace kept surviving the suffocation. This led to a collapse of the education sector and the rest is what we are witnessing today with the current ASUU strike.

Third, the media which is the fourth estate of the realm after the executive, judiciary and legislature started flying on a high altitude when veteran journalists like **Dele Giwa** debuted investigative journalism in 1984 to ensure the naming and shaming of corrupt public office holders in Nigeria. From Newswatch's **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed in 1984, the pioneers of Tell Magazine (15 April 1991), Nosa Igbor, Dare Babarinsa, Onome Osifo-Whiskey and Ayodele Akinkuoto trailblazed what they called guerilla journalism which constantly harassed the military rule of the "C-in-C" Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. Interestingly, Tell was awarded the Special Award for Human Rights Journalism Under Threat at the Amnesty International UK Media Awards in 1998. Notice of the award read: "Tell has continued to publish throughout the period of Nigerian dictatorship despite intimidation, harassment and the detention without charge or trial – the Tell staff." Just when the jetliner delivered democracy, the press in Nigeria began to face new challenges such as intimation of journalists, poor remuneration, lack of insurance cover and brown envelope syndrome.

As a consequence, it gave in to Afghanistanism – Reporting about George Floyd in far away from the United States of America while neglecting more important issues like who are the sponsors of insurgency in the country and Parachute journalism which connotes reporting on a story in which the reporter has little knowledge or experience about. For instance, except for mediums like Premium Times and Channels TV, investigative reporting across the country is a far cry. At best, while the media in Nigeria is more interested in what happens in other climes, "politicians" are busy smiling to the bank in the World's Poverty Capital.

Fourth, it would appear that it was the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua that introduced "rule of law" as a new lexicon in Nigeria's democratic process. Before and after his short presidency (2007 to 2010), "rule of law" has remained a mirage in Nigeria. Although activists like Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni 9 were executed by hanging in 1995 by the Abacha junta, lack of robust judicial and legislative systems have been fingered as reasons for legal summersaults in the country. While some legal luminaries blame the ugly trend on an imported imperial constitution

## Quadruple Heritage: The Drama of Post-Colonial Nigeria !

which was handed over to us, others are of the opinion that is sheer lack of political will to do the needful. In terms of obeying the laws of the land, what we have is the theatre of the absurd.

For example, in an article "Measuring the Buhari Administration on Human Rights Abuses: A Journalist's Perspective" (In Ndubisi E.J & Kanu I.A (Eds.) Human Rights in Africa: Perspectives within Ecology of Religion, History and Governance, 41-47), Dyikuk (2018) cited a chapter in the book "Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission" entitled Immunity or Impunity? The Politics of Non-appearance of the Generals wherein the author, Matthew Kukah (2011) revealed how the non-appearance of three former heads of state, General Muhammadu Buhari (1984-1995), General Ibrahim Babangida (1998-1993) and General Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998-1999) who were summoned to appear before the Oputa Panel generated much curiosity, anger and frustration nationally and internally (p.239).

Recently, in an article titled "Buhari's militocracy" published on 07 March 2019, a columnist with The Guardian, Paul Onomuakpokpo wrote: "Ever since Buhari succeeded in conning the citizens with his pretensions to being a born-again democrat, he has never hidden his contempt for the obligations of his newly-found calling. Yet, the citizens make allowance for the blossoming of the democrat in him. But the more they expect him to demonstrate the readiness to abide by the tenets of democracy, the more they are disappointed." He surmised that: "Instead of the democrat in Buhari unfolding, the passage of each day witnesses the manifestation of his autocratic excesses. Buhari obviously draws inspiration from the success of one dictatorial action to perpetrate a worse one. Now, he feels secure in the notion that no matter the abyss of autocracy he plunges the citizens, he would not suffer any inconvenient consequence."

It is now clear to the reader that drawing from Mazrui's Triple Heritage, Nigeria is currently contending with "A Quadruple Heritage" – militocracy/despotic governance, brain drain, Afghanistanism and collapse of the rule of law. To reverse the trend, like the Asian Tigers, we need massive investments in modern education with special emphasis on science and innovation. Only a knowledge-based economy can counter militocracy or despotic governance on the one hand and deliver the dividends of democracy on the other towards leading the masses to the expected paradise.

The Press in Nigeria must grow beyond its current limits to incubating the new Dele Giwas who would match words with action in terms of dogged investigate reportage which not only names and shames corrupt public office holders but capitalizes on homegrown problems for overall development. Perhaps we need bold Nigerians in the mould of the biblical Gideon who would sound the horn to raise alarm across the country and shout "For God and country." It is high time the media in the country outgrew Afghanistanism – let the world hear about our own George Floyds who cannot breathe as a result of many years of misrule. Because rule of law is the driver of every democratic experiment, history will not forgive the executive, legislature, judiciary, Civil Society Organisation's (CSOs) and indeed other well-meaning Nigerians if we continue to chew the gum of this inopportune fourfold heritage. Enough of the drama. Let's get to work. Let's build statecraft. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Fr. Dyikuk is a Lecturer of Mass Communication, University of Jos, Editor – Caritas Newspaper and Convener, Media Team Network Initiative (MTNI), Nigeria.

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Justin John

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2020



## Duro Onabule: A library burns down, by Femi Adesina

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 26, 2022 Friday

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### **Body**

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When an old man dies, a library burns to the ground, says Amadou Hampate Ba, Malian writer, historian, and ethnologist (1901-1991). And so it was with frontline journalist, essayist and image maker of the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) military administration, Chief Duro Onabule, who passed away August 16, 2022. It was about five weeks shy of his 83rd birthday.

Yes, Onabule was old enough at 83. But not too old. In 2003 or 2004, when I was editor of Daily Sun, I had asked him to write a weekly column for the newspaper. He kept faith for almost 20 years. His last outing was on the Friday before his passage last week. Fidelity to your art and calling. That was what the man displayed till his last breath. And it showed that his mental faculties remained ever young and virile.

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When Concord closed down, and we started The Sun in 2003, of which I was the pioneer daily editor, I invited him to write a column, which he did till his last week on earth. His strength as a writer was his power of recall; awesome. His sense of history; amazing. Frankness; unimpeachable. A walking encyclopedia. You may not necessarily agree with his position, but the argument and justification were often unassailable.

### Duro Onabule: A library burns down, by Femi Adesina

He was popularly called Double Chief, a cognomen that came from his traditional chieftaincy, Jagunmolu of Ijebu, and his role as CPS to IBB. When he turned 60, I was at his Ijebu Ode home, where he may be buried September 16, to celebrate with him. When he turned 70, and held a celebration at Civic Center in Lagos, I was the Master of Ceremonies. This shows the bond between us. And see the trajectory of his career and mine. He was pioneer Features Editor of National Concord. I held the same position. He became Deputy Editor of the paper. I also did. He went on to become editor. I did. He was appointed CPS, I also got appointed Special Adviser on Media and Publicity. He was a writer all his life, I hope to be.

On the afternoon of the day he died, I was in the office at the Presidential Villa, when his thought suddenly flashed into my mind. I told myself that he would be 83 in September, and made a mental note that we needed to issue birthday greetings. Possibly, that was the very moment, unbeknownst to me, that he went into the paroxysms of death, and passed on. I heard the news later in the evening.

Onabule served the man who had toppled Muhammadu Buhari as military head of state, in what was a palace coup. And we know the animus that existed between the two men for a long time, till time, that inexorable healer, mended the wounds.

I had been incurably opposed to IBB, simply because of my love for Buhari. I believed he did us in, simply to satisfy a personal ambition. And I took a trenchant position against him as a columnist, till he showed me friendship and goodwill in 2013, when my mother died. He saw the news in the media, and placed a phone call to me. He also sent a high powered personality to the burial. I softened.

I was also opposed to Major General Abdulkarim Adisa (now deceased), when he began campaigning for IBB to return to power through the ballot box in 2007. I wrote many critical pieces on him, and he protested to Onabule. Out of respect for the latter, I held my fire, after he spoke to me on Adisa's behalf.

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I remember December of 2016, at Christmas season. I had compiled the names of some loyalists, encouraging the President to place personal phone calls to them. He went through the list, and told me to add Chief Tunji Braithwaite. One after the other, we began to call them up, including Onabule. Their discussion was so friendly, and he expressed his appreciation to the writer for his support. Incidentally, the President's chat with Braithwaite that night was their last, as the man died shortly after.

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When Professor Gambari, a most urbane and decent man, with wide international experience, resumed work, he told me at our first meeting: 'Femi, just take me as your big uncle. We are both here to serve the President to the best of our abilities.' I laughed the antagonists to scorn. Rambunctious. I even had my two feet in the air.

But at the peak of their evil propaganda, Onabule had waded in. He wrote a piece, with the headline, 'Femi Adesina: So what?' As an alumnus of the Villa School, he educated them on how the place was structured, and how it operates. They stole away like a beaten dog, with its tail between its legs. Hahahahahaaaaaa.

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The last time I saw Chief Onabule was on a flight from Lagos to Abuja. Where was he headed? Minna, to see IBB. Loyal till the last. No wonder the former military president, in his tribute, described him as a man with 'remarkable and unalloyed loyalty to friends.'

When Onabule turned 70, I had asked him at his Epe Lane residence at Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos. 'Chief, why have you not written your memoir as IBB's spokesman for 8 years. You owe the public that book.'

He kept quiet for a few minutes, reflecting. Then he looked up, and said, 'It's good to write. But it's not a must. I may write, and I may not write.'

And unless he had something going in the final years, he didn't write. A library burned to the ground on August 16, a day before the 81st birthday of his former principal. Adieu, Double Chief. You were a dear senior friend. I'll always remember you.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2022

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## Remembering Nigeria's journalism pathfinder, Stanley Macebu

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 4, 2021 Thursday

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**Length:** 990 words

**Byline:** Cyril

### **Body**

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By: Uzor Maxim Uzoatu

Dr. Stanley Nkwachikwelumamaya Macebu was a rare breed in the freshest sense of the term, a charge of fine electricity who all on his own changed the face of journalism practice in Nigeria.

Stanley was at once a scholar, philosopher, cerebral journalist, informed commentator, mentor, liberal, technocrat, icon, legend, connoisseur, all rolled into one diminutive body of irresistible charisma.

As the founding Managing Director of the Guardian Newspapers, Stanley bequeathed on this country in word and deed "the Flagship of the Nigerian Press."

He died at age 67 by 4.15 in the morning on Sunday, March 7, 2010 at the National Hospital, Abuja.

Born on December 28, 1942, the incredibly intelligent lad attended Government Primary School, Port Harcourt, where he broke all the academic records.

He took a scholarship to Ngwa High School, Aba, where he excelled at the very top of his class.

He was then admitted for his Higher School Certificate at the esteemed Kings College, Lagos, where his intellect was the staple of legend. He even taught at Kings College, a prodigy.

Kings College legends such as Dr Yemi Ogunbiyi and the immortal "Motor-Park Economist" Ashikiwe-Adione-Egom can never tire of giving testimony of Stanley's good works.

Stanley took his prodigious intellect to the English department at the University of Ibadan from 1963 to 1966.

## Remembering Nigeria's journalism pathfinder, Stanley Macebuh

He departed the shores of Nigeria in 1967, just before the outbreak of the civil war, to study at the University of Sussex in England.

It is a mark of his genius that he acquired his DPhil (Doctor of Philosophy degree) at the age of 26.

The University of California, Berkeley, California, USA then poached him as an in-house African philosopher during the Civil Rights Movement era in the US.

It was Stanley's Doctorial dissertation supervisor who recommended the wunderkind to the American authorities for him to join the UCLA Faculty at Berkeley, California.

He distinguished himself for two years at Berkeley before two other universities in America, Columbia University of New York and City College of New York, both engaged in a battle to have him on their faculties.

Both universities had to agree to share his multiform services!

Stanley therefore set the record of lecturing in the two universities at the same time, and it was organized in such a way that he taught full-time at City College and part-time at the Institute of African Studies of Columbia University.

Stanley had risen to the post of a tenured Associate Professor of English in the US before he was invited by Patrick Dele Cole to return to Nigeria to breathe fresh air into the Daily Times newspaper as the Editorial Adviser.

He brought along the legendary Dele Giwa, and Nigerian journalism would never be the same again.

Stanley initiated the policy of separating the Editorial Board as the think-tank of the newspaper from the reportorial regimen.

Back then, it was the feature writers that supplied the editorials more or less as afterthoughts.

When the politics in Daily Times got out of hand he left, only to latter join forces with the financier Alex Ibru to found The Guardian, which he from the very beginning intended to be not just a great liberal newspaper but the "Flagship of Nigerian Journalism."

Stanley's audacious dream was to make The Guardian among the five best newspapers in the English-speaking world.

Stanley was a man who cherished ideas, and he hired all makes of intellectuals who even disagreed with him ideologically.

He believed in the sanctity of intellectual disputation.

The editorial board he set up was made up of Onwuchekwa Jemie, Sonala Olumhense, Femi Osofisan, Eddie Iroh, Sully Abu, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Chinweizu, Odia Ofeimun, Edwin Madunagu, Herbert Ekwe-Ekwe etc.

Stanley put his foot down that all opinion articles must come in within the 800-word ambit, stressing that anybody who could not make his argument within 800 words had not properly organized his thought in the first instance.

He also championed the cause of addressing everybody as "Simply Mister" against the Nigerian grain of addressing ill-assorted potentates as Chief, Prof, Dr, Engr., Rev. etc.

The labour of his ideas would eventually clash with the capital of the family that set up the newspaper.

Stanley performance had to leave The Guardian and tried his hands at business, but that was not his forte.

He helped some financiers to set up Sentinel magazine and the Post Express newspaper but his lofty ideas could not gel with the owners.

## Remembering Nigeria's journalism pathfinder, Stanley Macebuh

He was at the inception of democracy in 1999 appointed Senior Special Assistant (Special Duties) to former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The gruff ways of Obasanjo could not have suited the urbane subtlety of Stanley.

He later became the Deputy Chief of Staff to Obasanjo, but in the course of Obasanjo's second term in office he was in and out of the system.

Before his death, he was engaged as a consulting Editorial Adviser to Nduka Obaigbena's ThisDay.

Stanley made his mark as an intellectual, publishing in 1973 a seminal study of the iconic African-American novelist and essayist, James Baldwin.

He is said to have worked for many years on another academic tome on Jewish-American studies, provisionally entitled "The Tyranny of Things".

His very close associates reveal that Stanley regretted until his death the non-completion and publishing of the book after he had written well over 400 pages.

Even so, his return to Nigeria in 1977 denied him of his ultimate ambition of getting employed at Harvard University and eventually retiring there as a Professor Emeritus.

Stanley's life deserves all celebration, and he richly deserves the accolade of "Father of Modern Nigerian Journalism".

An aesthete, he not only had a rich taste for fine stylistic writing but also had an abiding love for fine cognac.

He will be sorely missed by all fine minds.

Uzoatu writes from Lagos

The post Remembering Nigeria's journalism pathfinder, Stanley Macebuh appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2021

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## Duro Onabule: A library burns down

PM News

August 26, 2022 Friday

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**Length:** 1373 words

### **Body**

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All the while I was opposed to his principal, Chief Onabule never took it against me. He would only say; you this young man, only God would settle the matter between you and IBB. And laugh.

I was also opposed to Major General Abdulkarim Adisa (now deceased), when he began campaigning for IBB to return to power through the ballot box in 2007. I wrote many critical pieces on him, and he protested to Onabule. Out of respect for the latter, I held my fire, after he spoke to me on Adisa's behalf.

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\*Adesina is Special Adviser to President Buhari on Media and Publicity

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2022

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## Gen. Babangida On The Marble

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

August 13, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 1178 words

### **Body**

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56 views | Ozodinukwe Okenwa | August 13, 2021

Retired General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) broke his silence last weekend on the rising Arise TV network. Ms Ngozi Alaegbu travelled to Minna, Niger State, to interview IBB inside his mind-boggling edifice. Living reclusively in obscene opulence in the city near Abuja since beating a forced hasty retreat from the national political scene post-June 12 Babangida must have considered it auspicious making himself heard again. The big man does not need any introduction to anyone conversant enough with his 'Maradonic' political exploits in power decades ago.

Gen. Babangida rose to national prominence in the middle of the 80's when he deposed a dictator in power at that time, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, (himself a coup plotter who had overthrown a democratically-elected government of the late Shehu Shagari). He ruled Nigeria guilefully for eight odd years. He made name for himself by bastardising the promised democratic processes and institutionalising corruption. During his giddy years 'settlement syndrome' became a favourable 'weapon' with which the opposition were compromised.

A master of political perfidy Babangida was demystified and taken to global infamy by June 12, a presidential poll he organized and turned to a national tragedy after the winner and the loser had emerged. His criminal annulment of the result of the free and fair election won by the late Bashorun MKO Abiola led to chaos and loss of lives. Abiola lost his life (assassinated) while fighting for the mandate Nigerians freely gave him.

General Babangida is better described as a crafty bloody militiaman, a professional coup plotter who excelled in his military career through perfidy, graft and shady dealings. Officially he had acknowledged himself as a 'Maradona' and 'evil genius' but IBB is certainly more than that. He was inordinately ambitious and treacherous! Like the late Argentine soccer legend, Diego Maradona, who mesmerized and dazzled the global soccer community with his football talent Babangida dribbled the opposition until June 12 arrived with a bang and confused and consumed him.

He died militarily and politically after perfidiously spending billions of Dollars on a bogus transition scheme and taking Nigerians for a fraudulent democratic ride. IBB was an enemy of democracy, free press and freedom. A

## Gen. Babangida On The Marble

mass murderer he orchestrated the Ejigbo fatal plane crash that killed scores of promising officers! He killed **Dele Giwa**, the great investigative **journalist**, with a letter bomb! He committed a good number of atrocities that ordinarily he ought to be docked and jailed like the incarcerated former South African President, Jacob Zuma.

Featuring exclusively on Arise Television the 'evil genius' never disappointed. A hard look thrown his way indicated that he is indeed getting nearer to the grave. Yet as he joined the Octogenarian club he looked graceful in his old age. He spoke his mind without fear or favour.

Generally he spoke about the presidential poll slated for 2023. He talked about the massive corruption in the system, present and past. He bared his mind on the agitations rocking the nation championed by the detained Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Igboho. He answered questions concerning June 12, democracy and the Nigerian present condition.

On June 12 the retired dictator was in his best treacherous element. He declared that the controversial annulment of the Abiola victory was based on the fact that if it materialised there would have been a violent coup d'état and more instability in the polity. He admitted that pressure was mounted on him by civilian and military elements to cancel the election. What he never told us was why he left the late Gen. Abacha behind as he retired the senior officers in the eve of his departure from power.

On the agitation for both Biafra and Oduduwa Republics the General predicted failure for the efforts saying that Nigerians did not believe in secession. He never told us when he conducted a referendum to arrive at such imbecilic conclusion. IBB made it clear Nigerians cherished their nation preferring to remain one yet what he failed to appreciate was that those supporting Igboho or Kanu are Nigerians and not foreigners.

Nigerians may be a happy people in love with peace but when the system is broken then something better ought to give!

On corruption in the system Gen. Babangida scored his highest point. He declared that he was surprised seeing those who stole billions walking free and enjoying their loot! He claimed that he fought corruption better than what 'Mr Integrity' is presently doing! He hit the bull's eye when he claimed that those that served under him could be seen as 'saints' compared to the Buharists and 'Buhardeens' presently in power.

On the general elections slated for 2023 the General never minced words calling for a new generation of leaders. He said he would go for a President 60 years or below as compared to the present old men running Nigeria aground and ruining her prospects for greatness. By that singular declaration Babangida must have had Atiku Abubakar and Bola Tinubu in mind. Atiku has never hidden his intention to contest the presidency yet again come 2023 despite the fact that he is getting older and older. Ditto Asiwaju Tinubu whose official age is put at 69 but rumours are flying about that he must have doctored his age!

Even sixty years IBB suggested is not good enough. Nigeria needs desperately a young man in his early or late 40s to take over power post-Buharism to knock sense into the senseless system. Africa remains a hopeless helpless continental case because it is brimming with youths but led by gerontocrats. In contrast Europe is an old continent of old men and shrinking youth but governed by young men. Take Emmanuel Macron of France, Justin Trudeau of Canada and Scott Morrison of Australia for examples.

Gerontocrats in power from Abidjan to Abuja, Conakry to Yaounde. Alassane Ouattara, Muhammadu Buhari, Alpha Conde, Paul Biya they are all holding sway; they represent what is wrong leadership-wise in mother Africa. But President Ouattara of Ivory Coast is an exception in terms of service delivery and world-class competence. A great achiever and big dreamer he has effortfully transformed his country in a space of a decade after a protracted political crisis that saw the economy devastated.

Unlike his Nigerian counterpart he is never in the habit of blaming his predecessors for whatever problems or challenges leadership or money could solve. As an economist and patriot he had used a wide global network and connections to attract investors guaranteeing steady power supply and security of lives and properties.

Gen. Babangida On The Marble

In the end Gen. Babangida has no moral, patriotic or democratic lesson to give to Nigerians. Himself, the late Gen. Abacha, Obasanjo and President Muhammadu Buhari are the major problems of Nigeria. The earlier they joined Abacha in hell the better for our collective survival as a great nation under God or Allah!

SOC Okenwa

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Gen. Babangida

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2021

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## **Of reign of gangsters and fraudsters**

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 13, 2020 Thursday

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Length: 1125 words

### **Body**

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I was at a shopping mall with my daughter on July 29 when a young lady approached us. She said she was doing a marketing survey for Lever Brothers. As evidence she gave two Lever Brothers products to my daughter. She said she needed our names and telephone numbers for the survey. While my daughter was asking why she needed our names and telephone numbers, I persuaded my daughter by confirming Lever Brothers often engage in periodic market surveys for their products.

But I was wrong. Within five minutes there was a call purportedly from a member of our University of Ife alumni associations. That was the beginning of my ordeal. Within 10 minutes, more than 10 people called to inform me that my number had been hacked. The following day, I headed for an MTN office nearest to me to show them the MTN number the fraudster used. To my greatest surprise, the young man simply said there was nothing MTN could do and advised me to go and appeal to the fraudster.

The security of life and property of citizens, protection of their rights and reconciliation of differences that naturally exist between groups are the primary responsibilities of a state. This task of the state is made relatively easy because of its monopoly of coercive use of force. And democracy which we ascribed to makes only two demands on government - respect for the will of the people and an abiding faith in the rule of law. Unfortunately, governance is one thing that has been in short supply since the beginning of the fourth republic. One manifestation of absence of governance is the take-over of the nation by brigands and fraudsters.

Unfortunately, like national interest, it is he elected sovereign that determines who the enemies and friends of state are. Thus, President Buhari as military Head of State back in 1984, identified journalist who report truth that embarrassed government officials as enemies of state and went ahead to jail Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor of The Guardian. As elected president, his close associates seem to have identified herdsmen killer squads as friends of the nation while victims trying to protect their land and farm crops are identified as bad hosts and enemies of the state.

His successor, the Babangida's regime equally identified journalists as enemy of state and Dele Giwa Giwa paid the supreme sacrifice when he was killed by a parcel bomb in his dining room. Abacha identified NADECO, which was rechristened 'Agbako' by his deputy, General Oladipo Diya as enemies of the state. The regime chased leading members of the group into exile while many of those who waited at home to confront his evil regime were assassinated.

### Of reign of gangsters and fraudsters

Obasanjo identified the Yoruba who insisted on restructuring of the country as enemies of state. He marginalized the Southwest while ordering the members of Odua militant group to be shot at sight. For him, Asari Dokubo, head of the militant group who confessed receiving mouth-watering contracts from Obasanjo is a friend of the state.

For President Yar'Adua, James Ibori who was later jailed for his sins against his people was a friend of the state while Nuhu Ribadu who probed Ibori who was rescued by an Asaba High Court and put Tafa Balogun, the former IG in chains, forced him to regurgitate the billions of police equipment and welfare funds he stole, was enemy of state who must be haunted out of the country.

Like Boko Haram, a creation of some PDP warring northern governors according to General Owoye Azazi, the then President Jonathan's National Security Adviser, the Niger Delta militants responsible for the loss of about 400,000 barrels of crude oil to oil bunkering daily was a creation of Niger Delta governors. But President Jonathan who according to the Financial Times of London empowered leading members of the groups with multi-billion-dollar contracts to secure of our waterways and protect oil pipelines while the navy remained under-funded saw Niger Delta militants as friend of the state.

Absence of governance finds expression in corruption, greed and debilitating poverty amidst bandits' illegitimately acquired opulence. Absence of governance is also a recipe for a failed state whose signs we are told include endemic corruption by the governing political class, absence of transparency and accountability by the political class and loss of confidence of the ruled in the existing institutions. There are other socio-economic consequences. In the name of privatisation and commercialisation, brigands and fraudsters sold all the commercial concerns established by the founding fathers to themselves and their cronies. The economy came under severe strains. Part of SAP legacy is that an exchange rate which was almost at par with American dollar in 1985 is today N460 to \$1.

Babangida and Abacha groomed new breed of politicians that bred nothing but corruption. El Rufai disclosed how, through the instrumentality of Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), members of the gang shared among its members, most blue-chip Nigerian companies. It is also on record that PPPRA set up government in 2003 was used by members of the political elite and their children to siphon about N1.7 trillion under the fuel subsidy regime.

When President Buhari first came as military Head of State in 1984, his presence as the leader of responsive government was felt by his absence. The fear of Buhari was the beginning of wisdom. Today by paying little or no attention to lawless brigands and fraudsters, he has allowed the state to undermine her role as a neutral arbiter that guarantees ordered society through laws and rules.

Apart from the economy, other manifestation of absence of governance and reign of gangsters is the ongoing mindless killings by herdsmen across the Middle Belt region of the country. Not too long ago, Theophilus Danjuma, former Chief of Army staff and defence minister called on Nigerians to get ready to defend themselves. With army formations and police contingents Kaduna governor El-Rufai called for, we are assaulted everyday with newspaper howling headlines of many that have been killed by invaders who simply disappear into the thin air without trace.

Community policing has been adjudged as the best solution to insecurity in communities. And the logic is unassailable. While federal police posted to remote communities in the country have little or no commitment to the people beyond doing their official duties, police from within the community have a stake in their communities. The Nigerian Police do not swear an oath to die for Nigeria. They therefore don't have apologies for not going beyond their lines of duty. The Nigerian police we see at every remote area openly collecting bribes from motorists do so because they are protected by their anonymity.

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2020



## ODUKOMAIYA: The man who gave me my first newspaper job

The Sun (Nigeria)

August 8, 2014 Friday

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**Length:** 1301 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

### **Body**

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The man who gave me my first newspaper job is an avuncular, old newspaper-man who turned 80 on July 19, 2014: Pa Henry Odukomaia, a man who mid-wifed two newspapers and even gave the two newspapers their names. First, it was Chief M.K.O. Abiola's Concord. Next was Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu's Champion. And just like Odukomaia,

The man who gave me my first newspaper job is an avuncular, old newspaper-man who turned 80 on July 19, 2014: Pa Henry Odukomaia, a man who mid-wifed two newspapers and even gave the two newspapers their names. First, it was Chief M.K.O. Abiola's Concord. Next was Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu's Champion.

And just like Odukomaia, I have, by the grace of God, been associated with the birth and nurturing of five newspapers: Weekend Concord, Sun, Soccer Star, Spectator and lately Entertainment Express.

I feel very proud and highly honoured to be asked to pay tribute to this great newspaperman without whom I probably would not have reached the height I have reached today in journalism.

Going back memory lane, I could remember the year 1979 at the ITT office in Kaduna where I sat before a recruitment panel chaired by Prince Odukomaia. In the panel was Alhaji Fola Ashiru. They had flown all the way from Lagos in Chief Abiola's plane to recruit the best journalists in the land that money could buy.

I had left the University of Lagos in 1977 with a Second Class Upper degree in mass communication. After my NYSC where I served with the police in Jos, I was recruited by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) as a reporter in Jos. With the news agency, I learnt the basics of news reporting. But I wasn't fulfilled as a news agency reporter. I came into journalism to make a name, to get a byline. But at NAN, nobody gave you a byline. Your story went to the general pool, into anonymity, covered by a general NAN byline. So when the opportunity to join a newspaper came

### ODUKOMAIYA: The man who gave me my first newspaper job

my way, I jumped at it. More so, the hype that attended the coming of Concord newspapers plus the star names paraded in their advert copies made it so enticing.

The very stars and columnists that I read about in the then Daily Times of Nigeria were all moving to the new Concord newspaper owned by the nouveau riche million-aire MKO Abiola. The biggest star of them all was **Dele Giwa**, the vibrant **journalist** who had been headhunted from the New York Times to come home and help build journalism in his fatherland. **Dele Giwa** with his Parallax Snaps column had grown into a cult hero. He was one hell of a guy I enjoyed reading. He was my role model—the guy I wanted to be like, my benchmark. I felt that if **Dele Giwa** was leaving the mighty Daily Times to join the new Con-cord, then there must be something in the new newspaper worth looking at. That was my reason for applying for the post of a Correspondent in the National Concord.

And luckily for me, I had a name that rang a bell. My un-cle, Moses Dapo Awoyinfa, had worked as the Chief Press Secretary during the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon. At the interview, Odukomaiya and Ashiru asked whether Moses Awoyinfa was my father and I said yes. In our culture, an uncle is also a father. From the look of satisfaction on the faces of my interviewers, I knew I had passed the interview. Even without having any such uncle, I believe I would still have passed the interview anyway, with my qualification.

That was how I left News Agency of Nigeria to become the Kaduna Correspondent of Concord. From Kaduna, I was discovered by my hero **Dele Giwa** who enjoyed the feature pieces I did for him to the point where he created a column for me called “Reporter’s Notebook” in the Sun-day Concord where he was the pioneer editor. Reporter’s Notebook was an offbeat column where I reported on the lighter side of my encounters as a reporter in Kaduna. The rapport with **Dele Giwa** reached a point where I had to be transferred on promotion to Lagos to work directly under the celebrated editor.

Working with **Giwa** was an entirely new journalistic ex-perience. For me, it was another “University of Journalism” where I garnered enough skills and experience that was brought to bear when I became the pioneer editor of Week-end Concord, Nigeria’s first Saturday paper. It’s so sad that **Dele Giwa** did not live long enough to see his “grandchild”: the Weekend Concord. It’s one paper he would have loved because everything we learnt from him inspired the paper. Right from day one, Weekend Concord was an instant hit. It was a trailblazer.

From 1989 to 1999, I edited the paper for 10 years with Mr. Dimba Igwe, another **Dele Giwa** protégé as my depu-ty. It was the best 10 years of our professional lives where we nurtured a generation of young newspapermen like **Dele** Momodu, Femi Adesina, Shola Oshunkeye, Chika Abano-bi, Eric Osagie, even the former Minister of Sports, Bolaji Abdullahi and others who all later made their own marks in journalism as editors and managing directors.

I never had the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Odukomaiya but I know that he gave Concord a solid foundation that enabled the Con-cord plane to soar into a commercial and edito-rial success. He was able to implement Chief Abiola’s vision to the letter. Abiola wanted an influential paper that would be the talk of the na-tion, a paper that will create a buzz, a paper that will break big stories and keep everyone on his or her toes, a paper that will create, in the words of Abiola “conviviality, cordiality and congeniality” among Nigerians. It was this “3Cs” that inspired Odukomaiya to come up with the name “Na-tional Concord” for the newspaper which Abiola bought instantly.

I didn’t know much of the details of what led to Odukomaiya’s departure from Concord. But I know it had to do with family intrigues which culminated in the exit of the highly principled media hero. From Concord, he left to pioneer Chief Iwuayanwu’s Champion. And again, he proved that thunder could strike twice in the same place. In Champion, he championed journalistic excellence, taking the paper to greater heights. But then, the ugly spectre intrinsic in running another man’s business reared its head again: A clash of interest between the consummate newspaper man, Odukomaiya and the publisher, Chief Iwuanyanwu. In the heady days of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presiden-tial election presumed to have been won by Abiola, Oduko-maiya was asked to apologize for a story he approved to be reported. A story about how the accounts of military offic-ers were frozen in Europe and America following the an-nulment of the June 12 Election by the Gen. Babangida-led government. The publisher Chief Iwuanyanwu who was a government contractor coerced Odukomaiya into apologis-ing for carrying

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the story but he stood his ground. He was 60 when he left Champion in 1994. Although his head was bloodied, he left like a true champion that he is, with his head unbowed.

At a point, he was even tempted with an offer to return to his job, if only he would recant and say sorry. But he told his publisher: "If the condition for me to come back is to withdraw my letter, then I would not come back. If I were that kind of person, you wouldn't have employed me in the first place. Let bygones be bygones. I have served you faithfully. I have enjoyed working while the matter was within the confines of you and I. Now it has gone beyond you and I, so let me stay in my house."

At 80, I am sure Pa Odukomaiya is at peace with him-self, having fought a good fight, run a good race and kept the faith. That is the crowning glory of a faithful news-man—keeping faith with the profession, rather than serving mammon. He is a man of unimpeachable integrity. I wish him good health, more years on earth and a glorious crown above—when it is his turn to get there! That is the ultimate glory. Happy birthday, sir!!!

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2014

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## Celebrating Dele Momodu, my star reporter

The Sun (Nigeria)

May 23, 2020 Saturday

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**Length:** 1205 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Like the Beatles, we were young, gifted and out to change the world, not with pop music, but with a new brand of pop journalism, a new narrative, a new song, a new approach to news. Call it new news! M.K.O. Abiola's Concord newspaper offered us that platform to excel, to fly like eagles, to be creative, to change the narrative of news reporting, to infuse literature into journalism through a Saturday new newspaper fleshed out of the daily National Concord and called Weekend Concord.

It was the idea of our then Managing Director and Editor-in-chief, the cerebral Dr. Doyin Abiola, a great woman of journalism who is our own version of Katherine Graham of Washington Post. Katherine Graham who wrote the bestselling memoirs titled "Personal History." I am waiting to read Dr. Abiola's memoirs. There will be a chapter on how she went abroad on holidays in 1989 and had this brainwave of creating a distinct Saturday newspaper with its style, culture and identity different from the main daily and the Sunday edition. She then called me—I was the Features Editor of National Concord—and gave me her vision of the newspaper and instantly asked me to run with it and give her a dummy—a prototype of what the newspaper would look like.

I had just written a book, Art of Features, together with my twin brother from Sunday Concord days, the late Pastor Dimba Igwe of blessed memory. Shortly after completing the book, I was sent to the features desk as Features Editor to take over from Lewis Obi who went to edit the African Concord newsmagazine. It was an opportunity to implement everything we wrote about on what a feature story should be. Like a football coach, I had to pick a team. In assembling my team of fresh, bright young men for the new Weekend Concord, one talented journalist with African Concord Dele Momodu came to mind. He had written some pieces for me at the Features desk where we changed the whole orientation towards features, making features livelier, more human angle-oriented and turning the feature pullout into a paper within a paper, such that it improved the circulation of the daily paper. This was what must have impressed Dr. Abiola to ask me to start a fresh paper from point zero. About that time, Dele

## Celebrating Dele Momodu, my star reporter

Momodu was introducing Nigerians to Woman at Point Zero, an exotic small novel by Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian doctor and feminist who wrote this poignant novel after encountering a woman on death row for killing a pimp on a Cairo street and telling her pathetic story. Nawal El Saadawi has **Dele** to thank for introducing Nigerians to her literary works like God Dies by the Nile, The Hidden Face of Eve and other works which **Dele** wrote about—having bagged his Master's degree in Literature after a first degree in Yoruba. It was this love for literature that brought us together. Within Concord, we created a small circle of literature aficionados which included Kunle Ajibade, Sam Omatseye, Dimgba Igwe and Mike Awoyinfa who as the Literary Editor of Sunday Concord did extensive magazine interviews with Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola, T.M. Aluko, J.P. Clark, Cyprian Ekwensi, Onuora Nzekwu, Chukwuemeka Ike, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta. How I wish I can get back all these interviews and put them into a book! I really feel a sense of loss. There was no Google and no Internet in those days where you could archive your stories. Who can help me out?

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As the pioneer editor, I wanted Weekend Concord to have a literary flavor. So I reached out to **Dele** Momodu but he initially didn't understand what kind of paper I envisioned. On hearing the name Weekend Concord, his mind went to Lagos Weekend, a popular paper from the Daily Times stable that specialized on sex, divorce and had a 'Wakabout' column written in Nigerian pidgin.

"No, no, no, I am not interested," **Dele** initially told me. But I had to sit him down to explain the paper. Luckily, he caught the vision. And the rest is history. I am proud to say, the Weekend Concord became an instant success because of stars like Dimgba Igwe, **Dele** Momodu, Femi Adesina, Omololu Kassim, Shola Oshunkeye, Eric Osagie, Wale Sokunbi, Aliu Mohammed, Ose Oyamedan, Blessing Okpowo, Chika Abanobi, Lat Oyemade, Yetunde Francis, Timothy Oyeola, Felix Asimone, Emmanuel Oturu, Gbola Adebayo, Gbenga Opebi, Lanre Ajeboriogbon, Waziri Adio, Bolaji Abdullahi, Lanre Issa-Onilu, the late Sunday Umahi and the late Bolaji Macaulay.

Right from the start, **Dele** Momodu demonstrated leadership and was promoted twice as News Editor and Assistant Editor. I can still remember him writing his stories longhand and helping to edit and rewrite stories. He is not just a good writer whose prose is every editor's delight but has a nose for news. **Dele** is a writer and a reporter. Two rarities merged with the love for adventure.

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How can I forget Saturday, March 4, 1989, the day we first hit the street? The birth of a newspaper must be occasioned by a big bang. Just like the birth of creation itself. The paper must come out with something earthshaking, the kind of story that would forever register in people's mind. For the Weekend Concord to live up to expectation, we needed something extraordinary. And this was where **Dele** Momodu came to the rescue with a WORLD EXCLUSIVE! An interview with the ex-wife of our Nobel Prize hero telling us the untold love life of the literary genius who made Africa so proud winning the Nobel in 1986. I don't know how **Dele** talked the woman into talking. Nawal El Saadawi would have been proud! It was my proudest moment as an editor—and probably his proudest too as my star reporter! Today, I remember the past and join the world in celebrating the great Bashorun **Dele** Momodu at 60. May 16, should have been double celebration. It's also the birthday of my late friend, the unforgettable Dimgba Igwe. May his soul rest in peace.

At 60, you have lived a good life **Dele**, but the best is yet to come. Like the phoenix, you have this knack for reinventing yourself. I like what you are doing today, dominating the social media with good, old journalism brought all the way back from our younger days in Weekend Concord, interviewing everyone with a story to tell. Keep up the good work.

Happy birthday from the one you call "my boss for life." It is humbling saying in your interviews that Mike Awoyinfa taught you a greater part of the things you know today in journalism. It is the same thing I say of my late editor, an Auchi man, another **Dele**, born and bred in Ile-Ife like you: the legendary **Dele Giwa**. As you turn 60, may God open a new vista of goodness and greatness for you to the glory of His Holy name. Amen.

Apology and Corrigendum

Celebrating Dele Momodu, my star reporter

In my column last week, Chief (Mrs.) Abimbola Akinjide, SAN, was erroneously referred to as Chief Abimbola Rotimi Williams. The error is regretted and hereby corrected with apologies.

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The post Celebrating Dele Momodu, my star reporter appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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**Load-Date:** July 23, 2020

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## **Dotun Oyelade Reporting...(Memoirs Of A Newshound)**

Nigerian Tribune

September 11, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 1882 words

### **Body**

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Prince Dotun Oyelade, is a broadcast *journalist*, publisher and politician. But he restricted the coverage of his publication, Dotun Oyelade Reporting...(Memoirs of a Newshound), to the first two aspects of his life: journalism and publishing. He intends to write on his political life in the years to come but flagged some of his political landmarks in the work to include being Publicity Secretary to Alliance for Democracy in 1999 and Private Secretary to Governor Lam Adesina from 1999 to 2003. He was Special Adviser on Public Communications to Governor Alao Akala from 2007 to 2011 and was also Head of the media campaign team of Governor Seyi Makinde January 2018 to May, 2019.

The interesting publication is broken into 5 parts of 18 chapters. The first part consists of two chapters and these have to do with how Prince Oyelade cut his professional teeth in journalism by working at NTV. The first chapter ought to have chronologically been the third but the author made it the first invariably to teach some lessons to students of journalism education. Oyelade was in Akure in 1978 to report the visit of Olusegun Obasanjo. As he charged through the crowd with his microphone to get a scoop for his federal television channel he was bullied back by some unfriendly soldiers guiding the head of state. It took him some time to get out of the panic mode. This must have been included in the book to show that it is not easy for an early career *journalist* to get breaking stories as taught in the classroom; it involves unpredictable risks and embarrassments. It was actually in the second chapter that Oyelade narrated how he was employed by NTA in August 1977 under the leadership of Yemi Farouqui. His supervisors on the job included Bayo Sanda, Fabio Lanipekun, Biodun Sotumbi, Biodun Aladekomo, and Biodun Adetuberu. In the news department, Oyelade worked with Segun Oyedele, Folu Ogundimu, Segun Soroye, Mufu Akinloye; Kayode Adedire, Femi Idowu, Biodun Ariyo now Senator Biodun Olujinmi, Bankole Laotan, Tunji Oyetoso, Lekan Alabi, Biodun Oduwale, Rasheed Adegbienro, Tunde Jawando, Kola Akinleye, Bukola Famuyiwa, Kunle Adeigbe and a host of others. He used colourful adjectives to describe the innovations brought to NTA by each of these personalities. He called attention to the suspect image of the *journalist* working under the military, the intrigues of reporting the 'Ali must go student protest', attempts to repress the media etc.

Part two of the book consists of 5 chapters focusing on Oyelade's sojourn and exploits at the TSOS/BCOS. In chapter three, he told the story of how the amity between Governor Bola Ige and Dr. Yemi Farounbi led to the founding of TSOS and how the station was provided the best possible facilities and conditions of service for attaining for practicing journalism. He was recruited into the station under very rigorous and painstaking conditions

but had an exemplary career there. He listed all the people he worked with in the station but singled out Yanju Adegbite, who later became the Project Coordinator at BCOS from 2011 to 2019, as the first face to appear on TSOS TV. In Chapter 4, he called attention to a number of ground breaking reports he wrote for the station: the Lawrence Anini saga, trial of Gen. Mamman Vatsa, the Cocoa House inferno, the death of Awolowo and Dele Giwa; the inaugural AFRC meeting of the Babangida regime etc. In chapter 5 Oyelade called attention to how the corporate identity of BCOS changed when the NPN government of Chief Olunloyo came to power in October 1983 in Oyo. Though the regime was sacked by the military on December 31 same year the three months period of its existence witnessed several staff of TSOS sacked and redeployed. Oyelade was redeployed to the State secretariat at Agodi where he wasted away in the conference room of the Head of Service until the civilian administration left and he was returned to TSOS which became BCOS with the merger of the TV station and Radio Oyo. Oyelade was serving as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation in 2001 when Governor Lam Adesina asked him to combine this with the assignment of a Private Secretary. Chapter 6 is a fuller length discussion of the merger of Radio Oyo and TSOS by the regime of Col. Oladayo Popoola to form BCOS. It also discussed the circumstances under which Chief Bisi Adesola became the first GM of the Corporation. Chapter 7, the shortest of the essays, has to do with how Oyelade went to the US on a fellowship and nearly acceded to be quest to stay back with the media outfit he visited.

Part 3 consists of 7 chapters and has to do with Oyelade's foray into publishing: another field in which he has made outstanding contributions. In chapter 8 he told the story of how it all started in February 1988 after interviewing Professor Ojetunji Aboyade, the world-renowned economist and former Vice Chancellor, University of Ife, now OAU, at the BCOS Studios. Oyelade was asked if he was enjoying his job and he told Aboyade that the glitz of the job was gone and he was ready to move on. Within a month of this discussion Oyelade was hired to manage a publishing house jointly established by Professors Akin Mabogunje and Aboyade: Fountain Publication. He was offered an initial salary of N1000 per month in 1988 which was more than twice the salary of a Controller at BCOS at the time. He was provided a Citroen saloon as his official car and a driver. One of the books produced by the publishing house at this moment was Mariam Babangida's Home Front which documents the experiences of senior army officers' wives. It fetched the publishing house millions. However, Oyelade was with Fountain Publication for just a year; the owners were more engrossed in their academic activities. In chapter nine, Oyelade narrated how he had to move to Chief Joop Berkhout's Spectrum Books where several works were produced: including Emeka Ojukwu's Because I Am Involved. The publishing house lost the opportunity to handle Obasanjo's Not my will when Oyelade advised the former Nigerian head of state to delete from his manuscript the aspect in which some uncomplimentary things were said about Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Obasanjo is reported to have described Oyelade as 'Omo ale Ogbomoso' (a bastard of Ogbomoso) for this advice. Chapter ten has to do with how he left Spectrum Book in 1991 to register his own company, Current Publications. This soon brought him in contact with family members of Chief Adeseun Ogundoyin, the successful Oyo State-born businessman, politician and philanthropist who suddenly died at the University College Hospital (UCH) on June 18 that same year. He was commissioned to publish a picturesque encapsulating the active life of the accomplished business mogul for the anniversary in 1992. Chapter eleven has to do with how he published the 'The Broadcast Journalist' in 1993 where he shared his professional experience to impart hands-on knowledge on students and practitioners of Broadcast Journalism. Three renowned Broadcast Managers (Dr.V. Maduka, Dr. Yemi Faroubi, and Chief Adebisi Adesola) wrote the preface to the book and he reproduced these in the present publication as a testimonial. In 1995, he published the book Soun Ajagunbade III. In chapter 12 he provided the contexts for the publication and called attention to some critical issues in it. Chapters 13 is on how he could not complete the book on Chief Emmanuel Oyedele Ashamu before his demise. Chapter 14 is on his other publishing exploits: it focused on how he published 'Destiny At Work' on the Late Otunba Alao-Akala and got it launched on June 3, 2009 at Mapo Hall in Ibadan.

In 2015, he also authored the biography of the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh.

Part 4 of the book consists of only one chapter (15th) and it is on the 'Current Studios and Publications': a broadcast commercial studio for video and audio recording and post-production. The modern equipment for the studio were brought in from the United Kingdom. It soon become the leading hub for popular artistes in the 90s, not only locally but also from Lagos. Iconic actors and actresses like Adebayo Salami (Oga Bello) Sunday Omobolanle (Aluwe) Jide Kosoko, Alhaji Kareem Adepoju (Baba Wande) Idowu Phillips (Iya Rainbow) Lanre Hassan (Iya

### Dotun Oyelade Reporting...(Memoirs Of A Newshound)

Awero) Iyabo Ogunsola (Efunsetan Aniwura); Mike Bamiloye (Mount Zion), Anike Obot and a host of other upcoming stars, musicians and producers rented cameras and other equipment to shoot films from the company. Many came back to do their editing at the studio. Dotun Oyelade's professional antecedent as a broadcast **journalist** with a specialty in documentaries and reporting enabled the studio to get jobs from government and other corporate concerns.

Part 5 is on the man Dotun Oyelade. The 16th chapter was compiled by Biola Olawale, Deputy Director Of News, BCOS. It has to do with how Prince Dotun Oyelade assumed duty as the Executive Chairman of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) in July 2019 with the experience of a foundation staff of TSOS in 1982 before he voluntarily resigned in 1986 to further his ambition and career. Again, he came back to the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) in 2001 as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under the administration of Governor Lam Adesina. The rest of the chapter lists his achievement on the job: staff manpower development, staff welfare, motivation and reward system, execution of iconic projects, amendment to the corporation's edict with a view to identifying certain provisions inconsistent with modern day realities; reinstatement of officers wrongfully dismissed/retired; redeployment of staff of bcos from the mainstream of the civil service. Chapter 17 are people's perception of Prince Oyelade while the last chapter, the 18th contains tributes by his family members: wife and children.

The publication, Dotun Oyelade reporting...(Memoirs of a Newshound), is not an everyday autobiography but an innovative case note that has a lot of lessons for students of journalism studies. The publication describes Oyelade as a newshound. The term refers to an aggressive or energetic **journalist** with insightful and instructive attainments. The contents of this book stands Oyelade out in this respect; he was indeed a newshound. The Prince achieved a lot in broadcasting but he used the platform of this book to reject being called a 'veteran **journalist**'. He worked closely with several eminent politicians (Lam Adesina, Alao Akaka, and Seyi Makinde) but he said this has not made him a professional politician but a **journalist** in politics. Towards the end of this publication a number of prominent Nigerians corroborated what the author reported about himself. In other words, the work under review is not an autobiography per se but an autobiography innovatively redefined. He prefaced each of the issues he raised with detailed historical background in a manner that makes the chapters instructive for students of history. I found this approach to academic writing to be very original and worthy of commendation. Students of journalism studies have a lot to learn from the publication not only in terms of the exemplary way Prince Oyelade did his work but more importantly his writing skills which he excellently demonstrated here.

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## A Nation On The Precipice

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

December 24, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 1204 words

**Byline:** Sunny Awhefeada

### **Body**

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**Dele Giwa**, the unforgettable **journalist**, preempted our today when he wrote in the mid-1980s that Nigeria had reached the stage of unshockability! Members of his generation would have applauded him for his insight, sublimity of thought and verbal dexterity. True, the 1980s was the high watermark of the tendencies that birthed today's crises and woes. Nigeria attained independence two decades earlier and despite her promising beginning as carrying the promise of the Black race, she tottered into a bloody internecine conflict that raged for thirty months. Thus the 1960s were a mixed grill for Nigeria, her rise and fall. The 1970s reawakened and repositioned Nigeria. Despite being run by callow soldiers the nation looked ahead and marched on the solid path to progress. The New Year of January 1970 not only ended the civil war, but it ushered in a series and sequence of events that enabled Nigeria to regain ascendancy. Our history books tell us about how Nigeria pointed at the way Africa should go by making the continent the centerpiece of her foreign policy. Nigeria took on apartheid South Africa, gazed at America without blinking and one by one ensured the total liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and more!

Many people still find inspiring the 1976 "Africa has come of age" speech of General Murtala Muhammed, then Nigeria's head of state, which emboldened Africa and left the West in trepidation. Kole Omotoso recreated that glorious moment in Just before Dawn. Africa was enthused. Murtala died a few days after that speech and with him dimmed the light that Nigeria tried to become. Nigeria, nay Africa, has been wandering between dusk and darkness since then. The kind of honest, selfless and purposeful leadership offered by Murtala Muhammed has not been found since then. Murtala was decisive, pragmatic and self-sacrificing. His moments as head of state remain Nigeria's halcyon days. Many people look back to the 1970s and rue the opportunities lost, the roads not taken and the roads mistaken! As a result of monumental failure of leadership and, recently, followership complicity, Nigeria has now found itself in a vortex of crises. Nigeria has become a casualty of misrule and one by one the citizens are being consumed. Even the rulers are not spared. The powerful also cry!

Looking back and comparing today to the yesterday of the 1970s, the simple and glaring inference is that Nigeria is on the fast lane to the abyss of failed states. Obiora Udechukwu, the poet and fine artist, in his collection of poetry, What the Madman Said, did say poignantly: "The LAND is not our land/This is not our land/This is not the promised

## A Nation On The Precipice

haven". Udechukwu's deposition derives from the shocking reality of what became of Nigeria despite the promise of greatness it bore before and just after independence. Barely six years after breaking the shackles of colonialism Nigeria was on the verge of collapse. Udechukwu ascribes the fate of Nigeria to the leaders who are actually dealers thus: "Shrill voices that drove strangers away/Word-owners that drove strangers away/What have you done to your people?/What have you done to the children of men?/What have you done to the land?". Our dealer-leaders are predatory. They fought against the colonialists (strangers), routed them and became the neo-colonizers of their own people.

Udechukwu's query regarding what the dealer-leaders did "to our people", "to the children of men" and "to the land" can find lucid and loud answers to the plurality of crises assailing Nigeria today.

The crises bedeviling us today accumulated from years of malfeasance, criminal indifference, moral ennui and acute feeling of helplessness. The failure of the ruling class, relegation of justice and absence of sanctions left the citizens to be at the mercy of one another. The citizens lost faith in government and have taken laws into their own hands. The citizens started seeing the state and its agents as adversaries about ten years ago. The curve has taken a frightening dimension as the citizens have turned against one another. That is why bandits, terrorists, kidnappers, armed robbers and the ubiquitous unknown gunmen have turned on fellow citizens. What is confronting Nigeria is the Hobbesian reality of life being "nasty, short and brutish". The citizens have become predators and preys, depending on the circumstance.

This is just ten days into December, yet we have been confronted by many events that sear our very humanity. The murder of a school boy, Sylvester Oromoni, by schoolmates has taken center-stage of public discourse. But we are a hypocritical lot. These things happen again and again and we paper over them and move on. Bandits burnt forty-two travellers to death in Sokoto. Eye witnesses reported that officials of the Federal Roads Safety Commission (FRSC) in Lagos pursued a truck that rammed into school children and killed seventeen of them. Some eight children got suffocated to death in a bus and a one-eyed thief of a government official demanded a million naira for their autopsy! Students are daily kidnapped for ransom like the five students kidnapped between Eku and Abraka where one encounters no less than five police checkpoints mounted for the sole purpose of extortion!

A trip these days, even the shortest one, usually elicits long prayers despite the many armed bearing uniformed men on the roads! Soldiers, police, NSCDC, NDLEA, FRSC, hunters, vigilantes and many more have taken over our roads, yet the unknown gunmen are still enjoying uninterrupted reign. Hunters have had to rescue policemen from abductors and even protect police stations! The University of Abuja in the nation's federal capital has also contracted hunters to protect the campus! I think it is high time we disbanded the security services and begin anew.

We are assailed on all fronts. Many government workers across the country are being owed months of unpaid salaries. They are now being threatened that there would be no salary for December! Government claims that N199 Billion is being spent on petroleum subsidy and that Nigeria earned zero revenue from oil export. Non-payment of salaries, dwindling fortune of the Naira and galloping inflation have combined to further emasculate the already traumatised populace. This Christmas is going to be the bleakest in our history.

But should we give up on Nigeria or on ourselves? The answer is, and should be, a loud NO! We can still redeem our country and ourselves. We can still be pulled back from the brink. As I have consistently maintained, only the people can rescue Nigeria. Let us not wait any further. The people must reinvent new terms of engagement in the political cum public space. Those who aspire to lead or rule must be made to imbibe ideals that are anchored on the common good. They must be made to live like us and experience life like us. They should patronise only public hospitals and public schools. They should travel by road and not by air, at least in the next five years. They must not move about with security details. Their homes must not be lit by alternative power sources. Then they will put on their thinking cap, think aright and govern aright. Then Nigeria will be great again.

A Nation On The Precipice

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## A Nation Astray

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

December 10, 2021 Friday

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**Length:** 1204 words

**Byline:** Sunny Awhefeada

### **Body**

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## A Nation Astray

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## **Remarkable Historical Occurrences And Events In Nigerian History Made In August**

Nigerian Tribune

August 31, 2022 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1517 words

### **Body**

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Exceptionality in man is usually celebrated and immortalised. Every day adds up to weeks, months, and years. Records are painstakingly shattered and in some cases, made while names are written in ink of gold and some in ink of blood on the dusty pages of history. However, not all pages of history can be dusty. Amongst a few historical pages in Nigeria which are often cleaned up are the following which were peculiarly made in August in different years.

#### 1. Mungo Park Discovered River Niger August 19, 1805

The River Niger was reached this month at Banbahoo by Mungo Park, Anderson, Martyn and seven other Europeans. About 35 others had died or murdered by robbers. Park built a small canoe which he called HMS Jolibar here, and moved.

#### 2. Britain annexes Lagos August 6, 1861

On August 6, 1861, Britain annexed Lagos, declared it a British colony in 1862 and established it as a protectorate over most of its Yoruba neighbours between 1890 and 1897. With its population numbering more than 60,000 people, Lagos colony had become a sophisticated commercial hub by 1872.

In 1906, the British added Lagos colony to the Southern Nigeria Protectorate. Later, in 1914, Lagos became the capital of the Protectorate of Nigeria.

#### 3. Lagos Treaty of Cession August 6, 1961

The landmark of colonialism is present around us to remind us of years of domination and foreign rule. Signed by (King) Oba Dosunmu; the then ruler of the coveted commercial hub; Lagos, the Lagos treaty of cession is one of the fundamental and institutional documents that signalled the beginning of foreign rule in Lagos and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa which will later in 1914, be amalgamated and christened; Nigeria.

## Remarkable Historical Occurrences And Events In Nigerian History Made In August

A petrified Dosunmu signed the document on behalf of his chiefs at the persuasion of Norman B Bedingfield, which made him a regent for the Queen of England at the threat that the British will bombard Lagos upon his dissent.

The Lagos treaty of cession of 1861 theoretically affirmed Lagos as a colony before its actual conferment and declaration of the status of 'crown colony' which will, later on, take place in 1862.

### 4. The August 1985 Palace Coup

On 27 August 1985, a palace coup was carried out by former Head of State, Major General Ibrahim Babangida, who was the Chief of Army Staff overthrew the government of Major General Muhammadu Buhari after a successful coup. However, Buhari was arrested and detained for three years until 1988. It was this agony and sorrow that led to the death of the mother of Former Head of State Buhari while trying to save his son from prison.

### 5. Samuel Sochukuma Okwaraji's Tragic Death On Pitch August 12, 1989

Battling for a victory at the Lagos national stadium, Surulere in front of a massive crowd was the Nigerian 18 - player- team against Angola for the world Cup qualifier Match, setting the stage for one of the most tragic moments in Nigerian football history.

Number 6, deadlocked 25 years old mmidfielielder'SISamuelraji suddenly slumped while playing and was pronounced dead caused to high blood pressure and enlarged heart leading to an ironic win for Nigeria who won the match against Angola with a 1-0 but lost Samuel Okwaraji; a lawyer turned footballer and promising scholar in her battle for the world cup qualifiers.

After decades of his tragic demise, Okwaraji's bust lies at the National Stadium in Lagos; the venue of his death immortalised as an example of sacrifice and service.

### 6. Gen. Babangida relinquishes power August 26, 1993

Following worldwide criticism of the scandal-rocked Babangida military regime over the annulment of the 1993 June 12 presidential elections, thereby frustrating every effort towards a civilian led government, the president; Gen Ibrahim Babangida voluntarily handed over in a less ceremonious way to a pre-organised Interim government that will later have to battle for legitimacy, to be headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan.

Brought into power by the 1985 palace coup, the handing over happened at the height of the scandal ridden government with various protests and planned strikes calling for the resignation of the military ruler. The trial and execution of some members of the millitary and co plotters of two alleged unsuccessful coups planned by Manman Vasta and Gideon Okar coupled with the assassination of the popular journalist; Dele Giwa, prepared the regime for an ungraceful departure.

Hence the annulment of the June 12 1993 elections popularly won by one of the two government-created political parties; the SDP candidate and president elect; Chief Olawale Moshood Abiola, came as an icing on the cake leading to the end of a controversial 8-year rule.

### 7. Nigeria's First Olympic Gold Medal in Football August 3, 1996

Largely considered the golden age and height of the Nigerian Football club in the country's history, Nigeria clinched her first and since then, only gold Olympic medal in football making her a trailblazer and pacesetter in the continent as the first African country to win a gold medal in football at the Olympics.

A significant moment in Nigeria's sporting history, the 1996 'dream team' who had lost shortly before the Olympics to another team, least expectedly clinched gold to the astonishment of the world.

The semi-final where Nigeria with the help of Kanu Nwankwo's winning goal, significantly called 'the golden goal', ousted Brazil which was equipped with players like the football legend: Christiano Ronaldo in a 4-3 win was largely considered the 'final before the finals'.

## Remarkable Historical Occurrences And Events In Nigerian History Made In August

Nigeria will go on to prove this in her final match against Argentina with Dosu Joseph the goalkeeper guarding the post and Garba Lawal and 17 other talented players winning with a 3-2 goal count.

### 8. Chioma Ajunwa Wins First Nigerian First Olympics Gold Medal August 2, 1996

One of Nigeria's proudest moments was when footballer turned athlete cum police officer; Chioma Ajunwa, gave a gold-worthy, mind-blowing jump length of 7.12 meters; a record which stood for more than two decades unbroken until sprinter; Ese Brume broke it with a 7:17 metres jump recently.

After a 4 year ban upon failing a drug test, Chioma bounced back to achieve a feat that will write her name among the national heroes with the thought of gold in history. She became the first African woman to win a gold medal and also the first gold medalist out of the three gold medals Nigeria has.

Now the Lagos State assistant commissioner for police under the Sanwo Olu-led government, she was recently gifted a house promised by the then military government after 25 years.

### 9. Nigerian doctor, Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh, died in Lagos, August 19, 2014

On 19 August 2014, Nigerian doctor, Dr. Ameyo Stella Adadevoh, died in Lagos, in quarantine because she had been infected with the Ebola virus disease (EVD) while selflessly discharging her duties as a physician.

Back in July 2014, Patrick Sawyer, a Liberian-American, flew from Liberia to Nigeria. However, on getting to Lagos, he fell ill and was admitted to a private hospital and became a patient of Dr. Adadevoh who diagnosed Sawyer with EVD and took responsibility for both his health and the containment of the Ebola virus.

In the process of treating Sawyer, Dr. Adadevoh died less than a month after her patient. She was one of 19 confirmed EVD cases and eight deaths recorded in Nigeria.

### 10. August 2022 Commonwealth Games - Nigeria Made History

The just concluded XXII Commonwealth games which was previously known as Durban 2022 to be hosted by South Africa but due to financial constraints, was proudly hosted by Birmingham was no doubt a success, especially for team Nigeria has she garners 12 gold medals; her highest in the history of common wealth all uniquely won in the women's category, two of which drew international attention.

In the women's 4x100m relay race, the Nigerian quartet team featuring Tobi Amusan, Favour Ofili, Rosemary Chukwuma and Grace Nwokocha made history by becoming the African first women's relay team to win a Commonwealth Games gold. However, in the men's 4x100m relay team category, featuring Udodi Onwuzurike, Favour Ashe, Alaba Akintola and Raymond Ekevwo also made history with the bronze medal win, the first by the men since 1982.

### 11. Osun Osogbo August Annual Festival

The Osun Osogbo cultural festival is an annual ceremony that is usually celebrated in every August of a given year at the sacred grove, to worship the goddesses of Osun river , referred to as goddess of fertility. The festival is believed to be one of Nigeria's well documented cultural festivals and recognizes Osun grove as a global cultural heritage by UNESCO. This religious tradition is as well celebrated in other part of the world, most especially countries in south America such as Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia and Cuba. Regardless of Western influence on African culture and religion, the Osun Osogbo festival has always maintained its originality, authenticity and acceptability among nations worldwide.

Over the years, the festival attracted different races of people, both foreigners and non-foreigners usually attend the tourist site from all over the world, as well as Osun worshippers.

## Remarkable Historical Occurrences And Events In Nigerian History Made In August

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## Taking the power of the air

The Punch

October 23, 2021 Saturday

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**Length:** 1265 words

### Body

Lekan Sote Published 30 June 2021

The content of the broadcast media -radio, television or the Internet- are sent from a source, to receiver, by air. So, if you said that the content of the broadcast media is air-borne, no one would think you were talking about a disease.

Sometimes, broadcast engineers and communication scholars choose to describe the pathway of the broadcast media as airwaves, channel for broadcasting; electromagnetic waves, or electric and magnetic fields moving in the same direction; or microwave, a very short wavelength in radio communication.

That probably explains Minister for Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed's quest for the National Broadcast Commission to regulate every business that uses the airwaves. But asking the NBC fix tariffs is an outright overkill.

The minister may have an argument in asking that social media platforms, like Twitter; international television networks, like the CNN; and their carriers, like DSTV, that operate almost as ungovernable out-of-country pirate stations, must have identifiable Nigerian street addresses.

They must register with the Corporate Affairs Commission, obtain Tax Identification Number and pay Company Income Tax to Nigeria's Federal Inland Revenue Service, just like the telcos that also use Nigeria's airwaves asset for their business.

But the minister is not handling the matter quite right. It looks like he, and the government he serves, are smarting from the use to which the social media were put during the explosive #EndSARS protest that resulted in violence, arson, destruction of private and government properties, maiming and death of many in October 2020.

The Executive Director of Institute of Media and Society, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, is of the opinion that including online platforms, the habitat of "citizen journalists, "will be injurious to the public space, freedom of expression and media freedom in Nigeria."

## Taking the power of the air

Experience shows that whenever any Nigerian government strays into the space of private citizens or corporations, the government behaves like a bull in a china shop, and it will require massive dexterity to steer it out, away from causing much damage.

Gnawing at Mohammed's credibility is his growing reputation as a cross between Josef Goebbels, Adolf Hitler's Minister for Propaganda, and "The Thought Police" of Oceania, the dystopic society chronicled in 'NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR,' by English author, George Orwell.

No one trusts him, as his sly Jacob is using Olusegun Odebunmi and Unyine Idem of the House of Representatives as the hands of Esau to achieve what appears to be the totalitarian purpose of the regime he serves.

At the public hearing of the House of Representatives Committee on Information, Culture, Ethics and Values, he practically ordered, "I want to add that the Internet broadcasting and all online media should be included" under the law that will expand the scope of the NBC, the airwaves gestapo.

The Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, sensing the coming ferocity of the braying dogs of the media, threw Alhaji Lai under the bus, and deftly washed the hands of the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.), off the controversial bills.

Adesina says: "That is not strictly a Presidency thing, because the President has nothing to do with that. It's the Minister (for Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, who is unilaterally initiating the bill without the knowledge and approval of the President) that can talk about it."

But then there is absolute confirmation that the President, a former military Head of State, betrayed such tendencies in the past. He once told the late Dele Giwa and Ray Ekpu, editors of Newswatch newsmagazine, that he would tamper with the press. And he did.

He rolled out Decree 4, whose Draconian Section 1 reads, "Any person who publishes in any form, whether written or otherwise, any message, rumour, report or statement...which is false in any material particular or which brings or is calculated to bring the Federal Military Government or the Government of a state or public officer to ridicule or disrepute, shall be guilty of an offence under this Decree."

The Decree added that offending journalists and publishers would be tried by what it described as an open military tribunal, (as if that was a big relief), and its ruling would be final and unappealable in any court, and those found guilty would be eligible for a fine not less than 10,000 naira and a jail sentence of up to two years.

To prove that he meant business, he put Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, two journalists with The Guardian newspaper, in the slammer at Kirikiri Prisons in Lagos, for two years. Nigerians, most of whom have long memories, have not forgotten this misadventure and are therefore wary of the intent of this new onslaught on the media.

Some discerning Nigerians say no one, who knows the danger, would tolerate another person, no matter how benign, to rattle a sharp sabre above their heads. Such a proposition, everyone would agree, is enough ground for apprehension.

President Buhari, who answered some questions and parried others, during the watershed interview he granted the team from Arise News TV ahead of June 12, 2021 Democracy Day celebration, cannot be the goofy shyster that Adesina is inferring. Buhari has a mind of his own, and Minister Mohammed would have unilaterally taken the course he is taking now at his own peril.

To be fair, placing the media under the ambit of the Nigeria Press Council is not quite a problem. After all, the medical, pharmaceutical, engineering, legal and other professions have councils that set standards for them under relevant ministries of the government.

But unlike other professions, the media is mentioned in, and assigned a role by Nigeria's Constitution under Section 22. Also, unlike other professions, whose membership and practice can be easily regulated by government statutes,

## Taking the power of the air

the media is better regulated by ethics or Code of Conduct administered by its members, not by a Minister of Information.

Ethics, which is not law, cannot be enforced by an external body, though you can ask a court of law to interpret and enforce its letters. It has to be done from within the profession. Also, membership of the media profession cannot be too restricted.

Indeed, the media, being essentially an omnibus creative space, must actively seek to accommodate content from all manner of professionals. No content must be excluded from the media, as long as it is not injurious to public interest.

That is why it is easy to agree with those who argue that the Minister for Information and a Nigeria Press Council, run by the government, is not competent to determine who should practise journalism, or license a newspaper, that is already registered by the Corporate Affairs Commission that statutorily registers all businesses in Nigeria.

Anyone who is worried about a journalism profession that is not going to be directly led by government, obviously forgot that the statute books are replete with sanctions for any *journalist* that breaches the laws of slander, libel, sedition and national security.

Also, they forgot Section 45 of Nigeria's Constitution, which provides that even fundamental human rights can be suspended "in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or... protecting the rights and freedom of other persons."

Anyway, those who oppose the Minister for Information's direct control of the media should more properly articulate their concerns, as government too loosens its noose.

Twitter @lekansote1

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2021

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I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa



## I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa

The Punch

August 14, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 2000 words

### **Body**

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A veteran ***journalist*** and author, Mike Awoyinfa, tells KEHINDE AJOSE about his life at 70, journalism, and other issues

You were the Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of Sun Newspaper at some point in your career. What was the experience like for you?

Before going to The Sun, I had written a book called '50 Nigerian Corporate Strategists', where top Nigerian CEOs shared their experiences. I wrote it with my friend, the late Dimgba Igwe. We interviewed big names in the corporate world. There was no question we did not ask them, including management-oriented questions, how a business is run, and how they rose to the top of their careers. We also asked them what it takes to motivate Nigerians to work harder, as well as time management. It was a very revealing project. The book was sold for N10,000 then, and it was selling like hot cake. I was still with the Weekend Concord as the editor then.

Before them, we had also written a book titled, 'The Art of Features Writing'. That was the book that opened the gateway for me and Dimgba. We met in Sunday Concord, in those years under ***Dele Giwa***. He was the editor that mentored us. In those days, Sunday Concord was the place to be and we learnt a lot under ***Giwa***. Everything we learnt as regards management was what I applied in The Sun. The strategy we used was that I allowed Dimgba, who was my deputy, to take full charge of the management. He was the disciplinarian and he had the talent to manage people. On the other hand, I was the dreamer, the ideas man, thinking of the future. I was also giving editorial leadership.

What were the challenges you had to deal with at Sun Newspapers?

It was the usual challenges of how to gain acceptability in the market place. One can pump all the money in the world into a product but if one does not get the branding right, one might not be able to make an impact. And, money will go down the drain. There are many newspapers that have died that lend credence to this. Even the name one gives a newspaper has to be based on strategies. When we started Sun, the owner, Orji Kalu, wanted a paper called 'New Republic'. Based on our background and pedigree, we told him that if we had created a paper called 'New Republic', we won't know how to sell it. Before then, there was a paper called 'Republic' which died a natural death.

I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa

We felt that calling a paper 'New Republic' was not strategic enough. We told him that we came from a tabloid background, so we should call the paper, 'The Sun'. He said we could call it whatever we wanted. We then started and created the product drawing from our Weekend Concord experience. We knew that how one starts a product is very important. If one starts without a bang, it would be very hard for one to catch up. We made sure our first edition was a very powerful one.

What were some of the things you did back then to stand out?

As of that time, General Ibrahim Babangida (retd.), had not spoken on the June 12, 1993, election annulment. Luckily, the chairman of the company, Kalu, took us to Babangida. We sat down with him, and he bared his mind on Abacha and other related issues. The interview was published in the first edition of the paper. When it was published, it was a big bang. People were looking for it and asking, 'Where is that paper Babangida spoke to?' Our branding too was good. We did a television jingle. We brought in a white man, Mr Allen, who was our technical director. In the jingle, he said, 'Hi, do you remember them? This is Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe. They used to be with Weekend Concord of those days. Now, they are starting The Sun based on the best tradition of British tabloid journalism. When people saw the white man, they thought we were from The Sun of London. The design was similar to that of The Sun of UK. People thought The Sun of UK had established a branch in Nigeria. That was one of the things that helped us. We also reached out to the singer, Orits Williki, who created another jingle for us. People loved it, and children were dancing to it.'

What do you regard as your legacies in that position?

The fact that the newspaper has not died is a legacy for us. That means the foundation we built was very strong. It also means the training we gave then was very strong. The brand itself is strong, so the continuity and sustainability are there.

You are noted for crafting creative headlines. How were you able to hone that skill?

That was our selling point. One of the things that sell a newspaper is the ability to craft good headlines. Sometimes, one crafts it with words, and at other times, one uses pictures. One cannot exactly explain what makes a good headline. It's a spiritual thing. It is a combination of many factors—words, ideas and creative thinking. For headlines, one should do what nobody is thinking about. It should be something that is exclusive, and that will last for a long time. Essentially, a headline that people will remember for long.

What were the memorable editions you produced as the Weekend Editor of the Concord Newspapers?

An example is when the late Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi, had problems with the immigration in the United Kingdom, and they found drugs on someone in his entourage. It became a big news. 'Alaafin arrested in UK' was the ordinary headline. But at Weekend Concord then, we did not believe in creating ordinary headlines. As the editor, I was in charge of crafting headlines. I did not delegate it to anybody in the production team, which is what they do in most papers. I was the chief headline writer. When that incident happened either on a Friday or Thursday, I asked someone to go to the library to ask for all the pictures of Alaafin that we had. In those days, there was no Internet. They brought all the pictures and I went through them. Suddenly, I saw one where Alaafin was laughing. Then, God dropped the idea in my brain. I was telling someone, 'God is the number one headline caster'. He is the one that puts headlines in people's brains. Even when I am sleeping, I think of headlines. The theory is that if one puts something in one's mind all the time, one will get it right. That is the art of creative thinking. After seeing the picture of Alaafin laughing, I came up with the headline: 'Drugs? Not Alaafin matter'.

## Related News

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I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa

Another example was when the late Gen Abdulkareem Adisa was arrested for plotting a coup. We put a picture of him on front page and a big screamer that said, 'A disaster'. We did not need any elaboration. We just used a picture of him looking troubled. Knowing one's market and knowing what to do is important. I recall that the publisher of Concord, MKO Abiola, used to commend me back then. He would say, 'Mike? He knows what people want to read'. For me, that is the greatest compliment anyone can ever pay me; that I have a nose for news. Any editor should know what the readers want. That is the basic rule of marketing; give your customers what they want. That is what we applied to journalism. And, it worked for us. When we went to The Sun, we applied the same formula.

Can you recall the first edition of the Weekend Concord that you produced?

The first edition was a very memorable one which I cannot forget. I recall that we had our editorial meeting and Dele Momodu said he would go to interview Wole Soyinka's ex-wife to find out why they broke up. He travelled, met the woman and struck up a rapport with her for a day or two. And, the woman gave a very great interview. The headline was, 'My love life with Wole Soyinka'. It was a big story and it sold out. We made a huge impact to the point that Soyinka was very angry. What made him annoyed was the fact that he knew Dele Momodu very well. They had been in Ile Ife, Osun State, together. I was so happy that Soyinka was angry. That is because someone once said that news is a story that somebody somewhere does not want you to publish. That is the real definition of news. Any other thing is advertising.

What are your thoughts about journalism as it is currently practised?

Every generation thinks their own brand of journalism was better than the current one. The kind of team we had in Weekend Concord of those days was like the Super Eagles team that won the first Olympic gold medal. We had creative young men with ideas. We were ready to die to get stories. I don't think that spirit is there any longer. These days, the facilities are there, including the Internet, but the reporters are not using it to leverage their reporting. It is unfortunate. These days, some journalists look for news through bloggers. Bloggers actually break news for some journalists in Nigeria. Meanwhile, those bloggers are not even trained journalists.

What advice do you have for young journalists?

I am not saying they should not use the Internet. Rather, they should use it positively to be able to fly high. They should tap into the advantages of the Internet. They should buy foreign newspapers to see how they are designed and how they are written. The Internet should be used as a tool for learning. As old as I am, I don't sleep until 12am. Every night, I watch the news and take note of the kinds of headlines they cast. That kind of passion is missing. People should develop that kind of passion for journalism excellence.

Also, there should be more training. Media owners and managers should look for competent hands to train reporters. I believe there is still a vacuum in the Nigerian market. Anybody that understands journalism can easily bring in a new paper and it will succeed.

At 70, do you have any unfulfilled dreams?

I thank God because everything I wanted to be as a journalist, I have been. As the features editor in National Concord, I changed the orientation about feature writing, to let people know that a feature story is a good human angle story. It is about people. A feature should bring in things that will make people laugh, and also cry. It was based on the 'revolution' I brought that I was invited by the Managing Director of the company, Dr Doyin Abiola, to start the Weekend Concord. Whatever one does, people are watching one. There is no how one does well and one will not rise. There is nothing wrong with being ambitious. I was very ambitious. Early on, I decided that I wanted to get to the highest height of the profession. Editing the 'Weekend Concord' was one of my highest achievements. Right now, my dream is to be the number one biographer in Nigeria. I believe biography is a higher form of journalism. It involves asking the same questions— who, what, when, where, and why. I pray God continues to give me the mental alertness, strength, courage and enthusiasm to go out there and look for stories that I will keep on telling. At the end of the day, everything is about storytelling. I want to go to the grave with my brain empty.

I was happy Soyinka got angry Concord interviewed ex-wife — Awoyinfa

Do you think printed newspapers could go extinct due to the proliferation of online journalism?

As a 'chronic' newspaper man, I can never believe that printed newspapers will die. I believe they will live forever. It is just like saying television or radio will die. These arguments keep coming up generations after generations. No matter what the competition is, newspapers will always be relevant. There is nothing like waking up early in the morning, drinking a cup of coffee and reading one's newspapers. There is a sound that a printed newspaper makes that one cannot get on the Internet. I don't pray that newspapers will ever die. As long as people are given what they want to read.

How do you keep fit?

I used to be a fanatical jogger. But with my sickness, I have not been able to continue my physical exercise. I pray to God to regain my health, so that I can continue my exercise. I actually exercise like a boxer.

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2022

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## Wayas' waltz across history's stage

The Sun (Nigeria)

December 14, 2021 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1434 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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The lights have dimmed on Joseph Wayas, the flamboyant Senate President of the 1979-1983 era. He is dead but he will be remembered for his foray from the world of business into the uncharted waters of politics and his role in shaping the politics of that era. I first met Joe Wayas, as he came to be better known, in July 1972. He was one of the commissioners under the military government of Col. Udoakaha Esuene. I was a rookie reporter on vacation assignment at the Nigerian Chronicle, which was published by the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation in Calabar.

The editor of the paper, Mr. Moses Ekpo, who is the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State today, had assigned me to interview all the commissioners for the newspaper. On the day I was to interview Wayas, the editor said to me, "Please, get there early because the man is a stickler for time."

My editor did not know that he was only preaching to the converted because I have always felt insulted by the idea of African time, as if Africans have no respect for time and are indisciplined as a race. On one occasion, I was to chair the inauguration of a private university in the South South. I travelled from Lagos and got to the venue 30 minutes before the scheduled time. At my arrival, I noticed that the organisers were only just beginning to saunter in.

There was a two-hour delay. I put away my prepared speech and first gave the university a lecture on how they can lead the community by doing what is right. Sorry for the digression. When I arrived at the office of the commissioner, he was ready and the interview was started on time. For me, that was an important lesson I learnt about Wayas and his ways. It was also something I carried in my head as a **journalist**, that you did not have to keep your interviewee waiting. At Newswatch, we had sought to interview the governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, some years ago in our prominent interview platform we called The Summit, a high-profile

### Wayas' waltz across history's stage

interview forum conducted by the senior editors of the magazine. It was always conducted in our boardroom. Mr. Fashola told us he would come at 7am. Some of our editors suggested I should ask the governor to come a little later because 7am was too early.

Of course, I turned down the stupid suggestion. The rationale for my decision was this: if a busy man like a governor could create time to come to us to be interviewed, why should we make some incredulous excuses even though we were the ones who needed his views in our magazine? The governor arrived a few minutes before 7am and earned the respect of all of us as a very disciplined and committed public officer in a country where some others would keep you waiting so as to emphasise their importance. Sorry again for the digression.

When Nigeria's Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, announced that his government would hand over to an elected civilian government in 1979, Wayas was one of the young men who threw their hats into the ring. He contested on the platform of the NPN for the position of senator in the Ogoja Senatorial District and won. He received plaudites of praise as a young man who was able to pursue his ambition successfully with missionary determination at a time that politics was a vocation for older people. He made it seem like easy street when he had only just crossed into the bitter territory of middle age. But more importantly, Wayas, a man from a little known minority tribe, was able, through appropriate networking and astute consensus-building, to get elected as the Senate President under the government of Mr. Shehu Shagari as President. That was a major achievement for a young man from a minority tribe.

Wayas' tolerance of the feistiness of the Nigerian press was tested during his tenure. The Daily Times was edited by Tony Momoh, lawyer and journalist, while the editorial board was chaired by Dr. Stanley Macebuh, a man who delivered his articles with philosophical nuances. There was also Dele Giwa, a former New York Times reporter who had just been employed. The brave liberalism of the Daily Times was not in doubt and it seemed to be at the time the foremost champion of press freedom and accountable governance. The Daily Times had published a grapevine story exposing the unparliamentary ways of some members of the National Assembly. The National Assembly was livid and its president, Wayas, sent, or caused to be sent, a letter to the Daily Times inviting its editor, Momoh, to appear before the Senate. To the Daily Times, it seemed to be a gratuitous piece of irritation. Momoh didn't go. Instead, he challenged the Senate's action in court. At this time, arguments had been fevered in media circles as to whether or not the Senate had a right to invite any editor to disclose his source of information. Momoh was convinced that he could not get a fair hearing if he went because a wall of prejudice had already been built against him at the Senate. To him, an impartial arbiter, the court, was the place to run to. He sued the Senate at the Lagos High Court for an attempt to infringe on press freedom. The High Court agreed that an individual had the right to refuse to disclose his source of information. That verdict bolstered the confidence of the press.

But it was mere pyrrhic victory because the Court of Appeal over-ruled the high court, holding that the 1979 Constitution did not shield a journalist from disclosing his source of information. The matter did not reach the Supreme Court so that issue remains an unfinished business because, if any journalist should disclose his sources of information to unauthorised persons, his sources will dry up. And what is a journalist without sources of information?

I was editor of the Nigerian Chronicle in Calabar during the Ali-Must-Go episode of 1978. The Obasanjo government was in a financial crisis. It took some stern measures, which included the abolition of scholarships and loans to students, increase in fees and the drafting of soldiers into schools when the national students union decided to go on a long protest asking the government to sack the Federal Commissioner for Education, Col. Ahmadu Adah Ali. Ali was a soldier, a medical doctor and former secretary of the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS), as well as a former executive director of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), 1973-75. I wrote an article published by the Chronicle on April 28, 1978, in which I suggested that Ali should be fired for misleading the government into taking those rash decisions and putting our education at grave risk.

That afternoon, the governor of Cross River State, Col. Paul Omu, sent for me. He had read my article on Ali in the first edition of the paper. He asked me to remove the article from the second edition of the paper. I told him that the first edition was sold outside the state, including Lagos, and it would be fruitless deleting the article from the edition that our people were going to read when the decision makers must have read it in the first edition already. Omu was

### Wayas' waltz across history's stage

the very definition of a gentleman who was always ready to listen to opposing arguments and did not terrorise me for publishing what he didn't agree with. He was a soldier with a difference, warm, affable and accommodating.

On my assumption of duty as editor of the Sunday Times in 1981, I went to the Senate to interview the Senate President, Wayas. As I was there, Ahmadu Ali, then a senator, walked in. I stood up, gave him my hand, expecting a handshake. He refused. He started ranting about what I wrote about him during the students' protest. I told him there was no malice in me against him and that he had a right of reply, if he felt I was wrong, but he didn't. Wayas played an excellent part and got us to bury the hatchet and to hug each other. The sting and clash of battle was over. That event of the Ali-Must-Go receded finally into history's mist, thanks to Wayas the reconciliator.

When politics resumed in 1998, Wayas became a founding member of the All Peoples Party (APP). He didn't seem to be comfortable in that party because it seemed to be a tribal party. In 2001, he left for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), which he thought had more nationalistic credentials. But the party soon became overwhelmed by its early successes at the polls and its managers thought Nigerians would stay with them, rain or shine. That did not happen. In 2015 it lost to the APC, a congregation of strange bedfellows that has taken the country down a steep slope that appears to lead to hell fire. Now Nigerians are between the rock and the hard place.

**Load-Date:** December 14, 2021

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## 29 Years After, IBB Opens Up on What Killed Dele Giwa & 159 Officers on Crashed Military Plane

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

December 7, 2015 Monday

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**Length:** 974 words

**Byline:** Lailas Blog

### **Body**

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Twenty-three years after a military plane crash in which more than 159 officers lost their lives in Ejirin swamp in Lagos in 1992, then military ruler, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) has finally spoken on the ill-fated incident.

Babangida, in an exclusive chat in the maiden edition of The Interview, disclosed that the crashed aircraft ought not to have flown on that specific day, based on the issue of maintenance and number of flying hours already attained.

Responding to a question posed by The Interview on what actually transpired on that day and if the crash was properly investigated, the 73-year-old former president said:

"It was investigated. It was reported. But you guys had a mindset. Certain people had a mindset; nobody was interested in the report. But it was investigated. What happened in sum total was that the aircraft should not have been flying. There are mandatory stages, number of hours and maintenance. All those things that are mandatory were not there."

When he was asked on what happened to the people who authorised the plane to fly on that ill-fated day, Babangida said there was no penalty meted out, adding:

"They ought to have been punished. I know that blame was apportioned. I wouldn't know about the punishment. We investigated; we even apportioned blame but no penalty."

On why that was so, he simply remarked, "That is the Nigerian factor."

Responding to inquiries on who killed renowned journalist, Dele Giwa who died from a parcel bomb blast, Babangida said, "A Bomb".

When asked in the interview on who sent the bomb, he replied:

## 29 Years After, IBB Opens Up on What Killed Dele Giwa & 159 Officers on Crashed Military Plane

"Would you ever think somebody could sit and ask a soldier or anybody, go and kill that man?"

Upon the interviewer's response that "It depends....", IBB was quoted to have replied:

"It depends on who? If what you hear about other African leaders is anything to go by, you are right to believe that it could happen because of what happened in the case of the Mobutus of this world. But there is also one human being who believes in God, who believes you cannot take away life, who believes that God forbids you to do that, who believes that God created you equally. Somebody of that nature cannot, in all fairness order the execution or killing of another person."

When he was pressed on his relationship with late **Dele Giwa**, Babangida replied:

"We were friends. Very soon, somebody is going to accuse me of saying he is my friend. I knew him very closely. I have correspondence between him and me. But that is not enough for you to believe that we were friends. What is enough is that I took a bomb and killed him."

When The Interview countered that "There was a general feeling that he knew a lot of military guys and knew more than he was supposed to know....", IBB cut in.....

"That he knew we were dealing in drugs and Gloria Okon. Somebody should have come out with it by now. He must have left some manuscripts."

When he was asked if he suppressed the investigation, the former president replied,

"There was a report on that investigation if you may be interested to know."

On the interviewer's remark that witnesses in the investigation were apparently hidden, Babangida replied,

"No. Most of what you guys talked about was fictitious. Even one of the persons you guys said was involved does not seem to exist. Gloria Okon; she does not seem to be in existence."

And then you came out with, what is the name of the other girl who was supposed to be my wife's friend? She was in prison or something; you came out with that one. There is virtually no truth in it all. People are not very good in putting stories together to make it look credible. They only make it look fantastic.

If you are dealing with an idiot, of course you can do anything. But you deal with a man who thinks, a man who tries to rationalise".

On Saturday, September 26, 1992, a Nigerian Air Force Hercules C-130 (NAF 911) transport plane, carrying more than 200 persons, took off at 5:27 pm from the Runway 19 of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, with its destination the city of Kaduna in northern Nigeria.

However, a few minutes after take-off, the heavy-laden plane, which was said to be carrying not just the military boys and girls but young students of the Nigerian Military School (NMS), Zaria, alongside civilians, relations and friends of military officers, developed a fault and nose-dived into the deep swamp not too far from the Lagos State Low Cost Housing Estate, Ejigbo to the Festac Town, Lagos, killing all those onboard.

In the crash officers of the 19, 20, 21 and 22 Regular Courses of the Nigerian Defence Academy were badly hit. A list of 159 names of those officially listed as passengers of the C-130H was released on October 1 by the Director of Army Public Relations, Colonel Fred Chijuka.

The list was made up of seven Lieutenant Colonels, 96 Majors, a Sergeant, Michael Bahago, two students – Mr. O B Oshodi, Mrs. M A Abu, and a reporter, Mr. Augustine Okpe. There were also the eight-officer crew including Alaboson, Mamadi, Squadron Leader J A Adeiza and Flight Lieutenant S O Adamu. The other men, Alum Wakala, Tarfa Saidu, W T Datong and A Soyemi in addition to 19 Air Force officers, were made up of 18 Squadron Leaders and a Sergeant, O. Jaja.

## 29 Years After, IBB Opens Up on What Killed Dele Giwa & 159 Officers on Crashed Military Plane

The Nigerian Navy lost 16 Lieutenant Commanders, Ghanaian Armed Forces, five; Tanzania lost Major M S Mgonja while Ugandan Major J R Mulazi also lost his life in the crash.

The Nigerian Army Education Corps lost a total of 19 officers, Infantry 17, Artillery 15, Intelligence nine, Signals nine, Supply and Transport eight, Military Police seven while the Electrical and Mechanical Armoured and Medical Corps lost four officers each. Others included Ordnance three while Finance and Personnel and Training lost two men each.

Culled from: <http://www.lailasblog.com> /2015/12/29-years-after-ibb-opens-up-on-what.html?m=1

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2015

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## Wayas' Waltz Across History's Stage

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

December 15, 2021 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1426 words

**Byline:** Ray Ekpu

### **Body**

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The editor of the paper, Mr Moses Ekpo, who is the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State today, had assigned me to interview all the Commissioners for the newspaper. On the day I was to interview Wayas the editor said to me "Please get there early because the man is a stickler for time." My editor did not know that he was only preaching to the converted because I have always felt insulted by the idea of African time as if Africans have no respect for time and are undisciplined as a race. On one occasion I was to chair the inauguration of a private university in the South South. I travelled from Lagos and got to the venue 30 minutes before the scheduled time. At my arrival I noticed that the organisers were only just beginning to saunter in.

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## Wayas' Waltz Across History's Stage

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## Wayas' Waltz Across History's Stage

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## A Return To A Season Of Anomie print

PM News

December 18, 2013 Wednesday

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Length: 1660 words

### **Body**

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There are some events which, over the last 50 years or so, remain indelible in the memory of those who were alive at the time they happened. It is said that those Americans and indeed non-Americans who received the news of the assassination of John Kennedy, the first Roman Catholic President of the USA, carry the circumstances of that murder in their mind for the rest of their lives.

Such was the profundity of the shock waves which went all round the world in the aftermath of that moment of madness on a street in Dallas, Texas, incidentally the home state of the Vice-President and successor to Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson. The Kennedy assassination was a global event but one which at least in Nigeria struck a similar chord was the equally mad incident which took place in Lagos in the morning of 19 October 1986 when the nation woke up to the news that Dele Giwa, the charismatic journalist and one of the founders of Newswatch magazine, had been assassinated when a parcel exploded in his hands as he unwrapped it within the safety of his own home.

Many people have been assassinated in Nigeria since that incident but no other assassination has provoked as much response from the Nigerian public as the murder of Dele Giwa as this was the first and only time that the dastardly device of a parcel bomb has been used to dispatch a Nigerian to the great beyond. But even more than the unusual character of the devise used to kill Dele Giwa, was the suspicion that the perpetrators of this heinous crime were government agents acting on instruction from the highest authority in the land at that time. Since then, the longest-running question on the minds of millions of Nigerians remains: who killed Dele Giwa? This question has however remained unanswered and it is for this reason that the book, Honour for Sale- An Insider Account Of The Murder Of Dele Giwa by Major Debo Basorun (rtd.) deserves to be closely interrogated and is sure to be over the next few months.

The unsolved murder of Dele Giwa is important for several reasons, perhaps the most important being that this assassination marked the end of the period of innocence for Nigeria and Nigerians as after it, a culture of cynicism and mistrust of government was instituted and it will take a great and sustained effort to bring Nigerians back to a state of trust in those who as soldiers or civilians are involved in steering the rickety and treacherous ship of the Nigerian state. It was the first sordid episode of gross impunity exhibited by purported agents of the Nigerian state and it has set the tone for the governance of the Nigerian nation.

Since then, several high-profile killings have been laid at the door of Nigerian rulers, especially the infamous Sani Abacha whose judicial murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists continues to represent the nadir of government impunity and insensitivity not only in Nigeria but all over the world. This extant state of mistrust of

## A Return To A Season Of Anomie print

Nigerian governments needs to be changed and a clear solution of the murder of **Dele Giwa** is a necessary first step on the road of reconciliation between the people of Nigeria and those who are set up in authority over them.

By his own repeated admission, Major Basorun was an important member of the Babangida administration and on many occasions he was the voice of the Babangida government, he being the public relations officer and spin doctor to Babangida when he was Chief of Army Staff, COAS, and later on for nearly three years when his principal was the self declared Military President (what nonsense) of the country. Although he was as close to the seat of power as anyone could be without actually occupying it, it is clear that the author could, by no stretch of the imagination, be regarded as an insider in that government as he had no power base and could not get anything done on his own authority, hence his constant need to see Babangida for the authority he needed to get anything done.

.Debo Basorun

.Debo Basorun

It is unlikely therefore that he was privy to the inner workings of the body, that is, the government to which he pledged his allegiance and which for a long time he thought he belonged. Unlike Akilu, according to him, the physically insignificant but extremely powerful chief of intelligence to the government and the man who has been identified or perhaps mis-identified as the brain behind **Giwa's** assassination, the Major was not capable of any independent action and had to follow all the orders issued to him not just by his boss, the President, but by other officers even if it is because they were senior to him in the military hierarchy or because even though they were junior to him in the pecking order, they had powerful connections which placed them outside Army protocol. As an insider, one who moved in such close proximity with the President, he would have been involved in the planning of the murder of **Dele Giwa** and would not have needed to stumble on clues which as he surmised, pointed accusing fingers at Babangida and his henchmen, one of who was definitely not Major Basorun.

The Major may not have been an insider as he thought he was but he was definitely very close to the seat of power and had the opportunity of observing the principal actors in that macabre dance of death and cold deceit at very close quarters. For this reason the Major deserves to be paid close attention to. Just as a man cannot hide anything of note from his valet, Babangida could not keep his disguises on in the presence of his image maker. From Major Basorun's account it is easily apparent that his boss was a character the study of which would have benefitted a whole tribe of psychologists not to talk of psychiatrists who would have had to propound new and extremely powerful theories to explain their findings. By many accounts other than that of the author, Babangida was a very charming man who was capable of going that extra mile to accommodate his friends and even on occasion, his acquaintances. This side of him made it possible for him to cultivate a large pool of loyalists some of whom have been quoted as being ready to die in his cause. It is quite clear from these memoirs that one of such acolytes was the Major who, to all appearances, is still under the spell of the general even if his mentor has been translated into a mortal enemy, one who, at one time, harboured seriously dangerous intentions towards him. Maybe it is the distance of time that has mellowed whatever grievances Babangida evinced in his onetime protégé but from this record the possibility of reconciliation between the two men cannot be ruled out.

.The book

.The book

The Babangida government, for many reasons, captured the imagination of Nigerians in a way that no other government has done. The government came in riding on giant waves of what was thought to be realistic expectation but it not only betrayed all the hope invested in it but paved the way for another government which waged a relentless war of terror on the people of Nigeria. Babangida and his government moved Nigeria into new and dangerous channels from where we are still seeking a way out twenty long years after they 'stepped aside' under a unprecedented wave of well deserved opprobrium. Never have so few betrayed so many in the history of Nigeria. It is the work of people like Major Basorun who can give us an insight into the workings of Babangida's government of 'settlement', deceit, nauseous exhibitionism and naked violence. For this reason, the Majors book

### A Return To A Season Of Anomie print

must be regarded as a source document, one which must be studied with great care as such accounts are the only tools we have to provide answers to some of the questions which that government poses to the future of this nation.

One aspect of the book and one which the author may not have intended is that it shows the human side of Babangida and it is a side which, but for the proximity of the author to the people he was writing about, we would have found difficult to believe. Babangida was presented to us as a man of action, one who was easily capable of facing all obstacles head on. What was not common knowledge was that the general's fiat did not cross the threshold of his own home where he was subjected to physical abuse by the woman who was presented as his alter ego and one whose death had a visible effect on the general.

The man may have been capable of all sorts of anti-human behaviour but he was also one who worshipped at the perfumed altar of Venus. It is almost a relief to find that the man has a human side after all. This man with all his Jekyll and Hyde attributes, who ruled with a bloody and destructive iron fist artfully concealed by a delicate velvet glove, was subservient not only to his wife but to a coterie of egotists who had him in close bondage and in the end brought him to the valley of impotence and disgrace. He appears on the pages of this book as a tragic figure who can be pictured as rattling around his mansion in Minna wondering how on earth everything has collapsed precipitously around his ears.

One question that this book raises is: can we find it in our hearts to have some sympathy for his condition? Major Basorun has a great deal to say in his book and even if he does not make any attempt to add something to the already bulging but far from complete **Dele Giwa** dossier, the book has enough gravitas to stand on its own. It is most welcome that some of the soldiers who were actors in the various sectors into which the Nigerian Army trespassed with resulting calamity for 30 long years are standing up to be counted on the side of the violated peoples of Nigeria. Those of them who are still thinking of picking up their pens rather than the guns which they dropped or were forced to drop all those many years ago should be encouraged to bite the bullet and make their observations public as a means of bringing some healing to our bruised and battered polity.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2014

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## God will Judge Supreme Court Justices - Ihedioha

The Sun (Nigeria)

March 8, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 926 words

**Byline:** Cyril

### **Body**

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Godwin Tsa, Abuja Former Imo state governor, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha has handed over the justices of the Supreme Court that truncated his seven-month reign as governor of the state to God. The court had on January 14, 2020, replaced him with Senator Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) after holding that his (Ihedioha) emergence as governor of the state was based on wrong computation by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The apex court had equally dismissed his application for the setting aside of the judgment in its March 3, 2020 ruling for lacking in merit. But in a statement in Abuja on Sunday, the former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives said he had resigned his to his fate.

Ihedioha who described the judgment of the Supreme Court as a fraud said God will be the ultimate judge. He, however, singled out Justice Centus Nweze who entered a dissenting judgment in his favour for praise. The statement reads: "On Tuesday 3rd March 2020, the Supreme Court of Nigeria gave a ruling rejecting our application to set aside its earlier judgement of 14th January 2020 on the Imo State governorship election. This is certainly not the outcome we wanted or we worked so hard for and I know how disappointed you must feel. While it is disheartening to note that your desire to introduce good governance has been halted, at least for now, it is also gratifying that our modest efforts have not gone unnoticed. I therefore feel a sense of pride and gratitude for the wonderful energy and commitment that we deployed together to secure the mandate that has now been brazenly stolen from us. "Permit me to use this opportunity to thank all those who played one role or another in this historic quest for justice and truth. I must thank members of the diplomatic community for voicing their concerns for the stability of our country. I commend the chairman and members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for their vanguard role and leadership during this period. "In particular, my special thanks go to all Imo citizens for their uncommon support, solidarity, and collective outrage. Never have a people been so united and committed to a cause. You prayed, fasted, marched, protested and even cried. You sacrificed your time, resources, and endeavour for this just cause. On this matter, the people of Imo State collectively rose to demand for justice and fairness. Imo

## God will Judge Supreme Court Justices - Ihedioha

people rose up in defence of their right to elect leaders of their choice. Our people resoundingly rejected oppression and power grab, defied imposition, injustice and tyranny. I salute Imo people for this display of courage in the face of oppressive state power. "I will forever be in the debt of Nigerians of all walks of life, across ethnic, religious and political divides, senior citizens, journalists, civil societies, ordinary men and women of good conscience, who added their voice to condemn the injustice done in our case. These are people unknown to me personally but who could not bear the illogic of turning number four to number one on the basis of a fraudulently procured result, and appealed to the Supreme Court to save itself and our judiciary. "Whatever may be the personal injury I suffer as a result of the miscarriage of justice, my main concern in this whole tragic episode is not about me. It has always been about the implications this judgement could have for the future of our democracy and the right of the electorate to have their votes count. If institutions that are critical to the entrenchment of rule of law could thwart the wishes of the people in a cynical manner, where lies the future of our democracy? That was why I sought a review of the Supreme Court judgement. Even though justice was not served at the end, the well articulated dissenting judgement delivered by His Lordship, Justice Centus Nweze, has vindicated our stand. I am sure that history and posterity will be kind to him. "To those who are rejoicing about their successful political fraud at the expense of Imo people, as well as their collaborators, let me leave them with the immortal words of the late **journalist, Dele Giwa**: "No evil deed will go unpunished; any evil done by man to man will be redressed; if not now then certainly later; if not by man, then by God for the victory of evil over good is temporary". We believe that God will render the ultimate judgment. He has been with us through this peaceful struggle. And our future is in His hands. " I wish to express my appreciation to members of our legal team who pushed the frontiers of electoral jurisprudence to advance our constitutional democracy. I wish also to thank my team of committed colleagues who served in various capacities during our administration. It has been a great privilege to serve the people of Imo State as Governor. I am proud to have been the recipient of their genuine mandate. I will forever cherish the support, solidarity and cooperation given to me during my tenure. My belief in the ultimate triumph and supremacy of the will of the people remains intact. I pray God to bless and reward all those who stood firm on the path of justice and fair play. "On a personal note, I accept trials and difficulties as part of life as they enable one to become wiser and more sympathetic to the plights of others in similar circumstances. But I am firmly resolved never to give up on the struggle for a better Imo State. And for a better governed Nigeria."

The post God will Judge Supreme Court Justices - Ihedioha appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2020

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## **Dahiru Lawal On Yushau Shuaib: Less Sense, More Nonsense**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

March 27, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 1386 words

**Byline:** Tony Eluemunor

### **Body**

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I know that some medicines could be worse than the diseases they are meant to cure, especially when the recommendation is from a quack doctor.

I also know that as Chinua Achebe noted about Onitsha Market Literature phenomenon, inadequate learning has not stopped some persons from writing books to educate their fellow men and to make some profit on the sidelines.

So, I know full well that quackery, even audacious quackery, did not begin today and that it has been acquiring turbulent virulence and extravagant boasting. Yet, when Mr. Dahiru M Lawal reacted to my column of 6th March, I was shocked.

It lacked civility, was uncoordinated because he rambled on and on, jumping from one issue to the other. It was an unfocused chaotic clutter; a total mess.

Not one error listed against Shuaib, whom he praised as his mentor, and projected as a Mass Communication genius and philosophical prodigy of Aristotelian dimensions, was refuted. Error number one: he wrote, "Sometime in 2021, my mother was denied boarding on an Air Peace plane going from Ilorin to Abuja, even though she was among the first set of passengers who arrived at the airport very early that morning.

Apart from frustrating her attempt to board the aircraft, the airline further charged her exorbitantly for the use of the same ticket for the next day's flight." That is a severe charge against an airline. A few sentences later this appeared: "Mama came early but was on the wrong queue at a counter of another airline.

By the time she realised the mistake, the Air Peace Counter had been closed". Yet, Shuaib still wrote in that article of March 4th: "Sometime in 2021, my mother was denied boarding on an Air Peace plane".

Is that not a blunder in reasoning, if one is blaming A for B's mistake? Is that not pure illogicality, warped thinking, self-contradiction? Oh, reader, what could have made an "award winning" Lawal to refer to the Wikipedia as a

## Dahiru Lawal On Yushau Shuaib: Less Sense, More Nonsense

journal? Journal? Haba Mallam, haba! It is an online encyclopedia while a journal is ..., no, I will leave that undefined for Lawal may want to debate me too on that.

Now, I will jump to three important issues; his attack on my person as a ***journalist*** and Chief James Onanefe Ibori's defender and the awards Shuaib has been winning.

Yes, some nonentity once mocked me as too untalented to work for the PUNCH, Guardian or THISDAY and not wining any journalistic awards, saying that explained why I became Ibori's spokesman to defend a corrupt politician.

I replied that I worked in the PUNCH two weeks and left to pursue an M.Sc. degree in Mass Communication at UNILAG. After that, ***Dele Giwa*** invited me into Newswatch in 1986 (and I add for Lawal's benefit that within two months there, I won an award for Initiative and Excellence. "Oga" Ray Ekpu wrote the citation that tagged me "a child of promise" and asked others to emulate me. My next place of work was THISWEEK where I won a double promotion, rose from Correspondent to Assistant Editor within three years and headed two different Desks; National News and Politics and wrote cover stories for three consecutive weeks, perhaps a first globally in any well-seeded media house.

In 1990, my fourth year in journalism, Harvard's famed telephone call came and I became a Fellow and Ford Foundation scholar at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, the first academic fellowship and the most prestigious one for journalists.

Oh, I still remember that I was invited into Reuters office in Lagos that same year and asked if I would be free to accept the Reuter's Fellowship at Oxford University. Stupidly, I replied that I preferred to go to Harvard; I didn't ask if the Oxford admission could have been deferred! And for you, Lawal, I joined the Guardian in August 1999 and within a month or two the Saturday Editor, Banji Adisa, asked me if I could turn my essays into a full-fledged column; that was the birth of Abuja Notes.

Do I need to add that I acted as a West African Correspondent for the second largest newspaper group in Africa then, The Daily Nation of Kenya, or that Dr. Stanley Macebuh invited me to be Deputy Editor at the Post Express? Or that I have toured Eastern Europe at European Union's expense in service of journalism? If you want more about my writing, please say so and I may tell you how I was contributing to the Daily Sketch twice a week by 1976 and '77 ever before I went to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for my first degree. Yes, I was contributing to the opinion and sports pages and was paid N7 for each article.

Thank you, dear Kayode Ojo, who was Sports Editor then. Please take on me on this for I have more to say; the money the Editor of Monthly Life paid me saw me through UNILAG; thanks to you Mr. Wole Olaoye, now a businessman and columnist for Daily Trust.

You said that I shamelessly defended a "the most corrupt politician in the country". My reply is in three parts; one, only simpletons doubt that Ibori was targeted because of his politics.

He supported the late Dr. Alex Ekwueme's presidency bid in 2003.

Also, only self-deceit can make a ***journalist*** think that there was an anti-corruption war during Olusegun Obasanjo's presidency and Nuhu Ribadu's time at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

Three, I am still defending Ibori from ignoramus too blind to see the injustice done to him. Somebody was willing to be someone's attack dog. It is likely, too, that you may have heard of Third Term bid.

I wrote on Sunday May 30, 2004 (or so) that someone would attempt to change the constitution to allow him become President for a third time, and that it would fail.

That was in a special presidency two-page series that ran in the Daily Independent for one week. You stated that THISDAY heaped tributes on Shuaib; I saw where a lady interviewed Shuaib, not a THISDAY editorial, not a news item. THISDAY? I forgot to tell you that by 1995/96, I sat on the Editorial Board of THISDAY.

### Dahiru Lawal On Yushau Shuaib: Less Sense, More Nonsense

So far, checking for the awards, reminded me of what Achebe said about a bad dictionary; you would take a confusing word to it and it would give you a more perplexing one. Remember that you wrote that Shuaib (or his firm?) won "the Most Creative PR Agency Worldwide 2020 by Global Creativity Index GCI and Statista, the world-renowned statistics portal". Searching for Global Creativity Index, I saw "The Global Creativity Index 2020" which listed countries; "Australia takes the top spot, followed by the United States and New Zealand.

I looked up those behind GCI and saw an article in BLOOMBERG; "Richard Florida is a professor at the University of Toronto's School of Cities and Rotman School of Management. Mr. Florida explained in that 2010 article: "Earlier this week I identified the world's leading nations on innovation, technology and the creative class.

I have created, the Global Creativity Index". Then, further mutations of GCI came up like variants of Covid-19 virus. I have to stop here to await Lawal's reply and then, I'll speak on my hunt for the powers behind a certain GCI award and how it led to Statista and PRovoke.

So far, I found no news of the body/bodies and the award in Reuters, Associated Press, or American or British newspapers.

I still wonder how or why a certain variant of GCI which turns to Statista/PRovoke will say something and no organization will report it except your prnigerianews (which published the inanities against me) and from there Nigerian newspapers got the news, quoting prnigerianews.

I know that there are awards and there are "awords". One means something relevant; one stands for just hot air. Ade Ogidan On Late Donatus Duru Nothing saddens the soul like death.

The African-American musician, Roy C (Hammond) put it succinctly in his "Fireside" pop music; "Like life when death comes around, we are so sad." It steals laughter from our hearts. And the death of others reminds us that our own hearts "are beating funeral marches to the grave".

Please let's lengthen that quote from A Psalm of Life by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "our hearts, though stout and brave, still, like muffled drums, are beating Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle, in the bivouac of life, be not like dumb, driven cattle! Be a hero in the strife!" Strife? Many have called me to ask if Daily Independent was not a national paper from inception and other questions.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

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## Abubakar Tsav - When the Times Were Tough [opinion]

Vanguard (Lagos)

June 15, 2020

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**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** Owei Lakemfa

### **Body**

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They were tough times. The mid-1990s. Times when General Sani Abacha ruled with an iron fist, generals terrorised the populace and the military dictated at gun point. Times when critics like Chief Alfred Rewane and Mrs. Kudirat Abiola were despatched with bullets and the writer-environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa with a rope. They were the times when public and military buses were bombed, journalists and pro-democracy activists jailed for phantom coups and many patriots fled into exile.

I was then Editor of a national evening newspaper, TNT (Today's News Today) and Lagos was the hot bed of popular opposition to military rule. So it was no surprise that the tough cop, Abubakar Tsav, the Police Commissioner Kano, Abacha's home state, was redeployed to take charge of Lagos.

He immediately went about trying to beat everybody into line, including the opposition and even policemen. But after a few weeks, there were wide jubilations at the State Police headquarters and a number of police stations and barracks based on a signal redeploying Tsav. We had a good Crime Reporter, Owolola Adebola who went round capturing the mood of the policemen and interviewing some of them and we published it. But Tsav was retained and he sent his anti-robbery squad after us. They met me but I convinced them that I was not the editor, and escaped. So did Adebola.

When the squad realised that they actually met me their prime target and had slipped through their hands, they became enraged packing whoever they found and eventually decided to detain the News Editor, Tokunbo Oloruntola and another staff, holding them as hostages, but I refused to hand in myself. Tsav had first come to national attention when he investigated the murder of leading ***journalist, Dele Giwa*** who was killed by a parcel bomb in October 1986. He was convinced that top security officers in the Babangida regime carried out the murder, and had the courage to seek permission for their interrogation which was denied.

There were several bomb blasts, especially in public locations, including the Lagos airport. He, at a press conference on November 28, 1996, claimed that the bombings were being carried out by the opposition National Democratic Coalition, NADECO and "Wole Soyinka's National Liberation Council, NALICON".

In the case of the late airport security chief, Dr. Sola Omotsola who was killed in a car bomb, Tsav said his men broke into his office immediately after the blast and found incriminating evidence, including a radio frequency counter and computer spare parts. But the victim's daughter, Omodele Omotsola challenged Tsav's claims pointing out that the police had on November 15, 16, 17 and 18, 1996 searched her late father's office more than four times

## Abubakar Tsav - When the Times Were Tough [opinion]

and found nothing incriminating; so how come Tsav was two weeks after the blast claiming bomb-making equipment was found in her father's office? She accused the regime of planting the so-called evidence.

When confronted with such evidence by the Newswatch Magazine (December 16, 1996 edition) Tsav said: "I have not entered that office once myself; as soon as the blast occurred, we assigned men to investigate the case; the first and second teams went in with bomb disposal experts and the police ... they did not conduct a thorough search initially... but what really gave room for discovery of additional incriminating pieces of evidence was that when the police visited the office again they went with mine detectors, the mine detectors will find anything, and that was what allowed the police to get the additional information."

But NADECO Chairman, Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin said Tsav lied: "We have no agents of violence and in our demands we have been calling for dialogue." Three years later when he appeared before the Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission (the Oputa Panel) Tsav admitted he lied against the opposition. He said the series of bombings in Lagos were by agents of General Sani Abacha, adding: "I believe the explosives were planted in Omotsola's office by the SSS (State Security Services)."

He also revealed that the then Inspector General of Police Ibrahim Coomasie ordered people arrested, especially for bombing without any evidence of wrongdoing.

On the state murder of the *journalist*, Bagauda Kaltho and the claim by Abacha's terrorist chief, Deputy Commissioner of Police Hassan Zakari Biu that a man who died on January 18, 1996, in the Durbar Hotel, Kaduna bomb blast was Kaltho, Tsav said: "Everything he (Biu) is saying is not true. I mean the evidence he gave in respect of Bagauda Kaltho. He said he got photographs from the wife of Bagauda Kaltho. He also said he got reports from the SSS through the Inspector General of Police, which said the person who was killed in the bomb blast at the Durbar Hotel was Bagauda Kaltho.

"And he said that he never met Bagauda anywhere in his life. Then how could he come to that conclusion that the man killed was Bagauda Kaltho? He merely saw his pictures. He should be in prison. As far as I'm concerned, he is a prisoner on parole."

Tsav saw the military as a problem: "Soldiers now commit crime, and behave as if they are above arrest, whereas soldiers are supposed to be subject to civil authority... After the (1966) coup, the military destroyed the police, and from then became law unto themselves."

On the police from whose loins he was produced, Tsav argued: "Our problem in this country is the Nigeria Police Force, it is not the government. If you like, give the police the Central Bank, give the police a general assembly plant, give them all the communication outfits, they will still not perform."

On insecurity, he argued that: "Banditry and insecurity are created by politicians and the politicians know who the bandits are. They know why these people are doing this. If the police are courageous enough to search houses and monitor activities of politicians, you will see what they will recover from them."

Despite growing distrust, mass dissatisfaction and disenchantment with the Buhari administration, Tsav believed: "Buhari is the best person to lead Nigeria now. He is incorruptible, and his war against corruption has been exposing looters" adding that the only drawback is that "he is too slow, and some of his aides are corrupt."

On Monday June 8, 2020, he took his eternal bow. Tsav was a nationalist who lacked the theory of a patriot; a tough cop who did not understand the uses of state power; a loyalist which made him susceptible to manipulations; a moralist with predisposition for social justice but whose grasp of power relations found him sometimes in the camp of dictators. He was, instinctively, a good man.

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## We'll reopen Dele Giwa's case - Sowore

The Punch

October 20, 2022 Thursday

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**Length:** 146 words

### **Body**

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The presidential candidate of the African Action Congress, Omoyele Sowore, has said that the case of a late journalist and activist, Dele Giwa, who was murdered in Ikeja, Lagos on October 19, 1986, with a bomb enclosed in a parcel, will be reopened.

In a memorial post for the late activist on Wednesday, Sowore knocked former military President, Ibrahim Babangida, alleging that he was part of the plot to assassinate Giwa. He subsequently stated that Giwa's case would be reopened.

"36 years ago, ex-military dictator, Ibrahim Babangida, plotted with Halilu Akiliu (Ex-Director of National Intelligence) and Col A.K Togun (now deceased) to send a letter bomb that assassinated foremost investigative journalist, Dele Giwa, in his house in Ikeja. We'll reopen the case!" Sowore posted.

He shared pictures of the late journalist as alongside a flyer that read, "Who killed Dele Giwa?"

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2022

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## I Will Temper With Press Freedom

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

June 13, 2019 Thursday

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**Length:** 891 words

**Byline:** Sunny Awhefeada

### **Body**

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The title of this essay should reverberate among people who had become adults around 1984. I don't belong to that age bracket, but the precocious in my generation would remember the statement "I will tamper with press freedom" wistfully. Yes, wistfully. We were enjoying the Harmattan and conviviality of yuletide and New Year in pristine Evwreni on 1st January 1984 when the news of an end of year coup d' tat got to us. We were innocent children savouring the rare taste of Christmas rice and stew and getting set for our masquerade show that earned us dough. Our only awareness that things had gone awry was that some of the items that constituted our menu had begun to vanish. Tea was no longer on our table just as bread was no more for breakfast. Rice had also become a rare item, except for Christmas and New Year. But we heard our parents and guardians and even teachers talk about corruption and rigging of election. We heard them, but they meant nothing to us. All of that changed in January 1984 in our first year in secondary school.

The teachers in the residential quarters where we lived bought many newspapers that January as that was the most authentic and lasting record of what was going on in Lagos, then the seat of power. Curiosity made some of us to begin reading the newspapers intensively as if for an examination. The stories were exciting as they detailed the actions of the new rulers who were young and good looking soldiers as evidenced in the pictures in the newspapers. Stories of arrest and detention of politicians of the deposed regime made the headlines. Our parents and guardians hailed the soldiers and we children adored if not admired them. Then one day we saw one newspaper, I think it should be National Concord, with the headline "I will tamper with press freedom". The statement was attributed to the Major General Muhammadu Buhari, the young military head of state. His picture was on the cover. He was trim, young, good looking, likable, and austere. As children we didn't know the impact of that declaration. We were rather enchanted by the power and authority the statement commanded. We soon adopted the phrase "I will tamper with" in our dealings in school. Our prefects also borrowed the phrase "with immediate effect" from the new military rulers.

Yes, Buhari as military dictator did tamper with press freedom. I am sure, not too long after that declaration Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, both of The Guardian were sent to prison. Two notorious military legislations

## I Will Temper With Press Freedom

reinforced the gross violation of human rights and the muffling of the press. One was Decree No. 2 and the other was Decree No. 4. The former allowed the regime to detain anybody indefinitely without trial. The later was an artillery nozzle aimed at the heart of the press. In its quest for scapegoats the soldiers branded many deeds, even innocuous ones, as sabotage. Thus, for twenty months the media gasped for breadth under Buhari's jackboot. He waged a war against the nation in the name of War Against Indiscipline.

When Major General Ibrahim Babangida, Buhari's buddy for twenty years, shoved him aside and took over governance he did so under the excuse of redressing the excessive human rights abuse and gagging of the press experienced under the latter's draconian regime. But military rule was military rule, because even though Babangida pretended to be a reformer he entrenched Buhari's assault on the media. The situation got worse under General Sani Abacha who usurped the Interim National Government (ING) to crown himself head of state. Thus, for sixteen years, from 1983 to 1999, the soldiers in power tampered with press freedom. **Dele Giwa** paid the supreme price. Others spent time in Abacha's gulag or were "jailed for life" as Kunle Ajibade experienced and wrote.

Yet, in spite of the media's gory experience in those sixteen gruesome years many journalists stood up in defiance against oppression. Those brave souls who founded and worked with news magazines such as Tell, The News, Tempo and others typified the heroism of defiance in the face of military barbarism. They proved that the pen was truly mightier than the armoured tank and not even the sword. The press created a site of struggle which took a pan-Nigerian dimension. The experience became a recreation of the role the press played in the quest for independence before 1960. Yes, the 1990s was the decade of struggle for a second independence from benighted military rule. Nigerians won mainly due to the role of the press.

The recent closure of the AIT and Raypower, both media outfits of DAAR Communications Limited, is the true to type of the abrasive assault on the press for which soldiers in power are known. When Ishaq Modibo Kawu the pugnacious Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) reeled out reasons for the closure of the station it was merely an act intended to give a dog a bad name in order to hang it. It is still fresh how the presidency blacklisted and barred the AIT from Aso Rock. Soldiers also invaded and occupied the offices of Daily Trust. Daily Independent **journalist** was also unlawfully incarcerated by the DSS. Many other instances of tampering with press freedom now abound because we are back to 1984.

The post I Will Temper With Press Freedom appeared first on Independent Newspapers Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2019

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## **Mike Adenuga buys Masekela's trumpet**

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 10, 2018 Saturday

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**Length:** 1173 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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It's a tale of two African giants—one a giant of enterprise, the other a giant of jazz, Africa's "Father of Jazz" and trumpet maestro.

Their paths crossed in Ghana resulting in Mike Adenuga buying the trumpet of the world-acclaimed South African jazz icon who died in January of prostate cancer at the age of 78. The encounter is told in our long-awaited book, *The GURU—Eyewitness Biography of Mike Adenuga* slated for release this year at the next Dimgba Igwe Memorial book launch.

As Mike Adenuga's biographer and a newsman, I cannot but report this exclusive news item in the light of the death of Masekela, a man who is to South Africa what Fela was to Nigeria. Incidentally Fela and Masekela were good friends. Masekela even did a cover version of Fela's song Lady. But it's for the Herb Albert-like song Grazing in the Grass, a song that topped the American Billboard chart in 1968 that Masekela is best remembered. Masekela's biggest hit "Grazing in the Grass" conjures the image of a nomadic jazz man playing his music across the fields, across green pastures. Only that he didn't kill people like the deadly Fulani herdsmen of the apocalypse ravaging our farmlands, leaving behind sorrow, tears and blood. Instead, he was the victim fleeing from the injustice, the brutality and the killing fields of apartheid and finding redemption in the jazz instrument of the trumpet that became his voice and weapon. As an activist, he simply used his trumpet to protest the cruelty and injustice of apartheid in songs like Soweto Blues and Bring Him Back (Nelson Mandela).

Jazz-wise, I won't call myself a big fan of Hugh Masekela. But I love the sound of his horn which appeals to me more than the sound of his singing voice. Generally, I prefer the instrumental aspect of jazz music to the vocal part. And the trumpet is my favourite jazz music instrument. My favourite trumpeter will forever be Miles Davis. I like his style, the muffled sound of his trumpet and the ability to explore other musical territories to enlarge the coast of

## Mike Adenuga buys Masekela's trumpet

jazz. While jazz purists like Wynton Marsalis will stick to the orthodox New Orleans type of jazz, Miles Davis is ready to innovate, to explore other genres including rock music and "jazzifying" them. Take what he did with Michael Jackson's Human Nature and Cyndi Lauper's Time After Time.

My introduction to Miles Davis was through Willis Conover, the man called the "Voice of Jazz", the deep baritone-voice broadcaster and disc jockey whose long-running "Jazz Hour" programme on Voice of America (VOA) radio introduced millions across the world to American jazz music.

I can never forget the first time I heard Miles Davis new album Tutu named after the South African bishop and anti-apartheid activist. Tutu remains my favourite album. It's the album that has turned me into a Miles Davis devotee. Next to Tutu, I love Miles' Kind of Blue rated as the No.1 jazz album of all-time.

I was watching the Hugh Masekela funeral ceremony where speaker after speaker paid homage to the late jazz icon. From Hugh Masekela's promoter, I got to know that Masekela didn't want to form his own band. He wanted to play with Miles Davis. But Miles Davis told him to go and form his own band and play "your African shit."

So this "shit" and "shithole" thing about Africa popularized and sensationalized by Donald Trump has come a long way. From what I gathered, it was Miles Davis who challenged Hugh Masekela to form his own band which he then infused with his native South African brand of music. But for Miles Davis, Masekela would probably have been lost in the anonymity of American jazz. He wouldn't have differentiated himself to be the African jazz leader that he is today even in death.

From listening to Willis Conover in my University of Lagos days in the mid-seventies, jazz has captured my soul. It is the music that inspires me as a writer. I remember the good old days in the Sunday Concord, when my editor, the legendary **Dele Giwa** killed by a parcel bomb initiated me into the jazz world of Earl Klugh, the acoustic guitar maestro. The Sunday Concord newsroom called "The Writer's Enclave" was filled with **Dele Giwa**'s apostles like Soji Akinrinade, May Ellen Ezekiel, Lewis Obi, Banji Adeyanju, the late Dimgba Igwe, Chuma Adichie and the rest of them. I remember I was the resident deejay spinning jazz music from my massive tape recorder cum radio as we banged our typewriters to produce stories. There were no computers then as we have today.

**Dele Giwa**, the American-trained **journalist** who was with the New York Times had worked with the Daily Times as features editor from where he was headhunted to become the pioneer editor of the Sunday Concord. I owe so much to **Dele Giwa**, the editor of editors. How I wished he lived to see my Weekend Concord, a paper influenced by the stuff I learnt from him. From my biography of Mike Adenuga, you will read that **Dele Giwa**, Mike Adenuga and Femi Akinrinade (Adenuga's first-ever business partner) were all students and friends in New York of those days, a New York filled with jazz and soul music. They all drove gypsy cabs which was one of the most dangerous jobs in New York in addition to studying.

Yes, Mike Adenuga loves jazz, but he prefers more of African highlife music. It's a passion he shares with his daughter Mrs. Bella Adenuga-Disu who told me in a rare interview: "My father likes good music. He is a lover of highlife music. Dad and I have common musical taste. I love highlife music and people think it's crazy. I love Victor Uwaifo, E.T. Mensah, Osita Osadebe. People find my musical taste weird but my dad and I have that in common. Whenever a new CD is out, he sends me a copy. And he loves jazz a lot. My dad enjoys good music and he enjoys good food."

As a kid, Adenuga was crazy about I.K. Dairo's music. He adored him. He would sit all day long by the radio waiting to hear Dairo's music. His sister told me so.

In our book, the story of how Adenuga, an Afrocentrist whose company Glo sponsors African Voices on CNN and who loves and supports anything Africa bought Hugh Masekela's trumpet in Ghana. The story is told by Ian Randolph, Adenuga's trusted friend from way back: "On a personal note, when I lost my mother in 2000, my chairman Mike Adenuga took over the burial in Ghana. He empowered me enough to give her a burial plus his presence at the burial. It was the most gratifying. And he came with a large delegation, not just him. He donates to churches, charities and so many causes and he doesn't say a word about it. His philanthropy is legendary. In Ghana, there was a charity for homeless children. He doesn't go out much. But on that day, I convinced him to

### Mike Adenuga buys Masekela's trumpet

go. Hugh Masekela, the world-acclaimed South African jazz trumpeter was performing. And they auctioned his trumpet. And he bought it for \$50,000. Then they didn't know who he was. And he made me give the money as if it was my money."

The post Mike Adenuga buys Masekela's trumpet appeared first on The Sun News.

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2018

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## The Nation stars at NMMA

The Nation (Nigeria)

December 17, 2019 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1035 words

### **Body**

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With a haul of eight honours, 18 nominations in 17 categories, The Nation on Sunday night proved its mettle at the 27th Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMA).

At the event, held at the Muson Centre in Onikan, Lagos State, this newspaper beat The Punch in the Prize for Editorial Writing of the Year.

Vintage Press Limited Chairman Wale Edun congratulated the winners.

He said: 'I want to heartily congratulate the eight worthy award winners, on their fantastic achievements. Such acclamation and recognition is becoming something of a noble tradition at The Nation. Nonetheless it is never to be taken for granted; we should celebrate!'

This year's NMMA featured 37 categories in print and six each for radio and television.

Deputy Editor Emmanuel Oladesu's report 'The big contest' won the Lateef Jakande Prize for Political Reporter. Correspondent Precious Igbonwelundu was runner up with her entry 'Conflicting...as National Assembly moves to endorse the creation of state police.'

Multiple awards winner Sina Fadare beat Vanguard and Nigerian Tribune nominees in the 9Mobile Prize for Innovative Reporter of the Year with his story 'The magic of smokeless coal.' His report 'Beekeeping: Gateway to wealth creation and good health' was runner up in the Bukola Saraki Prize for Agriculture Reporter of the Year, won by Ebhuomhan Sebastine of Daily Independent.

Fadare was recently appointed as Editor of Yoruba newspaper in the Vintage Press Limited stable - Gbelegbo.

With his report 'Revealed: How N600m SURE-P funds for tourism were misappropriated,' Innocent Duru floored two entrants from New Telegraph to clinch the Adamu Mu'azu Prize for Tourism Reporter of the Year.

Capital Market Editor Taofik Saloko's 'Multiple Subscriptions: Amnesty for 'ghost' shareholders' was the judges' favourite for the Access Bank Prize for Capital Market Reporter of the Year and Daniel Eshiet won the Coca Cola Nigeria Prize for Brand and Marketing Reporter of the Year with his report 'Nigeria's burgeoning diabetes drug business.'

## The Nation stars at NMMA

Assistant Editor Gboyega Alaka's investigative piece 'Shina Rambo is dead! Pastor who claims to be Shina Rambo is fake' won the coveted Ernest Sisei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year and Medinat Kanabe was crowned the NMMA Female Reporter of the year with her story 'Anyone can be victim of maternal mortality.'

Prolific sports writer Alimi Taiwo was a finalist in the Bashorun MKO Abiola sports reporting category which former New Telegraph's Deputy Sports Editor Dapo Sotuminu clinched; Energy Editor Emeka Ugwanyi was runner up in the Peter Odili Prize for Power Reporter won by Ujah Emmanuel of Vanguard. Ugwuanyi was also runner up in the Chevron Nigeria Prize for Oil and Gas Reporter which Juliana Francis of the New Telegraph won.

Assistant Editor Okwy Iroegbu-Chikezie's report 'ECOWAS protocol under xenophobia threat' was runner up in the Olusegun Mimiko Prize for Foreign News Reporter; Money Market Correspondent Collins Nweze was runner up in two categories: Sonny Odogwu Prize for Business Reporter of the Year, and Union Bank Prize for Banking and Finance Reporter. Industry Correspondent Oluwakemi Dauda was finalist in the Nigerian Port Authority (NPA) Prize for Maritime Reporter of the Year.

This newspaper has consistently lived true to its mandate of 'truth in defence of freedom,' parading an array of seasoned professionals.

The Nation won the NMMA Newspaper of the Year in 2018 with four other awards, emerging runner up in 16 categories. In 2017, this newspaper's reporters clinched 10 of the 29 prizes up for grabs in the print media category, leaving seven other newspapers to share the remaining 19.

This year, The Punch had seven wins, including the Babatunde Jose Prize for Newspaper of the Year, which it contested with The Guardian and Daily Trust; Alade Odunewu Prize for Columnist of the Year (Adelakun Abimbola); Cecil King Memorial Prize for Print **Journalist** of the year (Samson Folarin), Photographer of the Year (Obasa Olatunji) and MTN Prize for Telecommunications Reporter of the Year (Ogunfunwa Adedoyin). It had 18 nominations in 13 categories.

With record 34 nominations in 24 categories, New Telegraph clinched 10 awards; The Guardian got five awards, including the **Dele Giwa** Prize for Editor of the Year; Vanguard won three and The Sun won one.

Other winners at the event were Tony Okuyeme whose story 'High expectations amid disquiet over national theatre' won the Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter; Isioma Madike's entry 'The dying culture of giving first salary to parents,' won Olagunsoye Oyinlola Prize for Culture and Tradition; Dorothy Orakpo won the Ibrahim Shekarau Prize for Education Reporter with the story 'Deepening rot in education sector triggers alarm'; China Abanobi won the Olusegun Mimiko Prize for Foreign News Reporter with 'Flipside of the American dream' and Princewill Ekwujuru's 'Divergent views in debate over relevance of CSR' got the Keystone Bank Prize for CSR reporter.

Ifeanyi Emmanuel's 'Agony of residents sacked by flood' was adjudged winner of the NAFCON Environment Reporter category; Adeola Yusuf won Conoil Prize for Energy Correspondent with entry 'The big power scandal' and Yeeken Nurudeen's story 'Plastic recycling plants: how Nigeria's 392m investment on project end up in ruins' clinched the Sonny Odogwu Prize for Business Reporter of the Year.

Also, Chijoke Jideofor emerged winner of IGI prize for Insurance Reporter; Babatunde Ajaja won NPA Prize for Maritime Reporter; Olasunkanmi Akoni received the prize for Real Estate/Construction reporting; Emenike Chukwuemeka won Nnamdi Azikiwe prize for Cartoonist of the year, Akinfenwa Olugbenga got the Alex Ibru Prize for Investigative Reporting, Bertram Nwannekanma was announced winner of the Abubakar Imam Prize for Newspaper Features Writer and Mike Ebonugwo won the Gani Fawehinmi Prize for Human Rights Reporter.

Award Committee Chairman Prof. Ralph Akinfeleye said there was no winner for the Buba Marwa Prize for Defence Reporting because the nominations were below the 70 per cent cut-off.

He urged editors to be meticulous in editing copies to minimise errors, and encouraged media practitioners to uphold the tenets of the profession.

The Nation stars at NMMA

**Load-Date:** December 18, 2019

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## Noble Birth, Troubled Adulthood

Vanguard (Lagos)

December 30, 2019

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**Length:** 1162 words

**Byline:** Owei Lakemfa

### **Body**

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Muritala Ramat Muhammed was the charismatic General who emerged Head of State following the July 29, 1975 coup. In a counter-coup on February 13, 1976, he was cut down in a hail of bullets. The frightened regime which survived him was shocked it had no inkling such a coup was in the offing. It, therefore, decided to establish a secret service which would combine internal security, local and foreign intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence and propaganda.

The regime mandated then Governor of Benue Plateau State and former Director, Military Intelligence, Major General Abdul Mohammed, technocrat, Mr. Sunday Bolorunduro Awoniyi and then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Alhaji Liman Ciroma to work on this project. This gave birth to the Nigerian Security Organisation, NSO, under Decree 27 of 1976.

Initially, the Metropolitan Club, Lagos was to be seized and used as the NSO headquarters, but the regime rejected this and rather, ordered the seizure of the Civil Service Club at 15, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos. A few years down the line, that address, which was a relaxation centre, became one people prayed not to be taken as it came to symbolize repression, torture and detention without trial.

Another major issue about the NSO that changed, was secrecy, especially of its officers. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a general who was Head of State when the NSO was created, wrote in his book, *Not My Will* that: "At inception, our aim was to make the NSO thoroughly faceless and inconspicuous but silently functioning with a clinical efficiency... Its principal officers were to remain innocuous and maintain a totally low and obtrusive profile."

Given this policy, Obasanjo said: "One can then imagine our chagrin when information came to us about Newbreed magazine's story on the NSO with the picture of the Director, Maj-Gen. Mohammed, splashed on the face of the magazine to the bargain... I was told what Okolie (Newbreed Publisher) had planned to do would have done irreparable damage to the NSO, he would have blown whatever cover the NSO had... We had no choice but to seize his magazine in national interest."

This obsession about the secrecy of NSO, (renamed the State Security Service, SSS) is now laughable as the organization even advertises itself. In fact, like the police, customs, immigration, prisons (correctional services) and the armed forces, it has its own uniform. When in our streets today, you see people clad in full black attire with boots, and sometimes with fancy-looking Israeli weapons, know they are of the 'secret service.' Sometimes, their

## Noble Birth, Troubled Adulthood

uniform consist of masks making them look like Ninjas. As for its leaders, there are no known attempts to conceal their identities.

The NSO under Obasanjo, quickly degenerated into a terror gang, detaining student leaders, critics and those who politically disagreed with the regime. It also established, outside the ambits of the law, a super-secret detention centre on Ita-Oko, an island surrounded by crocodile-infested waters. The island could only be accessed by boat or helicopter.

One quite commendable project of the NSO, was channeling funds and arms to the liberation movements especially in Southern Africa.

The Shagari administration inherited the NSO and deployed it against real and imagined enemies. When it had political problems with the opposition Great Nigeria Peoples' Party, GNPP, in that party's stronghold of Borno State, it deployed the NSO to abduct the GNPP House Majority Leader, Alhaji Abdurahman Shugaba Darman, declared him a foreigner and deported him. When Alhaji Zanni Bukar Mandara, a military food contractor was overheard complaining in the presence of some soldiers about the worsening economic situation in the country, the NSO seized and charged him with attempting to overthrow the administration.

The NSO was so liberally used by the Buhari-Idiagbon regime that overthrew Shagari, that the country was virtually a police state. The successor Babangida regime promised to cleanse it. Part of the cleansing ceremony was divesting it of foreign intelligence and military espionage and rechristening it on June 5, 1986 as the SSS. The body also calls itself the Department of State Services, DSS, with a motto of "Loyalty, Vigilance, Verity." But like the leopard, it remained the same. Within five months, the SSS Director General, Alhaji Ismaila Gwarzo and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Tunde Togun, were embroiled in the controversy on the bombing of leading journalist, Dele Giwa.

Many thought that with civil rule, the SSS/DSS would change its role to that of safeguarding the populace rather than whoever is in power. Perhaps if it had, it would have provided more intelligence gathering on the shadowy Boko Haram, the kidnappers that have made road travel in many parts of the country, a suicidal mission and bandits that have grown to armies seizing parts of the North West.

Every administration since the 1999 return to civil rule has misused the SSS in various ways including to seize newspapers and intimidate opponents. However, the situation has become far worse since the 2015 change of government to the ruling All Progressives Congress. I will pick just one incident for every year.

In 2015, the former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki was charged with corruption. Three courts granted him bail but the SSS disobeyed the court orders for four years releasing him only last Tuesday. Related to that is the leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, IMN, Alhaji Ibrahim El-Zakzaky with his wife, Zeenat, who the SSS has refused to release since December 2015 despite court orders.

In the night of October 8, 2016, the SSS broke down doors and gates of the homes of a number of judges across the country including those of the Supreme Court in what has turned out to be a continuous effort to cow the judiciary.

For over thirteen hours on November 21, 2017 in Abuja, the SSS teamed up with the National Intelligence Agency to square off against the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, aided by police operatives. The clash followed attempts by the EFCC to arrest the immediate past SSS Director General, Mr. Ita Ekpenyong and a former Director General, NIA, Ambassador Ayo Oke.

Perhaps the most infamous act of the SSS in its 41-year history was its Tuesday, August 7, 2018 invasion of the National Assembly during which its hooded agents prevented senators, honourable members, staff and journalists from accessing the Assembly, announcing that its takeover was based on orders from above.

This year, the most infamous act of the SSS was its Friday, December 6, armed invasion of the Federal High Court, Abuja premises to re-arrest journalist, Omoyele Sowore and co-accused, Olawale 'Mandate' Bakare who had been

Noble Birth, Troubled Adulthood

granted and fulfilled bail conditions. As it continues to experience a difficult adulthood, there are yet no indications that the SSS can be reformed to operate within the constitutional and the laws of the land.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2019

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## **Nigeria Kills Them All (For Precious Owolabi)**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

August 15, 2019 Thursday

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**Length:** 1021 words

**Byline:** Sunny Awhefeada

### **Body**

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Takena Tamuno's fame rested on his prodigious achievement as a pioneer historian and later as Vice Chancellor of the Universities of Ilorin and Ibadan. If a roll call of Nigerian poets were to be taken, Tamuno would not number among the bards. But he was a bard in his own right, a profoundly insightful one for that matter. Tamuno's apprehension of the Nigerian condition as expressed in his verse is prophetic and tragic. In one moment of vatic inspiration Tamuno's fecund pen dropped the following lines, "all things bright and beautiful/Nigeriakills them all".

Nigeria is enshrouded in irony as she is a beautiful ideal that has become a mirage that daily hunts her citizens. My memories of childhood reverberate with thoughts of a great country, which our marching song at IMG Practicing School, Oke-Ado, Ibadan, configured to be the best place on earth. That nostalgic song "Ilu mi Ilu mi/ Ilu Nigeria/ Odara odara/Olewa kpukpo/Kosibi ti mo lelo/Ninu ile aye/Kimo le gbagbe/Ilu Nigeria" roughly means "My country Nigeria/ Is good/ She is beautiful/There is no place I will go to in the world/That I will forget Nigeria". The Nigeria of my childhood was a romantic ideal which now approximates nostalgia, very much in contrast to today's buffettings and most undesirable phenomenon. Nigeria is no longer that good and beautiful country amplified in that madrigal. Nigeria has become an ogress that eats her own.

I do not know exactly when Tamuno wrote his tragic, but prophetic poem. However, my memory of Nigeria as a land that "kills them all" dates back to 1986. That was the year Babangida's Police killed harmless students of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the then Vice Chancellor, the un-professorial Ango Abdulahi came out to say "ONLY FOUR" students were killed. That same year, on the 19th of October, a Sunday, the remarkably brilliant investigative **journalist**, **Dele Giwa**, was bombed to death. Nigeria lost her innocence. Although, the brutal act of blood-letting had been part of our history through the coups, counter-coups and the civil war of 1967 to 1970, the entrenchment of bizarre killings crept into our polity from around 1986. The murderous dictatorship that was to evolve and dominate Nigeria up to 1998/1999 turned the nation into a sprawling Akeldama (Acts 1: 19).

When Precious Owolabi, the **journalist** intern with Channels television went out to do his job as a reporter on Monday 22nd July, he never knew that Nigeria would consume him the way Funke Olakurin was consumed a week

## Nigeria Kills Them All (For Precious Owolabi)

and a half earlier. This piece is a threnody for the Olakurins and the Owolabis and the many other known and unknown victims of the failure of the Nigerian state. It is trite that the purpose of government is the security and welfare of the citizens, but this has stopped being the case in Nigeria. Every day lacerates our minds with stories of brutal deaths in the hands of cultists, bandits, kidnappers, terrorists and even government security agents. Our bad roads, roads made hellish by government's phenomenal incompetence have also wrought deaths. So have the hospitals and collapsing buildings. The failure of governance, the state's abdication of its responsibility to the citizens, the refusal to sanction infractions and the abysmal lack of altruism among the ruling elite constitute the multiple cogs in Nigeria's wheel. The citizens are angry, disenchanted and kicking and, the crises assailing Nigeria is a manifestation of rebellion against the State.

The brutal killing of Olakurin by bandit-herdsman, the murder of Owolabi in the Shiite-Police clash, and the many other killings that now hunt us could have been avoided, but for the failure of leadership. The social situation that led to this tragic bend derives from the failure of government in every sphere. Our turn for a Pan-Nigerian Renaissance came in 1999, but self-seeking Olusegun Obasanjo squandered that golden moment. Today, Obasanjo, the main character in the picaresque that is the Nigerian story, has stolen the toga of patriotism which he now grotesquely wears as a statesman speaking truth to power. From Obasanjo to Buhari, the lot of Nigerians has been most unenviable. Horror stalks the land, hunger, poverty, disease and other indices of irredeemable failure stare us in the face and we appear so very helpless.

That Nigeria has been taken hostage is not in doubt. We are a nation under siege. The sad reality is that nobody is safe anymore and the siege which T. Y. Danjuma described as "a war without fronts" is on us all. There are villagers in some communities who now have to pay the herders in order to have access to their farms. Communities have been decimated and we are now told that the herders, bandits and terrorists are not Nigerians, but foreigners. If it is true that they are foreigners why did they see Nigeria as a destination? And why are they unleashing violence on Nigerians? Why is government unable to deal with the situation and restore normalcy? The answers to these questions rest on the fact that Nigeria has become a failed state that can neither secure her borders nor protect her citizens.

The State has also showed its hands in the killing of Nigerians through its security agents. The Police are culpable in this. Some years ago, a bullet from the murderous convoy of a state governor killed Festus Iyayi in Lokoja and the perpetrators of that deadly act got away with it. Nigerians have resigned to "it is the will of God" and those who ruin the country daily entrench their interest. We ascribe every ill that befall us to God. But this should not be. The idea of Nigeria as represented in the popular imagination and nationalistic consciousness must be reborn. That idea of Nigeria is the motif in my primary school marching song. We must reinvent Nigeria. It is a task that the people should embark upon. We must stop Nigeria from killing her people. For now, it is "oh come together, let us mourn", but we must wake up someday from this tragic sleep and remake our dear country Nigeria.

The post Nigeria Kills Them All (For Precious Owolabi) appeared first on Independent Newspapers Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2019



## Why IBB Should Not Be Celebrated - By Festus Afofun

Naija 247 News

August 21, 2021 Saturday

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Length: 1378 words

### **Body**

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The ravaging calamity that befalls Nigeria as a country since colonial era is the act or re-writing history. The Nigeria ruling elites have successfully rewrote the Nigeria history by excluding themselves from the gory path of history and rebranding themselves as Liberators.

The unscrupulous act of rebranding criminals as statemens gets me infuriated. Ibrahim Babangida 80th years birthday anniversary brought many fake achievements, hailings and wrong history about the former head of state and his roles in Nigeria Democracy.

Prominent person's, academicians and influencers in Nigeria are trying to rewrite the gory details of Ibrahim Babangida widely known as Maradonna.

IBB as mostly called is a well-known coupist and enemy of democracy in Nigeria. He was born in August 17, 1941. IBB was a military dictator who ruled Nigeria from 1985 when he staged a palace coup that ousted General Muhammadu Buhari regime. IBB oversaw the brutal assassination of Dele Giwa a veteran investigative journalist who expose the criminalities of IBB and his cronies. Aside from annulment of June 12 election, massacres of dissent voices and enormous corruption committed by Ibrahim Babangida what other things do you know about him?

Read five revelations I consciously expose out of numerous crimes against humanity committed by the cheaply celebrated paralyzed elder statesman Ibrahim Babangida.

1. Restrictions of Freedom of expression and press: Babangida crippled freedom of press and expression as various journalists, media houses, critics and civil societies suffered from his inhumane dictatorial 6years regime.

Three newspapers in Lagos owned by John West Publications were shut down in March, 1991 for thirteen days for what was described as 'embarrassing publications' against the corrupt Military head of state IBB and his wife, relating to the Jennifer Madike case.

Also William Keeling, a correspondent for the British daily Financial Times, was expelled from Nigeria and declared persona non grata after he wrote an article that exposed the Babangida government of not reporting about half of the extra five billion dollars that it was estimated to have earned from higher oil prices during the Gulf war.

Many media houses were shut down and scores of journalists were imprisoned without charges. The press bitterly suffered from the claws of Babangida's oppression.

## Why IBB Should Not Be Celebrated - By Festus Afofun

**2. Abortion of Democracy:** Babangida was the Chief of Army Staff who annulled the June 12, 1993 election which happens to be the most free and fairest election in the history of Nigeria. The unofficial result of the election though not declared by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) but indicated a victory for Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who defeated Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC). Babangida purportedly annulled the June 12 election after he discovered that Abiola won the election despite all machineries he put in place to truncate the electoral process.

The hidden reason why the archenemy of democracy General Maradonna failed the Nigeria people was that Abiola's campaign focused on economic issues, as he was a vocal critic of the government's structural adjustment program (SAP) which the Babangida government had commenced the SAP in 1986, and following prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, he imposed austerity measures to ensure fiscal discipline by the state.

To interest you Tofa the government sponsored presidential candidate, support the SAP as he harmered the point that he will focus on the effective implementation of existing economy policies when he assume power.

Note that Babangida have closer ties with Tofa as he had once suggested Babangida remain president till 2000.

The evil genius annul the June 12, election because of his nepotic, tribalistic, selfish and bourgeois interest.

[b]3. Brutal clampdown on civil rights advocates: [/b]He jailed hundreds of activists and democrats who demanded for respect of human right and democratic government. He was so tyrannical and brutal that he admitted to a news magazine that his favorite alias was the 'Evil Genius'.

Sometimes in November 1991, the passport of human rights attorney Gani Fawehinmi was seized when he was on his way to London for medical treatment. No official reason was given for the action.

Human rights attorney Alao Aka-Bashorun's passport, which was seized in 1990, has not yet been returned.

Popular public interest advocate Femi Falana was harassed on numerous occasions, apparently because of his role as defense counsel for Jennifer Madike, whose case was a headache for IBB tyrannical rule. Femi falana was arrested on May 12 1991, when security agents asked to see documents used in the defense of his client.

The activist passport was also seized in October 1991, when he was at the airport trying to leave the country to attend a meeting of non-governmental human rights organizations from the Commonwealth countries. The meeting had been called to lobby the 1991 Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference, which was being held in Zimbabwe. He was questioned over the next two days about the Madike case and accused of being insufficiently patriotic because of his opposition to the government-sponsored candidacies of Nigerians to fill prestigious positions in the international arena.

Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was also jailed for years because he criticized the Maryam husband doctoral regime.

Babangida Maradonna also locked up pro-democracy activists in prison like Omoyele Sowore, Sheu Sanni and many others who led protests to demand for democracy in Nigeria.

**4. Killings of students:** Under Babangida rule Thousands of students were massacred across various Nigeria universities especially Zaria based on the order of the military dictator Ibrahim Babangida. IBB military governments' hostility to academic pursuits crippled universities throughout the country as academic operations were stopped.

In 1991, students were the targets of a Maradonna siege, The government cracked down on student's union and it's leaders in May as response to an ultimatum issued by the National Association of Nigerian Students which the government later banned.

## Why IBB Should Not Be Celebrated - By Festus Afofun

Babangida arrested and jailed over 500 students ranging from Lagos State University (LASU), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and other various institutions who protested against the government maladministration of educational system.

5. Corruption: Babangida was corrupt as Goodluck Jonathan former Nigeria president. IBB regime constitutionalized corruption even that his government of 8years regime does have time to fight corruption. His government finds pleasure in looting the national treasury to enrich himself, friends and families.

Ibrahim Babangida administration was unable to give an account of the Gulf War windfall, which has been estimated to be \$12.4 billion.

According to wikipedia.com, General Ibrahim Babangida's tenure, corruption became a policy of the state that he routinely disbursed vehicles and cash gifts to people to earn loyalty, and the discipline of the military force eroded.'

The term 'IBB Boys' emerged, meaning fronts for the head of state in the business realm, someone who usually transact dirty deals from drug dealing to money laundering and all sorts of corrupt deals.

Babangida covetously enriched himself through banking, oil and import licenses as he used these favors to raise huge cash for himself and his allies.

As of today, IBB is regarded as the most richest past head of state in Nigeria due to his magnificent Mansion in Minna, Niger state and significant investment in Globacom one of the largest telecom operators in Nigeria.

I penned this piece down for this and next generation to know that Ibrahim Babangida IBB is shrunk that cannot be deodorized. He looted national treasury, closed down universities for several months, he murdered his opponents, jailed journalists, closed down several newspapers and used various government privatization initiatives to reward friends and cronies, which eventually gave rise to the current class of nouveau riche in Nigeria. Babangida is a thief that should be living in jail by now if only Nigeria is been led by good people not past criminals.

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2021

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## **The journalist, still an endangered species**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 29, 2019 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1285 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Ayo Oyoze Baje "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again; The eternal years of God are hers; But Error, wounded, writhes with pain, And dies among his worshippers"

- William Bryant Truth is their first target. The next is the truth teller. The perpetrators of pure evil would go to great lengths to [...]

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Truth is their first target. The next is the truth teller. The perpetrators of pure evil would go to great lengths to deploy all imaginable machinations, in a bid to arm twist, cover up or out rightly drown the truth in the vast ocean of grand deceit. But Truth is eternal, incontrovertible, beyond the devious manipulations of any mortal. If only the power monger, be he a tyrant, dictator or some desperado democrat knows. But he does not!

## The journalist, still an endangered species

So, emboldened by the devilish desire to maintain a semblance of innocence, after some hideous crimes must have been committed, he strikes. And not a few patriotic journalists have fallen easy preys to their antics. In the line of duty, to their nation and mankind, some journalists have become the voiceless victims to this set of people, drunk on the heady intoxicant called political power. Some have been beheaded by ISIS. Others languish in Syrian jails. Indeed, some have had their skulls broken, their faces lacerated and their limbs decapitated. Records abound of those brutally raped or bruised and battered to a state of coma. In fact, some victims still lucky to be alive have gory tales to tell. In this group are journalists suffering the trauma of persisting high blood pressure, lingering muscle pains, excruciating back ache and mind-bending insomnia.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), noted in 2017 that at least 2,297 journalists have been killed since 1990. Amongst the deadliest countries listed in the statistics since 1992 are Iraq (184), Syria (111), the Philippines (78), Russia (58), Colombia (47) and India (41). On its part, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has recorded related deaths in targeted assassinations, cross fire incidents and bomb attacks, including 112 who lost their lives to violence in 2015, 93 who were killed in 2016 and 25 so far murdered in 2017. Sectorially, those covering politics took the highest figures at 48 per cent, followed by war (38%), human rights, (21%), corruption (20%) and crime (15%). Though the number is lower than previous years, the IFJ has warned against complacency and continued impunity. But why, you may ask? Justice has been served for only four percent of journalists killed worldwide!

But before you breathe easy, delighted that Nigeria is not amongst the deadliest countries so listed, think again. According to the media advocacy organization CPJ, "Nigeria and Somalia are among the worst nations in the world in combating deadly anti-press violence, our 2013 Impunity Index has found. Five journalists have been killed with impunity in Nigeria since 2009. However, 13 Nigerian journalists were killed in 2012 alone in active service, making it the highest in the history of the country since independence in 1960".

Dear reader, what you have just read was my focus on the travails of journalists written back in 2017. That was then, but this is now. Only a few days ago concerned Nigerians condemned an alleged plot by security operatives to arrest investigative journalist, Fisayo Soyombo. But why?

The former editor of The Cable and a contributor to Al Jazeera, in his undercover stories exposed corruption in Nigerian police cells and prisons. He detailed how policemen "pervert the course of justice in their quest for ill-gotten money". In the second part published by The Cable, he exposed "how the courts shortchange the law and (how) the prisons are themselves a cesspool of the exact reasons for which they hold inmates." The final part of the report is yet to be published.

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If found guilty, Jalingo could face up to three years in prison for the disturbance charge and up to life in prison for treason, according to the Nigerian criminal code. In a similar vein, a report by Jonathan Rozen/CPJ Africa Research Associate on April 15, 2019 stated that: "Under Buhari's first elected term, CPJ documented detentions, assaults, and harassment of the press.

In one particularly grave case, Jones Abiri, editor of the Weekly Source, was detained without charge in 2016 and denied contact with his family or a lawyer, for over two years. Also," before the February general election, authorities continued to harass the press: Premium Times reporter Samuel Ogundipe was detained and prosecuted for refusing to reveal a source; Buhari stated publicly that "rule of law must be subject to the supremacy of the nation's security and national interest" and the military raided two Daily Trust offices".

But let us note that Buhari is not the first Nigerian president so accused of hounding journalists. We recall, with deep pains, the brutal murder of the two Nigerian journalists, Tayo Awotunsi and Krees Imobibie, who disappeared in August, 1991 in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, while reporting on the civil war. Also, more than thirty years after,

### The journalist, still an endangered species

patriots still agonize over the cruel and callous killing of **Dele Giwa**, the pioneer Managing Editor of Newswatch Magazine through a letter bomb on 19th October 1986 during the IBB era.

That of Bayo Ohu, a reporter with the Guardian Newspapers on September 20,2009 and Channels Television reporter, Enenche Akogwu shot on January 20, 2012 in Kano still remain as scary scars on the conscience of the nation. Are we done?

Not just yet! The operatives of the EFCC unleashed mayhem on workers at the Sun Newspapers as reported on September 21, 2017. A statement from the paper stated that: "For one grueling hour, EFCC operatives subjected our staff to crude intimidation, psychological and emotional trauma.

The development had more to do with suffocating free press in Nigeria than law enforcement." In a similar vein, a score of soldiers on Operation Python Dance against members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, stormed into the Nigerian Union of Journalists Press Centre in Umahia on 12 September, 2017. Some journalists were beaten up, with the seizure and smashing of their cameras , smart-phones, computers and other equipment containing newly-shot photos and videos.

Truth be told, we do not want to go back to the dark days of military dictatorship when seasoned journalists including the likes of Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles-Obi, George M'bah, Onome Osifo-Whiskey and Babafemi Ojudu saw hell in Sani Abacha gulag.

The way forward is for journalists to be insured as being championed by the Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ. They should be trained in the areas of the laws of journalism, job security, journey management and how to ensure their mental health. Safety training for them should have in attendance their employers, to drive home the message of protection of their lives and provision of enabling environment to thrive.

Baje writes from Lagos

The post The **journalist**, still an endangered species appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2019

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## Osinachi: Questions begging for answers -2

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

April 28, 2022 Thursday

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Length: 1499 words

### **Body**

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I do not think it is the wish or will of God for anyone to tarry a minute longer than necessary in an abusive or life-threatening marriage or relationship but His admonition to us is to flee from every appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

According to one philosopher, death is the greatest evil from which everyone recoils (*Summum malum*) as opposed to the highest good (*summum bonum*) to which everyone aspires. God said in Jeremiah 29:11: For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end" No one sets for himself or herself the expected end of being battered or clobbered to death in marriage. Again in 3 John 2 God says: Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth".

Of course justice will be served if anyone tarries longer than necessary and ends up getting caught up in the fiery vortex of domestic violence; if not by man then by God and if not now, then certainly later; as the celebrated but assassinated journalist, Dele Giwa, posited. Was justice not served in each of the cases of Abel (killed by his brother Cain), Uriah (killed through the machinations of King David), and Naboth (killed through the conspiracy and manipulations of King Ahab and his wife, the wicked Queen Jezebel)?

But what did it profit the avenged if not that each of these cases has been divinely ordained as object lessons for you and me? Scriptures, I dare to say, are there for us to apply to our own life here on earth. I do not think anyone will need the bible in heaven or hell!

As stated in Part 1 of this piece last week, the perfect will of God for man is that a man would find the bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Genesis 2:23) as the perfect help meet that God in His infinite wisdom decided that the man requires (verse 18) and the two shall abandon all else, including father and mother, and become one flesh (verse 24).

This is one very strong argument advanced not just against divorce but also against polygamy by some Christian preachers. Can a man cleave to more than one woman? How many women or wives did God make out of the rib He took out of the side of man? There is no denying the fact that God established His perfect will for man in the

## Osinachi: Questions begging for answers -2

Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, the ENTIRETY of God's perfect will for man was subverted right there in the same Garden of Eden; as a result of which God drove Man out of the Garden and withdrew all the privileges man had hitherto enjoyed. It will therefore be wrong for anyone to say that man still operates in the perfect will of God; he does not! God's established state of blissful marital life (verse 25) was lost right there in the Garden of Eden. Henceforth, man (and woman) shall struggle not only in marital life but in all other spheres of life.

That is the essence of the curses pronounced by God (Genesis 3: 14-19). Mercifully; God gave man a second chance: He sent His Son Jesus to die for us! But as our people would say, the scar will never, ever look like the normal skin! I shall discuss the mortal dangers of "one-man, one-wife" to the Church at a later date.

No man should play holier-than-thou! If you allow anyone to do that to you, it is your fault! God who created man repented that He did (Genesis 6:6) but decided all the same to make do with whatever is left of His perfect creation (Genesis 1:31) now corrupted (Genesis 6:3). Hence the bible is littered with God's admonitions, pieces of advice, corrections, and warnings unto man, including even punishment - all directed at reminding him of his past, his present and the future.

One such admonition is to be found in the oft-quoted but wrongly interpreted Malachi 2. Verses 14 & 15 warn men not to deal treacherously with the wife of their youth. This is the "putting away" or divorce that God hates: "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hated putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously". God was talking more specifically to the man than to the woman. The practice must have been prevalent in those days, as it is now, that men, when they have become wealthy or fulfilled, when their social status is upswing, they suddenly realise they need a more beautiful, more educated, more socially savvy, and more "lepa" wife to fit into their new social status.

The wife of their youth, probably after a few children and years of child-bearing, the woman who suffered with them, who stood by them through thick and thin, no longer possesses the magical "figure-eight" or has become too old for comfort and a younger, fresher damsel is thus needed to take her place. God says: Do not put her away! That was the "putting away" that God hates; not a woman fleeing the evil of an abusive or life-threatening marriage. God did not condemn women to "stay put" in an abusive or life-threatening marriage.

Now, one other statement preachers have relied upon to cage women especially and forbid anyone, male or female, from fleeing death is the marital vow: "I take you to be my husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy law"!

To start with, this statement is not in the bible. It is not from God but is the coinage of men like you and me - and for purposes and reasons we must not shy away from interrogating! Even if the original coiners of that statement meant well, events have since proven that it has become not only anachronistic but also destructive of the very purpose it was meant to serve.

It should thus be jettisoned and expunged from whatever marital vows anyone is asked to say these days. At the very least, it should be seriously edited! I stand to be corrected that the "death" referred to in the marital vows of "till death do us part" cannot be death in the hands of murderous husbands or wives but natural death, which is a debt we all must pay as God commanded after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:19).

In "The Good Book Blog" of the Talbot School of Theology Blog, John Hutchison had this to say: "What a commitment we make in that moment of time (when we recite the marital vows), with 'God and these witnesses' listening! Are these just empty words of tradition or do they represent a genuine promise of commitment?

The longevity and quality of your marriage depends upon it!" But many who recite the vows understand them only as necessary "rites of passage" and do so absent-mindedly. They tag along, eager to get done with it and be gone for their honeymoon! From what we now know, these marital vows are like someone signing his or her death warrant if one ends up in a bad marriage.

### Osinachi: Questions begging for answers -2

But marriage is not soldering where men and women sign to die - most times, needless death determined by others who will be nowhere near the battlefield! Marital vows are said to become famous through its presence in the marriage service of the Book of Common Prayer (1549), where bride and bridegroom each must pledge to stand by the other "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health." This expression was derived from the still older Sarum Manual.

Two other bible passages that preachers quote to turn a blind eye to or sanction marriage turned into slave camp or torture/horror chambers are Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" and Matthew 19:6. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" So, preachers run away from consenting to divorce, thinking that if they do, they will be running counter to God's commandment.

I dare to say that this interpretation or understanding is erroneous and misleading. Quoting Moses as we did last week, the one who puts a marriage asunder is the one whose "hardness of heart" makes continuous marital relationship untenable. Quoting Jesus, it is the one who engages in adultery that drives a dagger into the heart of marriage.

Quoting Apostle Paul, it is the one who bolts away from his/her marital home and responsibilities (1Timothy 5:8) that puts asunder what God joined together. Pastors, parents, friends, the society, etc. should stop nudging couples to continue in life-threatening marriages. So, stop feeling guilty: It is not pastors dissolving failed marriages to save lives and destinies that put asunder!

It is not for fun that Proverbs 4:7 says "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" Hosea 4:6 adds: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge&hellip;" So, then, if you fail to get wisdom, that is your fault. If you neglect to equip yourself with knowledge, you have yourself to blame. The ball, then, is in your court! NOW CONCLUDED!

By Bola Bolawole

[turnpot@gmail.com](mailto:turnpot@gmail.com) 0807 552 5533

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

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Former Nigerian dictator seeks to block possible probe into journalist's slaying



## Former Nigerian dictator seeks to block possible probe into journalist's slaying

Associated Press International

June 4, 2002 Tuesday

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**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 336 words

**Byline:** GILBERT DA COSTA; Associated Press Writer

**Dateline:** ABUJA, Nigeria

### **Body**

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One of Nigeria's former junta leaders is seeking to block further investigation of the 1986 assassination of a magazine editor, recommended by a judicial panel that probed abuses committed under military rule.

Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, who headed a brutal and corrupt 1985-93 junta, on Monday filed a federal court application to prevent implementation of recommendations related to him that were submitted to the government by the panel.

In its final report, the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission asked police to reopen a probe into the death of Dele Giwa, editor of the Lagos-based Newswatch magazine. Giwa, who was highly critical of Babangida's government, was killed by a parcel bomb at his home.

The panel wants Babangida and his security chief, Gen. Haliru Akilu, "held accountable" for Giwa's killing, commission spokesman Mohammed Sharrif said.

Babangida denies any involvement in the killing, and a police investigation at the time of Giwa's death was inconclusive.

Babangida and Akilu ignored repeated summons to testify before the panel.

Babangida's attorney, Yahaya Mahmood, called the panel's actions a "well-orchestrated attempt by (President Olusegun) Obasanjo to humiliate northern former military rulers."

Sharrif said Babangida's legal challenge was premature, as the commission's recommendations have yet to be adopted by the government.

"This is a democracy, and anyone who feels he has been unjustly treated by the commission is free to pursue a legal action," Sharrif said.

Former Nigerian dictator seeks to block possible probe into journalist's slaying

"What I'm saying is that even though we had recommended the reopening of some issues, including the murder of **Dele Giwa**, the federal government may not necessarily adopt it."

The panel, which exposed military-sponsored corruption, torture and killings between 1966 and 1999, wrapped up two years of investigations in October and submitted a final report to Obasanjo last week.

Obasanjo's election in 1999 ended 15 years of military dictatorship, but the army still wields enormous influence in the West African country.

**Load-Date:** June 5, 2002

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## **The Journalist, Still An Endangered Specie!**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

October 26, 2019 Saturday

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**Length:** 1229 words

**Byline:** Ayo Baje

### **Body**

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On its part, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has recorded related deaths in targeted assassinations, cross fire incidents and bomb attacks, including 112 who lost their lives to violence in 2015, 93 who were killed in 2016 and 25 so far murdered in 2017. Sectorally, those covering politics took the highest figures at 48 per cent, followed by war (38%), human rights, (21%), corruption (20%) and crime (15%). Though the number is lower than previous years, the IFJ has warned against complacency and continued impunity. But why, you may ask? Justice has been served for only four percent of journalists killed worldwide!

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But let us note that Buhari is not the first Nigerian president so accused of hounding journalists. We recall, with deep pains, the brutal murder of the two Nigerian journalists, Tayo Awotunsin and Krees Imobibie, who disappeared in August, 1991 in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, while reporting on the civil war. Also, more than thirty years after, patriots still agonize over the cruel and callous killing of **Dele Giwa**, the pioneer Managing Editor of Newswatch Magazine through a letter bomb on 19th October 1986 during the IBB era.

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Our political leaders should note that Freedom of Expression is clearly stated, specifically in Section 39 (1) and (2) of the 1999 constitution (as amended). It is in sync with the fundamental human right, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Leaders are mortals and vulnerable to making mistakes. They should therefore, note that if we must strengthen and sustain our democratic values, Truth should be their guiding credo. For, only a true friend would tell you the truth at the risk of losing your friendship.

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**Load-Date:** October 27, 2019

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## **The editors' editor**

The Nation (Nigeria)

September 25, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 1956 words

### **Body**

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I have had cause to celebrate The Punch at every of its major landmark ceremonies, including its 25th anniversary as well as during the opening of its magnificent headquarters, The Punch Place, sitting majestically and conspicuously at Magboro, Ogun State, on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. I know why.

But today, I want to join others in celebrating a man whose editorship of the popular tabloid would for long be remembered, especially by those of us who had cause to cross his path at The Punch. A man that many journalists regard as a thoroughbred, with a nose for news and a specialist in headline casting. I am talking about Alhaji Najeem Akanni Jimoh, who turned 70 on September 14.

It would be sheer ingratitude for someone like myself who was able to secure a job at The Punch in 1985 despite the fact that I did not know anybody there. I would explain. At the time, unemployment had started to rear its ugly head in the country; just that never in our wildest imaginations could we ever have thought it would become a monster that it has become today. No thanks to the curse of bad leadership.

I looked forward to what I can call the D-Day when I received the letter of interview. I remembered how the joy in our hearts knew no bounds when myself and a friend, Olumide Awogbemila, received the letters, with the intimidating logo of The Punch. It was a privilege. Awogbemila and I were then living at Ebute-Metta area of Lagos, indeed just about seven minutes trekking distance apart.

At last, the day of interview came. But what we were confronted with at The Punch was not just an interview; it was an examination. We arrived the company early in the morning and were there till late in the evening. Despite the irregular payment of salaries that hallmark the paper then, (I think) about 44 of us sat for the examination. I remember this because I know that those who did not succeed were asked to leave in batches of 10. Whenever the harbinger of what passed for both good and bad news then, Jide Kutelu, of blessed memory came to announce the result, our adrenalin naturally rose. It was good news for those of us who were able to make it finally but bad news for those who were dropped at every turn. That was the way it was on the three or four occasions that Kutelu came with the news.

## The editors' editor

At the end of it all, only four of us were left in the room - Awogbemila, Ganiyu Aminu, Ganiyu Akogun and my humble self. We were all course mates at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos (UNILAG). They then congratulated us and we congratulated ourselves. Now, why this long story when this piece is to eulogise Jimoh on his 70th birthday?

The answer is simple. I had the opportunity of knowing Jimoh because of his resolve and that of the other senior journalists who decided our fate in the examination to prioritise merit. He was then deputy editor of The Punch. But then, he had tremendous influence, especially as the then editor, Nurudeen Alade Balogun (Uncle NAT, for short), of blessed memory, was a liberal editor who allowed him such latitude. I remember the anxiety of those of us who knew nobody in the system when some of our colleagues that came for the examination went into the offices of these senior colleagues and emerged with either bottles of soft drink or table water. I remember how we wondered aloud that these people needed not have wasted our time by inviting us for interview when they already had their preferred candidates. But I was somewhat confident of making it even if I did not know what informed my confidence. One of the questions I answered was to critique Decree Four promulgated by the Babangida government in 1984. I tore the decree into shreds, using the then Dr Olatunji Dare's write-up on it in The Guardian as compass.

But if I was so sure of what I wrote, how would I have known that others did not do better? However, it eventually turned out that the four of us who were taken knew nobody at The Punch then.

This passes for something in a country where who you know determine what you get. And it partly explains why Nigeria is the way it is today. If The Punch is soaring, this is one of the secrets. It was this level-playing field that afforded me the opportunity of meeting Jimoh. And I cherish it a lot. I have never had any cause to regret the chance meeting.

Let me quickly say that the fact that some of our colleagues could not join the company at that time did not confer any special brilliance to those of us who were picked. Examination, as we know, is not always a true test of one's ability. As a matter of fact, some of them joined the newspaper later as the demand for more hands presented itself. Indeed, many of them too are doing well in their various endeavours today.

I must particularly be grateful to Jimoh for this wonderful opportunity because the 'eaglet' **journalist** that he employed as a sub-editor in 1985 eventually rose to become editor of the daily title of the newspaper, a lifelong ambition. He was in a position to influence decision otherwise. But he did not.

Working under Jimoh was exciting. Some other persons who passed through his tutelage, whether at The Punch or elsewhere - Lawal Ogienagbon, Reuben Abati, Azubuike Ishiekwene, Tunde Akanni, Mikail Adegoke Mumuni, Feyi Smith, and even a senior colleague, Tola Adeniyi, have all celebrated this easy going editor of all times, to mark his joining the septuagenarian club.

Working under the one that we all refer to simply as 'Alhaji' presented many fond memories. Many have talked about his humility, they have talked about his humanity, his dedication to journalism and to the people, his simplicity and other attributes.

As Lawal mentioned in his piece on September 14, those of us who worked in The Punch at the time we did can never forget '90 - 10'. So, what is '90 - 10'? It simply refers to the guguru and epa that was our regular snack in those days. As a matter of fact, hardly could any day pass without some of us placing orders for '90 - 10'; that is 90 kobo groundnuts and 10 kobo local popcorn. Yes, you heard me right, 90 KOTO groundnuts and 10 KOTO guguru! Today, our younger ones do not know that we once talked of our currency in terms of Naira and Kobo. Many do not even know what the kobo looked like because it has become extinct. Again, no thanks to bad governance. Whoever bought the '90 - 10' would place it on the table and anyone interested needed no special invitation to come to partake. It was a rallying factor of sort. Even as editor, Jimoh himself would join in not only packing The Punch ('Pack a Punch' was once upon a time the popular slogan of the paper) but also the '90 - 10! We ate it like a family. But what I cannot still explain is whether we were fond of the guguru and epa because of the peculiar financial predicament of the company at the time or because of our natural love for it. I guess however that the story

## The editors' editor

would have changed by now not just because of the company's prosperity but also because of values that have changed in the country generally.

Another incident I would not forget easily at The Punch was the day the four of us that were employed the same day decided to go on strike in protest against the delay in paying our salaries. We were all on the sub-desk, so, we did not have problems of logistics in executing the strike. We kept the plan close to our chests. On the appointed date, we edited the stories as they came, and pretended as if we were sending them down for further processing; so, it was difficult for anyone to suspect that we had something up our sleeves. It was very late in the day that it was realised we were not sending the stories to the compugraphic department (which was the computer of the time) for processing. To show how outdated compugraphic machines have now become, even my i-pad does not know 'compugraphic' as it kept on underlining it! I doubt if there is any newspaper that is still using compugraphic machine in the country today.

However, when it dawned on all that we were on work-to-rule, we were invited for talks. I remember the role Jimoh played. I think he had become editor then. How he tried to calm our frayed nerves, the sweet talks and all. But we had said nothing was going to change if our salaries were not paid and we stuck to our guns. Eventually, the accounts people were instructed to pay us and they brought our salaries in the usual brown envelopes for paying salaries in those days. Just the four of us.

At this point, it is necessary to explain our resolve to down tools because it is not all the time that such an opportunity presents itself. Of course we knew the company was in arrears of salaries before we joined. So, non-payment of salaries should not be sufficient cause to down tools. And we had been coping until then, anyway. Moreover, the four of us were still bachelors then, and so our needs were still relatively few.

But, we were blind to the leakages that were going on in the company when we were outside. However, now, as insiders, we were privileged to see some of the reasons things were tight for the company. We were later proved right. But, as usual with journalists, we hardly bothered about other things beyond headlines and deadlines.

I did not know whether our type of 'strike' had happened in the company before, but what I know was that some of our colleagues wondered what informed our audacity.

Perhaps more confounding was the fact that whatever some people (including the four of us who went on strike) thought would follow, never followed. This was due to the magnanimity of someone like Jimoh. Apparently his activism in his university days played a critical role in considering more the values that we were adding to the company at such hard times rather than the fresh-from-school radicalism that propelled our strike. Some editors in his shoes would have orchestrated our exit from the system before we 'polluted' others, whether immediately or in the near future. Although a newspaper like The Punch which rode to prominence on the crest of its clamour for a better society ought not have done such, that would have amounted to nothing in the eyes of editors who would be more anxious in pointing at the specks in the eyes of others, even when they have logs in theirs.

It is important to stress that the sky was the limit for journalists who worked under Jimoh. There was the latitude to explore and showcase your talent. If I cast good headlines today, Jimoh was involved in shaping me in this regard. No matter how knotty a headline appeared to be, he would crack the nut. Many of the stories which made the paper to fly in its days as a pure tabloid were headlined by Jimoh, some of which incurred the wrath of the then military rulers. One such headline that readily comes into mind was 'Dele Giwa bombed', when the frontline journalist, who was editor and founder of the then vibrant Newswatch Magazine was killed by a parcel bomb on October 19, 1986. That was what happened but the Federal Government was uncomfortable with the headline and the paper's courageous handling of the story. It therefore sued The Punch and the Late Chief Gani Fawehinmi for sedition (whatever is so called). One can go on and on.

All said, if both Christians and Muslims are celebrating Jimoh, it is for a reason. He is at home with everybody, irrespective of creed. He builds bridges across all divides. He has a way of keeping in touch with his friends. That is why till date, he is hardly alone. When he snaps his fingers, people respond. Such is his simplicity that even when he turned 70, he did not make noise. If Jimoh were a politician, the noise that would have attended his birthday on September 14 would still be reverberating.

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## **Tony Momoh: Each Man, His Time**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

February 4, 2021 Thursday

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**Length:** 1503 words

**Byline:** Temidayo Akinsuyi

### **Body**

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Prince Tony Momoh

LAGOS – The book, Each Man, His Time, subtitled, The Biography of an Era; was one of the numerous books written by the late elderstatesman and former Minister of Information and Culture, Prince Tony Momoh, the Yerima of Auchi kingdom who died on Monday February 1 at the age of 81.

Although the book is the chronicle of the life and times of Momoh Oshioigbele Idoah who was the Momoh the First of Auchi Kingdom (Tony Momoh's father), it basically admonishes readers that God has created each man for a purpose and it is best to make judicious use of the time allocated by God to each man to use on the planet.

Anyone who came in close contact with the late Momoh will testify to the fact that he had his time and he maximized it judiciously. Born on April 27 1939, Momoh who was looking forward to celebrating his 82 birthday few weeks away left an indelible marks in the sands of time and this was attested to by the flurry of tributes from eminent Nigerians who mourned his passage.

**ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW MOST NIGERIA MEN ARE NOW OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!**

The 165th child of King Momoh I of Auchi, Tony was named Suleiman at birth but in 1955 after converting to Christianity, he changed his name to Tony which he took after Chief Anthony Enahoro, one of Nigeria's foremost anti-colonial and pro-democracy activists.

Momoh attended the Government School Auchi, a school founded by his father in 1922. He later moved to Anglican School Okpe, where he served as a pupil-teacher. He also served as headmaster of the Anglican School, Ubuneke, Ivbiano, Owan local government area of the state. Momoh attended the Provincial Teachers Training College, Abudu, Edo state and Government Teachers College, Abraka, Delta state. He proceeded to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), University of Lagos and the Nigerian Law school. He possesses degrees in mass communication and law.

### Tony Momoh: Each Man, His Time

He cut his teeth in journalism as a sub-editor at the Daily Times in October 1962, where he rose to become editor and deputy general manager in 1980.

Momoh had a reputation for standing firm in the face of intimidation and he was known for fighting for press freedom. Joseph Wayas, former senate president, once invited him to appear before the chamber over an "uncomplimentary" and "contemptuous" publication, asking him to disclose his source of information. Momoh sued the senate at the Lagos high court over what he described as an attempt to infringe on press freedom in the country.

In the legal battle that ensued, Momoh argued that a ***journalist*** has the constitutional obligation to hold the government accountable at all times. The court held that an individual had the right to refuse to disclose their source of information.

In its ruling, an appellate court, however, stated that the 1979 constitution did not shield a ***journalist*** from disclosing his source of information.

Later in his career, Momoh was appointed by Ibrahim Babangida, then military president, as minister of information and culture from September 1986 until 1990. When ***Dele Giwa***, former editor of Newswatch magazine, was killed by a letter bomb, Momoh promised there would be a probe of his death. He later backtracked saying the probe would serve no useful purpose. In 1996, he became a director of Newswatch.

A founding member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) he was director of the Alex Ekwueme presidential campaign organization in the 1999 presidential election . He later served as the chairman, media and publicity, of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). Also, he was chairman of the political committee of the Muhammadu Buhari Organisation and national chairman of the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), one of the parties that merged to form the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He was also the first Chairman, Independent Newspapers Limited (INL), publisher of the Daily, Saturday and Sunday Independent titles.

Momoh had always emphasized that he never joined politics for acquisition of wealth or for position. In 2017, when President Buhari appointed him as Chairman of the Governing Council of the University of Jos, the defunct CPC members said they were not in agreement with the appointment, pointing out that the appointment was not befitting of the caliber of the former Minister.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja on behalf of other defunct CPC members in 17 states of the southern region, National coordinator of Southern Mandate, Comrade Ikonomwan Francis said the appointment "does not befit our former National Chairman of CPC and therefore we reject it in totality."

The statement reads: "We, members of the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in the seventeen states of the southern region in Nigeria under the auspices of southern mandate wish to express our dismay over the appointment given to Prince Tony Momoh as the chairman Governing Council of the University of Jos.

"We want to state categorically that the appointment does not befit our former National Chairman of CPC and therefore we reject it in totality. Prince Tony Momoh today in the ruling APC has gone far, over and above "for himself alone" he should be given an Office or position that can empower his teaming followers and supporters across the country.

Speaking with Daily Independent, Momoh however distanced himself from the protest and thanked President Buhari for giving him an appointment in the academic world.According to him, he had personally told the President not to give him appointment in any of the boards or ministries.

He said "Someone sent me a note last week and said Buhari has been ungrateful to me. I replied him by saying 'How do you know that? Are you me? Did I ever complain to you? We must have attitude to life, which is everything we do, we must do it to the glory of God. There are 15 million voters who gave Buhari the mandate in 2015, how

### Tony Momoh: Each Man, His Time

many of them can he compensate with appointments? I don't share that view that Buhari is ungrateful and that he rewards good deeds with ingratitude at all".

Momoh, a die-hard Buharist defended the President till he breathed his last. In his last interview with Daily Independent, published on January 25 2021, titled 'Buhari's Slowness Is A Strategy, Not Because Of Old Age', Momoh had pleaded with Nigerians to cooperate with President Buhari in delivering the gains of democracy to Nigerians.

He however said Nigerians should not hesitate to "stone the APC with votes" in 2023 if they failed to perform to expectation.

"Buhari's slowness has nothing to do with old age but strategy. If old age limits his performance doesn't mean that there will be no performance at all. It doesn't mean slowing down. Buhari is in control of his government and any meeting we attend, once it comes in, you know that someone in charge has come".

President Buhari in his tribute expressed grief at the passing of his longtime ally, friend, political loyalist, saying Prince Momoh stood with him through thick and thin, He said "His brand of loyalty is very rare in the politics of today. I will greatly miss him."

The President recalled that as chairman, Media and Publicity of the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) Campaign Organisation in the 2003 and 2007 elections as well as Chairman of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the late Auchi Prince contributed in no small measure to the growth and strengthening of the organizations, leading to the eventual formation of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

On his part, Chief James Onanefe Ibori, a former governor of Delta state has said that with the passing of Prince Tony Momoh, Nigeria has lost a remarkable elder statesman.

According to him, the late Momoh was a renowned journalist, the first Chairman, Board of Directors of the Independent Newspapers Ltd (INL), an eminent public servant, a totally detribalised Nigerian, and a pillar of the All Progressives Congress (APC), who nevertheless, had a rewarding relationship with members of the other political parties.

Chief Ibori said: "Though Prince Tony Momoh and I were never in the same party all through, he was civilized enough to respect the boundaries of friendship".

Ibori recalled that he and the late Prince Momoh, who was Nigeria's Information Minister from 1986 to 1990, had a rewarding friendship that lasted for decades. This bond became stronger when Prince Momoh graciously served as the first Chairman, Board of Directors of the Independent Newspapers Ltd (INL).

He said that in that capacity, Tony Momoh's professionalism was on display as he reached into the great depths of his experience and journalism prowess to help give birth to an exciting newspaper stable which introduced many novel features into Nigerian journalism.

Chief Ibori condoled Tony Momoh's family and the Auchi Ruling House, Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, for this pronounced loss and prayed that God will give them the fortitude to bear this loss and grant Momoh's soul eternal rest.

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## **Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles**

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 11, 2019 Thursday

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**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Victor C. Ariole Time to reconstitute the entire NJC for failing in its duties by allowing the executive to meddle in its affairs out of negligence of duty. Montesquieu, a great French philosopher, knew that the expression: "l'état c'est moi"- "I am the state; I decide who stays alive or who must be executed". As seen [...]

The post Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

Victor C. Ariole

Time to reconstitute the entire NJC for failing in its duties by allowing the executive to meddle in its affairs out of negligence of duty.

Montesquieu, a great French philosopher, knew that the expression: "l'état c'est moi"- "I am the state; I decide who stays alive or who must be executed". As seen in the powerful King of France, was greatly abhorrent to humanity. Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Diderot, et al, embarked on an enlightenment documentation of a new France with lots of paper works and pamphlets to acquaint the French people of what it means to be really free; viz: knowledge, education empowerment.

Documentation on checks and balances of power and separation of power became one of the magnum opus of their performance. Unlike what is happening to Nigeria, their Chief Justice (Président de Cour Suprême) very much in agreement with their Attorney General (and the keeper of the Seal, Ministre de la Justice et Garde Des Sceaux) do not allow their profession to be compromised or ridiculed; they must agree before the nation's seal is applied on any deal or bill.

The Chief Justice is the current day seer or judge of the then Jewish tradition of Samuel's time before, out of foolishness, they demanded for a king. When people say Igbo don't have king, they just failed to know that it is a

## Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles

revolved tradition and that Montesquieu thought of replacing in one powerful person what some members of free press see as the square and the sword. Equilateral, square or triangle, of power, joined by the press that must not falter if the wrath of the sword should be avoided. In effect the expected sword of the new dispensation is the press but they seem to be faltering also. "The pen is mightier than the sword" obliges. So, it calls for a stronger press as the fourth realm of the State; assurance coverage for press people by the State, even if it is one press person for every media house, is necessary; that means, the elected watchdog of watchdogs certified by the nation. That is how it works in France to the extent that the fear of a journalist is the beginning of a political wisdom.

They proved that to their ever greatest president yet to be surpassed; General Charles de Gaulle. Like said earlier, the Chief Justice is always supported by the Minister of Justice to an extent that a Muslim lady as Minister of Justice – Rachida – during Sarkozy presidency, stood by the constitution not minding what people of her faith said about her or what the presidency expected her to do when individual's or faith's interest clashes with the constitution.

That was, also, how General Charles de Gaulle was meant to resign to pave way for their current 5th Republic as they saw his humiliation as the total failure of what their 4th Republic's constitution represented. In effect, it was not De Gaulle per se but the constitution. He still remained vindicated till today as he was begged to take on the Presidency of their reconstituted 5th Republic.

The resignation of Nigeria's Chief Justice Ononghen is a "Jamais Vu" as per "Déjà Vu" of Heads of State in France or elsewhere. In effect, the entire NJC is to be disbanded. Three of France's presidents could not enter second term as judicial concerns were already raised before their attempt at it – Giscard d'Estaing, Nicholas Sarkozy, François Hollande. François Hollande's own was even made worse as journalists scooped with precision his sexual escapades even when it was not meant to be judicial issue because in France the private life of the President is entirely his affair as long as it does not conflict with his official duty.

In Nigeria, the legislature and the judiciary seem not to stand firm on their own grounds of protecting the minimum governance square. So, if the executive is the only side of the square that must stand firm, then the total square is unbalanced, chequered and inconsistent with what Montesquieu intended. Adjusted to Africa's circumstance, some elements of elderly statesmen pronouncement should be part also.

In effect, for Nigerian's constitution to stand the test of time, the press council must be presided by a person covered by immunity; the legislature must be presided by a security cleared leader, the press, and the judiciary; the judiciary, also, must have a leader cleared by the press, the bar and the bench.

As politics is not easily defined by ethics, the executive, in effect, becomes what other sides of the square are to monitor to avoid the derailment of the State like France did by not giving chances to Sarkozy, Giscard and Hollande for a second term. Note that a discreet François Mitterrand stayed on for 14 years – two terms, then, as against 10 years after him – notwithstanding his shielded bigamous private life. Nigerian Press, Nigerian Legislature, Nigerian Judiciary must be seen as the pillars that hold the upper side of the square that must be seen as stable so as to buttress Montesquieu stance and to avoid what French people see, today, as Voltaire's wrong stance of laicity or secularity, when their side of the press started faltering; that is, the press must be responsible and responsive as well as proactive to avoid weak prosecution or whistle blowing that make mockery of the State and its leaders.

When the press scoops, let it be provable beyond reasonable doubt and endorsed by State assured press person. Assurance cover is crucial here to avoid Dele Giwa's thankless devotion.

Resignation of the CJN, like that of the France's President in their 4th Republic, necessitates a constitutional review as well as the total resignation of all the members of Nigerian Judicial Council.

ARIOLE is a Professor of French and Francophone Studies University of Lagos.

The post Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

Unbalanced chequered checks: Judiciary fumbles

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## **27 Yrs After Parcel Bomb - I Could Have Been Killed Like Dele Giwa - Kayode Soyinka**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 20, 2013

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**Byline:** Josephine Igbonovia

### **Body**

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Three years into his education at the Baptist Boys High School in Abeokuta, his father was retired from the Nigerian Tobacco Company and couldn't get another job because he had come of age since child-bearing didn't happen quickly for him. This was unfortunately when he needed to see his six children through school! The second child, Kayode Soyinka, therefore decided to sacrifice his university education for his elder brother and siblings, and this soon landed him in the world of print journalism as a reporter with the defunct Daily Sketch in Ibadan at age 18 in 1976.

Despite the agony of watching his stories dumped in the news editor and sub editors' waste baskets and never getting published for months, doggedness spurred him on as in two years, he transformed into a celebrity **journalist**. He was soon appointed the London Correspondent; a position he retained when he joined the defunct Concord Group at 22, working at the same time as its Bureau Chief.

Kayode also worked with the legendary editor Peter Enahoro and **Dele Giwa** until his mastery of the ropes culminated in the birth of Africa Today, a pan-African news magazine presently on international news stands in about 90 countries around the world. The author of 'Diplomatic Baggage: Mossad and Nigeria - The Dikko Story', a book used in many universities around the world, Kayode recounts his thirty-seven year romance with journalism just a day to his 30th wedding anniversary.

He was covering the magistrate court in Ibadan while his senior colleague and tutor, Kayode Muritala, covered the High Court. Frustration, however, engulfed him each morning when he opened the papers for his stories- none was published and even when any eventually was, it came without his by-line while Muritala's by-lines flooded the papers! This went on for months until 18-year-old Kayode could no longer swallow his anguish.

"One day, I left the newsroom and went into the sub-editors' room next door to explain my pains. I said: "Sir, please I want to know why my stories are not being published. I spend a whole day in court, write my stories, but do not see them in the papers the next day!" The Chief Sub-Editor stood-up, tapped my shoulders very nicely, and said, 'Kayode, the day you get the right story, you won't have to come to this room to ask that it be published. Just continue to do your work'."

Resolute on getting that 'right story' that would get his name on print, an opportunity knocked at his doorstep. He was resting at home one morning when he heard a bang in his neighbourhood. On sighting a motley crowd heading

## 27 Yrs After Parcel Bomb - I Could Have Been Killed Like Dele Giwa - Kayode Soyinka

in a direction, he joined and soon discovered that a two-storey building had just collapsed in the middle of a naming ceremony, killing the baby, injuring family members but leaving festivity rams unharmed. He called a photojournalist from the office for a shot of the scene and thereafter visited the University College Hospital, Ibadan, where the victims had been hospitalised, for clarity.

"I couldn't believe my eyes when the next morning, July 8, 1977, that story was the front page lead of the Daily Sketch and the headline, 'Disaster at naming ceremony: FALLING WALL KILLS BABY - mother, 13 others seriously injured... but rams for festivity saved, looked so fascinating. For the first time ever, my by-line, 'BY KAYODE SOYINKA', was in print!", he recalled.

At that point, he made a personal commitment to always have his stories on either the front page, back page or, at worst, lead page three, which was the third most important page in the newspaper. He did not only maintain this but had his by-lines on almost each of these pages on certain days.

From covering Magistrate Court, Kayode soon began covering High Courts - a sort of promotion. Another assignment that launched him into journalistic stardom was the case of one prominent Chief Shodeinde who had been sentenced to two years imprisonment and had gone to the Federal Court of Appeal. Editors were the ones handling that case, but one day, Kayode's News Editor was not available and he was asked to go and cover the proceedings. There, he was the only teenager amongst editors from other media houses. The proceeding took a new twist, Kayode got a new inspiration and, by the following morning, he had the catchiest report and even the justice noted this during the next sitting.

"Throughout the days I covered court proceedings, none of my stories was indicted for contempt! That's why I say the best place to start, for a reporter who wants to do well, is the court", he added.

At age 20, he became the Sketch's Acting State Correspondent in the old Bendel State until he suddenly got a letter from the head office, sending him to London for an all-expense paid study at the College of Journalism on Fleet Street, the home of newspapers. While in London, he was appointed the paper's London Correspondent.

"I was at that job when the Concord Newspaper was established in 1980. There was a crisis in Sketch and some of our colleagues were moving to Concord. Though I didn't apply, Concord invited me to be their London Correspondent. At that time, I was destabilised for the first time in my journalism career because of the change that took place in 1979 in Daily Sketch, which brought in Chief Osoba as the Managing Director of the paper.

I therefore resigned from Sketch and joined Concord. By the time I became the London Correspondent for the Concord, I was already 22, and that appointment opened a floodgate of global journalism opportunities for me. The first time I met Chief Abiola in London was to collect money from him, to pay for our bureau which I had been given the mandate to set-up. I did that tastefully and was eventually appointed the Bureau Chief", he explained.

Always adventurous, four years later, Kayode left the Concord Group to work with Peter Enahoro who was the publisher of Africa Now, a leading pan-African news magazine, as General Editor.

"Working with Peter Enahoro was like going to college of journalism again because he regaled me with Nigeria's history. He writes better than the English man! When you look at Africa Today, it's like the old Africa Now! So, for me, it's a sort of pride that I have represented well the old journalists who tutored me. My career has always been one of opportunities given to me by people I will never forget", he narrated.

Few years later, he joined the Newswatch where he worked with Dele Giwa, Yakubu Mohammed and Ray Ekpu, and was again appointed London Bureau Chief.

"It was while at the Newswatch the historic letter bomb was sent to us on October 19, 1986. Dele unfortunately did not make it; he died as a result of shock and fatal wounds that he suffered, being the one that had the parcel in his hand when he tried to open it. Miraculously, I survived. I did not have injury on my body apart from my eardrums which were badly affected and slight hair burns on my head.

## 27 Yrs After Parcel Bomb - I Could Have Been Killed Like Dele Giwa - Kayode Soyinka

There were some stains of blood on my night gown I was wearing which must have come from Dele's body. It's a shame Nigeria did not get those behind the bombing. It will be 27 years ago this October 19. I thank God for life. I am 56 years old this year, but when I remember my miraculous escape of the letter bomb, it's like I am 27 years old because I could have been killed like my best friend and colleague, Dele, on that day.

His success notwithstanding, Kayode did not rest on his oars though he had one of the best jobs in journalism-being a London Correspondent.

He went on: "As a London Correspondent, you are the representative of your newspaper on the global stage. I was not only covering the UK but was also covering the Commonwealth, OPEC, New York(United Nations) and South Africa, amongst others. All along, I, however, knew it would be advisable to have a university degree in readiness for the future.

I therefore did a part-time degree programme in international relations at the UK campus of the United States International University, San Diego, California, and a master's in international journalism at the City University College of Journalism, UK. I was going to withdraw from the master's programme because of work but the school's Senate decided to let me run it in two years instead of one year, on the grounds that they wanted me in the school. Perhaps Nigeria's Kayode was becoming famous!"

Now at 32, a real confirmation of his fame came when on the day he collected his certificate from the City University in 1989, a letter from the Cambridge University, England, invited him to Wolfson College as a Visiting Scholar! His stint at Cambridge in 1990 was paid for by the Commonwealth and his book, *Diplomatic Baggage*, was written while at Cambridge.

On leaving the Newswatch, after 10 remarkable years of service, Kayode decided to establish a news magazine that would report Africa, just like his former boss, Peter Enahoro.

"I had worked for 18 years as a foreign correspondent and did not want to waste that experience. My goal was to project Africa appropriately on the international scene, as against the projections we were getting from the western media, and, really, that's what we've done with Africa Today since 1995. I'm grateful to Nelson Mandela who granted us the first interview for our cover.

Institutions in the US and Canada subscribe to Africa Today, most western newspapers rely on Africa Today for writing their stories on Africa, and, as a matter of fact, they barrage us with telephone calls when they do not get copies. There's a famous UK news magazine that comes out with an annual report on Africa- which the Nigerian press re-reports. Actually, one of our in-house editors puts this together for them!", he revealed.

Kayode repeatedly attributed the progress of Africa Today, which has also produced two sector-specific news magazines, Africa Oil & Gas Today and Africa Telecom Today, to God who exposed him to even the business aspects of journalism at a young age. He would not forget in a hurry other great journalists like the former Daily Sketch's Managing Director , Mr. Felix Adenaike, his first editor at the Sketch, Dayo Duyile, his Managing Director at the Concord Prince Henry Odukomiaya, his editor at the Concord, Doyin Abiola, and senior colleagues in Newswatch: Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese.

"Journalism could be very frustrating if you do not have the mind to give it a long haul. It's like running a marathon as far as I am concerned. Really, if I die tomorrow, apart from the stint I had recently in politics in Ogun State, I won't be known for anything else but as a newspaper reporter, both in Nigeria and internationally.

I've said it several times that what should be written on my tomb stone is 'Kayode Soyinka, Newspaper Reporter: 1957-' because journalism has given me everything I have in my life. Right from my days at Sketch, I've kept cuttings of my reports because, as far as I'm concerned, that's my own P.hD. I've been able to send my two children to the best schools in the world and they are doing very well today. I'm most grateful to my wife for being so supportive and for not throwing me out all these years because of my consistent trips", Kayode Soyinka remarked.

27 Yrs After Parcel Bomb - I Could Have Been Killed Like Dele Giwa - Kayode Soyinka

**Load-Date:** October 21, 2013

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I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter – Oyelade



## I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter – Oyelade

The Punch

September 10, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 2322 words

### Body

The Chairman of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State, Dotun Oyelade, who clocked 70 years on Friday, tells OLUFEMI OLANIYI about his growing up, career and related issues

How was your growing up like?

I knew I was going to be a **journalist** as early as 1962 when I was 10 years old. My colleagues would gather round me, wanting to hear stories about exotic and strange places like Pakistan, Britain, Alaska and Iceland. I was an avid reader and read so many books; I was a constant feature at the only public library in Ogbomoso. My life was cut out for me very early and I pursued it vigorously.

In 1972 when I was 20 years old, I had an interview with a former Nigerian football captain, Sam Opone. He came to Ibadan then, he was getting to the twilight of his career. He came to the 2 Division Nigerian Army in Ibadan to lead their football team and that was when I had the opportunity to interview him. After I cobbled the story together, a gentleman, Jide Orimogunje, who was the Sports Editor of the Daily Sketch, was so surprised that a young man of my age could write with such graceful eloquence. That was the word he used and that kindled my self-confidence.

Were you already working as a **journalist** then?

No, I wasn't. However, when I was in my last year in secondary school, I wrote essays and pasted them on the board for pupils to admire.

Which school was that?

I attended Ogbomoso High School. One day, our English language teacher, Mrs Dahunsi, of blessed memory, took a look at one of my essays and wrote on it, 'superfluous'. That was the first time I came across that word and I checked it up in the dictionary. Under the circumstance, it wasn't complimentary but I took it in my stride and I moved forward. That was how I got into journalism and I later chose broadcast journalism as my forte.

Did you work for Daily Sketch?

### I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter – Oyelade

No, I was just a freelancer from outside. I joined NTA Ibadan in 1977 and after that I was sent to the BBC College and while there, I won the star prize in News Scripting and Television Documentary. There is this popular park in London called the Hyde Park. I did a report on the stream there and named it ‘The Serpentine’ because it is curvy like a snake. That report fetched me the prize.

I had no doubt in my mind that if I was going to write a book that has to do with myself, it would not be a book about where I come from but about my ability and experience as a journalist. That is why the book I just authored, ‘Dotun Oyelade Reporting’ is so unique because I cited verifiable personal experiences since 1972 when I first wrote the story on Sam Opone and all the experiences I had during my illustrious career in the book.

Daily Sketch was very interesting then; the newspaper was what they called the broadsheet. It was double the size of The PUNCH now. In the book, I concentrated mainly on my enterprise as a broadcast journalist. I came across so many personalities like General Olusegun Obasanjo; General Yakubu Gowon; Odimegwu Ojukwu, my good friend, and others. I was one of the first journalists to reach Lagos and get to the scene in Dele Giwa’s living room on the day (he was killed by a parcel bomb) in spite of the fact that I was working with the Television Service of Oyo State. When I got there with my cameraman, I saw vividly what happened. I saw fresh blood already clotting, I saw the mangled typewriter, mangled furniture and human flesh and my cameraman recorded it. For a week after the incident, I was reporting blow-by-blow account of how he died, why possibly he was killed, his family members and so on.

Also, when Papa (Obafemi) Awolowo died, some of the things that people never knew, which no newspaper has ever scooped, are in my book because I was in his bathroom.

I met so many personalities and even Lawrence Anini ( notorious armed robber) became my friend during his trial. The police had to warn me to stop hobnobbing with him. Anini was always calling me ‘Baba Ibadan’;

Was Anini sober during his trial?

He was not sober at all. There was a time he refused to let anybody take his photograph and he vowed that if he ever got out of detention, he would kill a particular reporter. But he never got out; he was executed with others. I was the only one he allowed to cover him generously. The other guy also, Monday Osunbor, allowed me. At that time, many newspapers would quote what we reported at TSOS and used them as their headline. That was what was happening and that shows how good TSOS was.

How did you feel the first time you read the news?

I was a broadcast reporter, I never read the news. I would have been a disaster if I tried that. I know my area of strength and I focused on it. In the book, I described my early days at NTA Ibadan. I started there in August 1977. The late Chief Bola Ige established TSOS to counter the NTA, a federal establishment that was one-sided politically. The station was established around March 1982 and it flourished.

Will you say journalism has been rewarding to you?

I don’t have to think twice before answering capital yes. Without journalism, there is nothing in this world that I could have done that would have been very interesting to me. It has been very rewarding to me. Spiritually, physically and economically, it has been rewarding to me. I have served under three governors in Oyo State. I served Uncle Lam Adesina; I was not only his private secretary and private adviser, I also wrote all his public statements and addresses throughout his four-year office term. I also wrote his acceptance speech in May 1999. I served the late Otunba Adebayo Alao-Akala, who was my schoolmate in primary and secondary schools way back in Ogbomoso.

### Related News

[Buhari approves FG's takeover of Gombe airport](#)

I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter – Oyelade

Military will tackle security challenges, Buhari assures Nigerians  
Nigerian story not complete without Queen Elizabeth - Buhari

Were you and Alao-Akala classmates?

He was a year my senior in primary school before he went to Ghana but we became classmates in secondary school. We attended Osupa Baptist Day School. So, when he became the governor, I served him as Special Adviser on Public Communications, which is journalism-related. With Engr. Seyi Makinde now, I was his first nominee to lead his media campaign. That was in January 2018 and I worked in that office until he won the election the following year. He appointed me as the Chairman of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State. He believed I would be very useful to his administration and to the people of Oyo State in this area. Uncle Lam Adesina thought so too. As his private secretary, he made me to double as the executive officer of the same BCOS. They recognised me as a broadcast manager.

How would you describe Alao-Akala since you were his classmate at some point?

He was one of the most extroverted persons I have met in my life. He had a lot of people around him and he was a very generous person; he loved life and he enjoyed life. He was successful as a governor mainly because of his love to see people happy. In certain regards, we are direct opposite of each other. While I am a little bit reticent, he was the very opposite. A very nice man.

You said he was nice and generous and he loved to see people happy. What will you say was responsible for his electoral defeat in 2011?

If you read my book, I stated reasons why I would not dabble into politics now. I will do that at the fullness of time. I believe that regurgitating my professional experience will be far more useful to the younger ones than anything else. At 70, I want to be a mentor, a professional mentor, a family mentor and I believe strongly in the sanctity of marriage. I am not going to talk about those governors I served now. The time is not ripe for that because I am still in government.

What do you think about the way social media has disrupted the old way of journalism practice?

It's awesome; it's enormous and it could be used for 'black', just as it could be used for 'white'. When deployed positively, it can assist journalism in a very effective way. It is so efficient in getting views of the people out there. Although some people use it for nefarious activities, I am an advocate of its existence and establishment and it can only help in the end, just as it is helping now. However, the dark areas have to be addressed.

How do you suggest those areas be addressed?

By providing stiff penalties for those who spread deliberate falsehood to justify their interests; stiff penalties must be applied to anyone who violates the laws there. It is the bane of a great country like Nigeria; things are upside down because people are not made to answer for their actions. I hate citing the so-called developed societies because we know their inadequacies too. But if we start from a simple thing like punishing anybody who throws out a pet bottle or paper on the road or while driving, there will be a great change. If they are put in jail or fined, such things will stop; and if those involved in lesser offences are not spared, those involved in criminal activities will know that there is no place to hide.

Cast your mind back to 1984/85 when Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon came to power with all their garbage, they showed us an idea of toughness and people were apprehended and punished for little offences. This made people to sit up and you could see Nigerians in queues at bus stops and there was orderliness during their short stay in power. That is not to say they were angels, they were not. I have always told people that General Buhari does not possess a quarter of the attributes that people falsely and conveniently attributed to him. No, he doesn't.

Why do you say that?

I started doubting Buhari's smartness after our 1984 encounter – Oyelade

I was one of the few journalists, who, in January 1984, immediately after they came to power, asked him questions at what they called a 'World Press Conference' at the Dodan Barracks in Lagos. That was a week after they sacked the administration of President Shehu Shagari from power. Shagari's government was sacked via a coup on December 31, 1983. We had the privilege of asking him the first set of questions. I remember Tunde Thompson was there, Chris Okorie, Nduka Irabor and some other journalists were there. I asked him: 'Now that you have taken over from a democratically elected civil administration, do you feel any sense of remorse?' General Buhari could not utter a word. It was Tunde Idiagbon, who was by his side, that brushed aside my question. That day, I began to wonder if Buhari was as smart as he was said to be. Here we are today; I don't want to dabble in politics, I want to continue my life as an author and a biographer. I have written 10 books and one of my recent books is a book on Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, one of the past Chiefs of Defence Staff. I was playing golf and a call came in and the caller introduced himself to me and we started talking. I told him that I would complete his biography in one year and I did. He loved it, his family members and others love it,

What do you do now?

I do contract publishing and I am not doing badly. That is aside my job as the Chairman of BCOS.

The media has been blamed for the growing immoralities and crimes like Internet fraud and ritual killings. What is your take on this?

The media has nothing to do with these and should not take the blame for those criminal activities. The media is just performing its roles. Ritual killing is a grandchild of government neglect of its duties. Anytime a government neglects its core duties, the peasants and the commoners are the ones that will be directly hit first. Yahoo Yahoo is a reflection of the abject poverty and utter frustration in which the youth have found themselves. As I talk to you today, many youths are unemployed and many are unemployable. Many of them are now engaging in criminal activities as a result of this. When General Obasanjo said Nigeria was sitting on a keg of gun powder with the huge unemployment among the youth, he was not saying anything new but was just saying the obvious. As they say in law, it is trite. We are in the midst of this problem now.

Some university graduates now are unemployable, even many lawyers can't speak good English because their teachers are flawed in the area of brilliance due to what they were exposed to. Also, many lecturers are not as good as what we had about 40 or 50 years ago. They fall far short of educational and academic depth expected of university lecturers. We are in trouble and whoever takes over from this administration can only try his best; and there are certain areas that must change first. Security situation, in which we find ourselves as a nation, is one that must change. Insecurity now is an unnecessary distraction for an already impoverished nation.

The NTA is Nigeria's first TV station. Why has not been able to rank among the very best in the world?

There is none of these broadcast stations that can rank among the best because of fundamental constraints. In this part of the world, anything that is owned by government will be bogged down by bureaucracy and with that, it cannot work. It will be bureaucratic in editorial content and bureaucratic in procurement of facilities that will jazz up the system. So, there is no way such will rank among the best in the world. I was in the US in 1985 when the CNN started. The owner of the station was the butt of jokes of everybody. Nobody believed that his ambitious idea and focus were possible but look at it today now, it is one of the most reliable sources of information around the world, if not the best. See what happened in Nigeria also, Channels, AIT are ahead, they are bound to shoot ahead of government-owned stations because they have the wherewithal to move forward without encumbrances that are the bane of government-owned institutions.

**Load-Date:** September 11, 2022



## **Murdered Journalist: Union Demands Justice**

PM News

April 30, 2017 Sunday

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**Length:** 207 words

### **Body**

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The Nigeria Union of **Journalist** (NUJ) has urged the Inspector General of Police, Idris Abubakar, to ensure the arrest and prosecution of the killers of Mr Famou Giobara, a broadcast **journalist** in Bayelsa. The union made the request in a communique issued Sunday at the end of the NUJ National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, held in Gombe.

The communique was signed by the NUJ National Secretary, Malam Shuaibu Leman. The union is also demanding that the case files of all slain journalists be re-opened, including those of late **Dele Giwa** and Bagauda Kaltho.

The communique further condemned in strong terms, the withdrawal of a Punch reporter, Olalekan Adedayo, from the State House and urged Presidency to reprimand the Chief Security Officer responsible for the act. The union challenged the Federal Government to sanction state governments that failed to properly utilise the first batch of the Paris Club refund.

The communique further commended the anti-corruption war of the present administration and also called on the National Assembly to ensure quick passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, to stabilise the sector. The NUJ commended the Gombe State Government and the State Council of the union for the successful hosting of the NEC meeting.

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2017

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## **Magazine Disavows Lawyer's Move Against Security Chiefs**

The Associated Press

November 5, 1986, Wednesday, AM cycle

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**Section:** International News

**Length:** 436 words

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Nigeria

### **Body**

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The directors of Newswatch magazine have disavowed a lawyer's attempt to bring murder charges against security officials in connection with the letter-bomb killing of the journal's editor.

The lawyer, Chief Fani Fawehinmi, filed a complaint Monday with the Justice Ministry alleging that security officials were responsible for the death of Dele Giwa, a highly regarded journalist in the West African nation. Giwa was killed by the letter-bomb on Oct. 19, two days after being questioned by intelligence agents.

The Newswatch directors said in a statement Tuesday night: "We wish to state categorically that Chief Fawehinmi does not have our authority or that of the family of Dele Giwa to proceed on what they consider to be a hasty and ill-timed legal action." "We wish to put the burial behind us. We also wish to give the police the chance to complete their investigations," they said.

The magazine earlier had called for an independent investigation of the slaying, and the detention and suspension of security officials who questioned Giwa.

Labor leaders, the Nigerian Bar Association, journalists, newspapers and other prominent Nigerians supported the call. The government said police would handle the investigation.

Lawyers in Lagos said Fawehinmi's action was unprecedented, and probably had no legal standing.

Fawehinmi, one of the more flamboyant lawyers in the Nigerian capital, said Wednesday he was Giwa's personal lawyer, not the magazine's.

"I am convinced that the government has infiltrated Newswatch," he told a reporter. "Everyone of those who spoke at the news briefing was protecting his interest." Hours after Giwa's death, Fawehinmi told reporters his client had been interrogated several times the previous week by the State Security Service and military intelligence. He was questioned about allegations he was involved with groups seeking to destabilize the military government.

Fawehinmi disclosed he had asked Information Minister Prince Tony Momoh to intercede with authorities on Giwa's behalf. Momoh confirmed he had asked the chief of the general staff to stop the questioning, and Rear Admiral Augustu Aikhomu complied.

## Magazine Disavows Lawyer's Move Against Security Chiefs

Both Col. Halidu Akilu, director of military intelligence, and Lt. Col. A.K. Togun said the questioning had cleared **Giwa**. Akilu said he told **Giwa** in a telephone call on Oct. 19, about 45 minutes before the letter bomb arrived, that the case was closed.

Fawehinmi, in filing the complaint, said there was enough circumstantial evidence against Akilu and Togun to warrant prosecution. He cited Akilu's phone call to **Giwa**'s wife the day before the killing asking for **Giwa**'s address.

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## Tinubu's ministerial gyrations fail to inspire

The Punch

July 31, 2023 Monday

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**Length:** 1076 words

### **Body**

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AFTER keeping the country in suspense for two months, President Bola Tinubu's unveiling of 28 ministerial nominees on Thursday failed to reignite hopes of radical change in Nigeria's governance trajectory. While some new faces are on the list, the return of four ex-governors and some others with unflattering political baggage immediately drew reactions ranging from disappointment to disgust. In the end, since the list offered no surprises, its lateness and incompleteness reinforce a rising conviction that though Tinubu prepared, worked hard, and strategised to win power, alas, he has not prepared adequately for the arduous task of governance.

For a country facing multiple crises: political, economic, security, and social, including existential threats, this is troubling. Moreover, after eight years of ruinous, indecisive superintendence under Muhammadu Buhari; Nigeria desperately needs a sure-footed leader at the helm.

Since his inauguration on May 29, Tinubu has sent mixed signals. Presenting an image of decisiveness and courage to take bold decisions to rescue the economy, he immediately stopped the petrol subsidy a month ahead of schedule and followed this up with nudging the Central Bank of Nigeria to unify the official and parallel market naira exchange rates.

This 'boldness' has however frayed as the two measures have devastated businesses, pushed many more people into poverty, and by its responses, exposed the unpreparedness of the administration.

Indecision has also manifested in the delayed appointment of a cabinet. It took Buhari six months to name ministers in his first term, and two months in his second. Tinubu has continued on that slippery path.

His image of a decisive political actor is crumbling. Whereas an amendment to the 1999 Constitution requires the President to send the names of ministerial nominees to the Senate within 60 days after his inauguration, he dallied till the last minute. Besides, he fulfilled the law only halfway by presenting 28 names, while the constitution requires him to nominate at least one minister from each of the 36 states.

He was announced winner of the presidential election on March 1, a clear three months before inauguration. In effect, it has taken him five whole months to name just part of his cabinet, an embarrassing reminder of the Buhari era.

## Tinubu's ministerial gyrations fail to inspire

Additionally, his promise to run a cabinet of mostly technocrats appears to be folding in favour of settling his political IOUs. He also fell short of his campaign promise of having at least 35 per cent women.

Many commentators are upset at his recycling of some politicians, especially the ex-governors. They find little to recommend them. Along with others, on their watch, Nigeria transited from a 52 per cent poverty rate in 1999 to become the world's poverty capital in 2018, only returning the title to India in 2021. It had 133 million poor in 2022, joined by another 7.1 million this year, according to the World Bank.

Two ex-governors, Nasir el-Rufai (Kaduna), and Nyesom Wike (Rivers), have been ministers of the FCT and of Education respectively during the Fourth Republic. Both are divisive figures. El-Rufai's eight-year rule saw Kaduna descend into a hellish killing field and hotbed of ethnic and sectarian divisions. The murder of five persons and kidnapping of another 50 farmers in ***Giwa*** Local Government Area at the weekend reflects a daily fare. Wike left Rivers no better.

Another ex-governor, Badaru Abubakar, for eight years presided over Jigawa that has the country's highest percentage of multi-dimensionally poor children with 73.9 per cent, and an illiteracy rate of 75.8 per cent. With David Umahi of Ebonyi as the fourth, many Nigerians wonder why Tinubu cannot find new hands to drive his "renewed hope" slogan.

Other nominees such as Ahmed Dangienda, and Stella Okotete, have been hit with allegations of wrongdoing, while Sani Danladi, a former governorship aspirant in Taraba State, was enmeshed in a fake certificate allegation.

Two ruling party presidential aspirants who stepped down for Tinubu made the list. Indeed, while the law presumes accused persons innocent unless otherwise pronounced by the courts, and it is universal practice to reward political interests with appointments, Nigerians who yearned for more non-political actors were disappointed.

There are some silver linings. Unlike Buhari, the list reflects Nigeria's diversities. At 38, Okotete is a refreshing departure from the creeping gerontocracy of the major parties; Hanatu Musawa, 43, Bunmi Tunji-Ojo, 41, and Betta Edu, 36, are also relatively young.

A few other technocrats also made it: Mohammed Pate, a one-time minister of state for health, is a well-regarded international health professional; ***Dele*** Alake, a long time Tinubu acolyte, is a leading ***journalist***; and Doris Uzoka, a banker; and Lateef Fagbemi, a respected Senior Advocate of Nigeria.

Tinubu has faltered, but still has a chance to define a strong character for his administration, inspire public confidence and halt the country's slide into state failure. The next batch of nominees should be top-heavy with technocrats. He should avoid the politicians who collectively have thoroughly misgoverned Nigeria.

Governance is different from politicking; settling with politicians across the aisle does not unite Nigerians. He needs a team to rescue the economy, stamp out crime, bridge the infrastructure gap, and fix the education and health sectors.

The country is tottering. The naira exchanged at N870 to \$1 at the weekend at the unofficial market, while blue chips, Nigerian Breweries, Guinness Nigeria, and others announced huge losses on the back of forex volatility; terrorists continued killing and kidnapping across the country, and international agencies announced higher poverty and hunger figures in the land. Industrial strikes are on the horizon.

Politics should therefore take a back seat. Tinubu should quickly name his full cabinet this week; assemble a very strong economic management team, and appoint a very capable professional as defence minister. His next batch of ministers should inspire hope.

The Senate should do a thorough screening and insist on portfolios being attached to each nominee. Nigeria's outlandish democracy features senators questioning nominees for unspecified positions! This Senate has a chance to drop the charade. It should reject any unfit person.

Having wasted two months, Tinubu should roll up his sleeves and go to work.

## Tinubu's ministerial gyrations fail to inspire

**Load-Date:** July 31, 2023

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## **Omatsola's Rhythmic eyes, watching and telling**

Weekly Trust

July 11, 2015 Saturday

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**Length:** 435 words

**Byline:** Nathaniel Bivan

### **Body**

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Poems are not very easy to review. In fact, literature is not. There are rules in poetry, and then there is poetic licence. But beyond this licence, this author's veto to meander in a sea of words leads him to history and politics and an elegy to Dele Giwa, a journalist killed in 1986 during the reign of military president General Ibrahim Babangida. The poem 'Elegy to Dele Giwa' reads in part:

Excellent a golden name in the pen annals

Alas. Corpuscles run for us in canals

Sure indelible the sacred name becomes

When with the black ribbon we cry; the spirit returns

Yearning to visit the Robots in Brutaldom

And your blood singing sonorously from martyrdom

And of course, where there is politics lurks dictatorship in a country like Nigeria - although remembered as past, there is always the reminder when a democratically elected leader rears his horns. In 'The Rhythmic eyes,' someone is always watching, telling the story the way it is, starting from the beginning when Nigeria fell into the hands of crafty leaders - the fate of Moshood Abiola and the memory of June 12, 1993. Hints are dropped here and there and it is clear the culprit is the dictator, when there is one wearing goggles and giving orders.

One would wish the editing of this work were perfect because a word like playwright is spelt 'playright' on the back cover page. This is not a good sign for such poetry that reads like a history book. Here, there is success in the play with words, poetry's greatest weapon manipulated to hold attention and win the reader's love. The love poem, 'Woman Power' is an example:

Her balls like magnet

And voice Nectar

And lips hypnotic

Omatsola's Rhythmic eyes, watching and telling

I argue and grumble

The battle I lost.

Some of Omatsola's poems are lengthy and run into many verses, others short and in single verses. In all these, he treats matters bothering Nigeria, from hope to misery and violence. The poem 'Stray Bullet' reads in part:

The cloud darkens the face of the sun palefully

There is a rumbling among the cosmic forces

The sun indicts the cloud but the cloud becomes darker

And the celestial

Bodies are hungry

The sky grumbles and tells the cloud to relieve him of the heavy burden

Suddenly, people are running where to? Followed by clattering

Followed by bang! Bang!

The poet leaves nothing out. He trashes the evil of social vices in the poem 'Gossips.'

Cross-legged they sit,

Under moonlight and sunlight

They are always

And problem abound.

Some write to entertain, others perhaps to test their skills with words. This poet succeeds in educating, informing, as well as correcting the ills in the society. From one page to the next flow the issues of life.

**Load-Date:** July 11, 2015

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## Only restructuring can save Nigeria –Eze Ogbonnaya

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 20, 2020 Monday

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**Length:** 1258 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Dickson Okafor

His Royal Majesty, Eze (Dr.) Cletus Uwadiiegwu Ogbonnaya, the traditional ruler of Umuanisi Autonomous Community in Uturu, Abia State has called on Igbo to drop agitation for Biafra, but to unite and push for President of Igbo extraction in 2023.

The veteran ***journalist***, historian and university lecturer turned traditional ruler relived his civil war experience and the lessons of the three years hostility that too many lives.

The monarch called for restructure of Nigeria, adding that with the way things are going, Nigeria may collapse.

He speaks about other issues.

From pen pushing to royalty, what has it being so far?

It has been eventful, exciting and demanding. It has not been easy. I was in journalism for 23 years having started with NTA Abia in 1989 during my Youth Service. I later moved to Concord Newspaper. I was a former member, Nigerian Guild of Editors. In fact, it was the late ***Dele Giwa***, Alhaji Ashiru and others from the Concord Newspaper who came to interview us in Port Harcourt in January 1980. I was barely six months in NTA when I joined Concord Newspaper at inception as the pioneer Chief Correspondent in the old Imo State comprising Abia and half of Ebonyi State and by the grace of God, I had been the traditional ruler of Umuanisi Autonomous Community in Uturu, Abia State since April 2001. Uturu is ancient town and today it is the host community of the Abia State University and Gregory University.

### Only restructuring can save Nigeria –Eze Ogbonnaya

In 1983, Governor Sam Mbakwe appointed me Zonal Secretary, Educational Board and I could have gone to the federal House in 1987 if not for the coup that brought President Muhammadu Buhari to power. Therefore, because of the love and passion I have for journalism, I went back to Concord after the coup and I was one of the five Editors appointed in 1986. In 1989, I became the Deputy News Editor and in 1990, I rose to the position of Assistant Editor in charge of defence.

Many are of the view that traditional rulers in Igbo land don't command the level of respect and honour their counterparts in other parts of the country earn from their subjects, what are the challenges you face as a monarch?

Yes, those with such view are right. The traditional stool in Igbo land is not as developed as that of other tribes and ethnic groups. For instance, you see retired generals in the North going back home to become traditional rulers. The Sultan of Sokoto was a colonel in the Nigerian army, and also there is Gen. Hassan Yakubu of Kogi State. The same thing applies in the South West, Middle Belt and some parts of the South South geo political zones. Unfortunately, in Igbo land, traditional rulers are not accorded the kind of respect, regard and reward their counterparts in the other zones are accorded.

January 15, 2020 made it 50 years Nigeria/Biafra civil war ended; can you share your experience?

I joined the Biafra Army when I was in primary three at the age of 16 years and 4 months. Incidentally, my first training was at my Alma-Ata, Aquinas Secondary School, Osu, Isiala Mbano LGA where I started school in 1965. No person who saw the event of 1966 to 1970 will want to witness it again. We saw how everything happened and its consequences. It was the adventure of Major Nzeogwu and co who staged a coup and they could not take charge and the coup failed. Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi who never planned coup took over and it was the British lecturers at Ahmadu Bello University that interpreted the 1966 coup as Igbo coup. On July 29, 1966 when Ironsi was on tour of the Western Region at Ibadan, a counter coup happened. In fact, the people who staged the coup were Major Martin Adamu, Major Murtala Mohammed and T. Y. Danjuma. The only Igbo officer who died in Nzeogwu coup was Brigadier Arthur Unaegbu. So, the counter coup by the Northern army officers was more bloody. It was T. Y Danjuma who kidnapped Ironsi and handed him over to Major Williams Wabe who later became A.D.C to Gen Yakubu Gowon and they finished Ironsi at Moore Plantation in Ibadan. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu rose up to the challenge and he gave Igbo the leadership we needed to survive the unfortunate incident. So, if Gowon had implemented the Aburi Accord, the war wouldn't have broken out on July 6, 1967. It were agreed that Nigeria should confederate yet, it was not adhered to. It was the students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka that asked Ojukwu to declare war.

To you, was that declaration a mistake?

It was not a mistake even though we were not prepared for war because the whole military formations in Nigeria with the exception of the 7th battalion of the Nigerian army in Enugu, were all in the North. Our people were chased away from all parts of Nigeria. What do you expect us to do? In fact, I look at Biafra army as a resistance army because we resisted attack on us by the Nigerian army.

Many will say you are not fair to the North considering the fact that only Northern leaders were killed in the Nzeogwu coup; wasn't that an injustice against the North?

What happened was that Zik was already out of the country on health grounds. Col. David Ejor who was the battalion commander when the coup happened would have moved to the Government House, Enugu and picked M. I. Okpara, but unfortunately or fortunately, the then President of Cyprus Archbishop Macarius was on a state visit in Nigeria and was in the Eastern State and it would have looked odd to pick Okpara in the presence of a visiting Head of state even at the airport. The five majors were idealist in their perception of Nigeria not knowing ethnicity is stronger than whatever they thought of. There was a journal I read in my final year in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka which says, looking at the whole world, ethnicity is stronger than religion and that even nationalism is stronger than religion.

Which can guarantee peace and unity in the country?

### Only restructuring can save Nigeria –Eze Ogbonnaya

The answer is restructuring. The way things are going, if the country is not restructured, I'm afraid Nigeria may collapse one day. Those who are holding Nigeria at the jugular don't want Nigeria restructured. Restructuring is all about state governors using the resources in their regions to develop their states. That was how Nigeria was structured before 1966. It was the unitary system of government introduced by the army that resulted to concentration of too much power in the centre.

What would you say are the lessons we should learn from the civil war?

Like I told you, I enlisted into the Biafran army on February 12, 1968. I saw action both as Infantry and Radiance personnel as well as a ranger. So, January 15, 2020 made it exactly 50 years that Biafra surrendered and was handed over to the then Head of state, General Yakubu Gowon at the Dodan Barracks by Major Gen. Philip Effiong, the Biafra Second-in-Command. Therefore, one has to thank God that one is alive witnessing 50 years of the end of the Nigerian civil war. Unfortunately, Nigeria doesn't seem to have utilized or learned any lesson from the war. Take for instance, every brigade in Biafra had a mini refinery. What you call illegal refinery today. Why can't Nigeria harness them? If Biafra could build three airports within the two and half years of the war apart from having Enugu, Port Harcourt and Calabar ports, why can't Nigeria replicate and utilize these opportunity? During the war, Biafra built an airport here in Uturu after the fall of Enugu at Onuaku where you have Masters Energy Industrial City.

The post Only restructuring can save Nigeria –Eze Ogbonnaya appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2020

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## Omatsola's Rhythmic Eyes, Watching and Telling [book review]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

July 11, 2015

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**Length:** 450 words

**Byline:** Nathaniel Bivan

### **Body**

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Title: The Rhythmic Eyes

Author: Daniel Omatsola

Publisher: University of Abuja Press

Pages: 91

Poems are not very easy to review. In fact, literature is not. There are rules in poetry, and then there is poetic licence. But beyond this licence, this author's veto to meander in a sea of words leads him to history and politics and an elegy to **Dele Giwa**, a **journalist** killed in 1986 during the reign of military president General Ibrahim Babangida. The poem 'Elegy to **Dele Giwa**' reads in part:

Excellent a golden name in the pen annals

Alas. Corpuscles run for us in canals

Sure indelible the sacred name becomes

When with the black ribbon we cry; the spirit returns

Yearning to visit the Robots in Brutaldom

And your blood singing sonorously from martyrdom

And of course, where there is politics lurks dictatorship in a country like Nigeria - although remembered as past, there is always the reminder when a democratically elected leader rears his horns. In 'The Rhythmic eyes,' someone is always watching, telling the story the way it is, starting from the beginning when Nigeria fell into the hands of crafty leaders - the fate of Moshood Abiola and the memory of June 12, 1993. Hints are dropped here and there and it is clear the culprit is the dictator, when there is one wearing goggles and giving orders.

One would wish the editing of this work were perfect because a word like playwright is spelt 'playright' on the back cover page. This is not a good sign for such poetry that reads like a history book. Here, there is success in the play

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with words, poetry's greatest weapon manipulated to hold attention and win the reader's love. The love poem, 'Woman Power' is an example:

Her balls like magnet

And voice Nectar

And lips hypnotic

I argue and grumble

The battle I lost.

Some of Omatsola's poems are lengthy and run into many verses, others short and in single verses. In all these, he treats matters bothering Nigeria, from hope to misery and violence. The poem 'Stray Bullet' reads in part:

The cloud darkens the face of the sun palefully

There is a rumbling among the cosmic forces

The sun indicts the cloud but the cloud becomes darker

And the celestial

Bodies are hungry

The sky grumbles and tells the cloud to relieve him of the heavy burden

Suddenly, people are running where to? Followed by clattering

Followed by bang! Bang!

The poet leaves nothing out. He trashes the evil of social vices in the poem 'Gossips.'

Cross-legged they sit,

Under moonlight and sunlight

They are always

And problem abound.

Some write to entertain, others perhaps to test their skills with words. This poet succeeds in educating, informing, as well as correcting the ills in the society. From one page to the next flow the issues of life.

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2015



## Kingsley Osadolor: Quintessential Media Man Teacher-to-be

The Will (Nigeria)

March 1, 2021 Monday

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Length: 4365 words

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Kingsley Osadolor BEVERLY HILLS, March 01, (THEWILL) Just when you think he should be contemplating his years in retirement, of putting his feet on a puff, sipping warm milk, I-pad, I-phone, newspapers, magazines and books handy, bifocals in place the better for long reads, one or two excited grandchildren romping around in his sitting room, Kingsley Osayande Osadolor, former Deputy Managing Director of The Guardian, media consultant and lawyer, hopes to take up teaching as a next career. If he were in the civil service (which he once was as commissioner in Edo state) he would have retired compulsorily when he turned sixty on August 15 2020. But he spent a greater part of his career as a journalist from when he joined The African Guardian in 1985. Before then, Osadolor had contributed to The Nigerian Observer in Benin, Nigerian Tribune, The Herald and Satellite newspapers, mostly on and about sports.

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Having spent much of the last three decades and half as a distinguished **journalist**, media consultant, special assistant, commissioner and lawyer, he hopes to crown it all as a teacher. "I equally look forward to returning to teaching," Osadolor told the **journalist**.

"The greater motivation for me is to be a catalyst for change through the instrumentality of my profession," insisting that as human beings, particularly on his diamond jubilee, "one continues to aspire. I give thanks to Almighty to have enabled me to record my modest accomplishments.

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"They are all avid consumers of media products," he reminisced, "but none has shown any interest in becoming a **journalist**." There were times when wards routinely followed in their parent's professional footsteps.

Thus, if Joseph the Elder is an accountant, for instance, you will reasonably expect Joseph the Younger to take up accounting in school. These days, it is different, especially with liberal guardians like Osadolor who allowed his children to follow their career preference instead of dictating to them like an overbearing parent.

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General knowledge enables you to navigate the gamut of issues while specialized knowledge makes you an expert in given fields of journalistic coverage." Above all, you can't achieve much as a professional if you are stripped of your integrity.

"Another very important quality is integrity coupled with fairness," Osadolor insists. "There is a limit to which a scoundrel can blackmail anyone.

There is also a limit to which a partisan can ply his trade because the audience is very discerning and judgmental, and if a segment of the audience rejects you, then you have lost your influence over that segment. "Perhaps nothing does more damage to a **journalist** and his product than reputational harm arising from integrity deficit.

If media manipulators believe that you have a price, you are worthless no matter the price tag. Nothing challenges or rattles a media manipulator than the realization that you are not his errand boy.

" To be sure, journalism in Nigeria today is unlike what it was during Osadolor's time in the halcyon days of The Guardian with great minds like Macebuh, Eddie Iroh, Onwuchekwa Jemie, Odunewu, Ogunbiyi, Olumhense and a number of intellectuals from universities either as members of the Editorial Board or regular contributors. Looking back at those glorious times and what he still thinks about the profession today, you tend to believe Osadolor when he declared in one recent interview that "journalism is a sacred calling," locating those in it "as prime actors in the broad media function of informing, educating, and entertaining.

" More than any other person, he would have long heard the age-long belief that journalism is history written in a hurry. He sure knows, pointedly insisting that "as drafters or chroniclers of history, journalists owe a sacred duty to present and future generations.

To appreciate what I am saying is to recognize the true worth of quality journalism of which scrupulous gatekeeping is an essential feature. To be a good **journalist**, therefore, I would say that a keen interest in public affairs, which translates to a desire for a better society, is the single most important aptitude.

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General knowledge enables you to navigate the gamut of issues while specialized knowledge makes you an expert in given fields of journalistic coverage." Above all, you can't achieve much as a professional if you are stripped of your integrity.

"Another very important quality is integrity coupled with fairness," Osadolor insists. "There is a limit to which a scoundrel can blackmail anyone.

There is also a limit to which a partisan can ply his trade because the audience is very discerning and judgmental, and if a segment of the audience rejects you, then you have lost your influence over that segment. "Perhaps nothing does more damage to a journalist and his product than reputational harm arising from integrity deficit.

If media manipulators believe that you have a price, you are worthless no matter the price tag. Nothing challenges or rattles a media manipulator than the realization that you are not his errand boy.

" To be sure, journalism in Nigeria today is unlike what it was during Osadolor's time in the halcyon days of The Guardian with great minds like Macebuh, Eddie Iroh, Onwuchekwa Jemie, Odunewu, Ogunbiyi, Olumhense and a number of intellectuals from universities either as members of the Editorial Board or regular contributors. Looking back at those glorious times and what he still thinks about the profession today, you tend to believe Osadolor when he declared in one recent interview that "journalism is a sacred calling," locating those in it "as prime actors in the broad media function of informing, educating, and entertaining.

" More than any other person, he would have long heard the age-long belief that journalism is history written in a hurry. He sure knows, pointedly insisting that "as drafters or chroniclers of history, journalists owe a sacred duty to present and future generations.

To appreciate what I am saying is to recognize the true worth of quality journalism of which scrupulous gatekeeping is an essential feature. To be a good journalist, therefore, I would say that a keen interest in public affairs, which translates to a desire for a better society, is the single most important aptitude.

"

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2021



## Fact-Checking Technology, Key To Combating Fake News – Olupohunda

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

July 25, 2020 Saturday

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**Length:** 1463 words

**Byline:** Tomi Falade

### **Body**

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In this digital age, being a member of the media does not hold as much importance as it used to, especially with the influx of partly trained and untrained journalists muddying the waters of quality reporting and documentation of history. This does not, however, erase the presence of real media professionals thoroughly dedicated to their duties as the fourth estate of the realm. Bayo Olupohunda, editor-in-chief of Opera News, numbers among this class of erudites. Prior to his role at Opera, Olupohunda had been the editor of leading Nigerian online platform, Legit. With decades of experience across both online and print media, his writings have earned him both local and international awards and nominations. In this exclusive interview with TOMI FALADE, the 2014 CNN African **Journalist** Awards finalist speaks on his first love, journalism, and his emergence as an author with his book, 'Are You Not A Nigerian?'

Did you always see yourself pursuing a career in media?

Let's start from my teenage years at college. Even before then, I have always had a thing for the written word. In the early days, my parents would send me on errands to the vendors to buy newspapers. I always looked forward to those mornings because I enjoyed reading those newspapers. I devoured everything. And yes, I love the Op-ed pages, the opinions, editorials are my favourites. It was always a battle of who would read first in the house. In secondary school, my best subjects were English and Literature. I was bad at Mathematics but I led the whole school in English. I became a member of the Press Club where I wrote stories and had role models in the late **Dele Giwa**. I read Newswatch like a Bible.

ABUJA DOCTOR REVEALS HOW OVER 2,000 NIGERIAN MEN ARE NOW NATURALLY OVERCOMING TERRIBLE BEDROOM PERFORMANCE DUE TO THIS BRILLIANT DISCOVERY. DON'T BE A VICTIM!

Later, during the years when the military ruled Nigeria with an iron fist, I fell in love with The News, Tempo, The Guardian and other publications that wrote stinging criticisms of the military. In my second year in the university, I enrolled as an intern with The Guardian and that was how my journalism career took off. So yes, I have always seen myself pursuing a career in the media and my dream in the early days was to be a famous writer.

What would you say contributed to your emerging as editor of two different major online platforms in Nigeria?

## ALSO READ

Let me say consistency and my willingness to adapt to changes in journalism practices driven by technology. I contributed to Guardian as a freelancer. I did a lot of stories back then and after a scholarship from the Goethe Institut, I moved to contribute to NEXT Newspaper and then later transitioned as a columnist for Punch where I was nominated for two major awards. In between, I was contributing to several online media in Nigeria and internationally. Many times I don't even get paid for those articles. I take personal development seriously and I read a lot of publications about new directions in journalism. I was quick to understand how technology will impact the practice and future of journalism. I think this understanding helped me to understand the intersection of digital media and journalism as we know it. I didn't always jump to become an editor. Like I said, I had several years writing for many traditional papers and online. My first managerial role began as head of desk at Legit (formerly Naij) where my role included experimenting with developing content for a Lagos tourism guide for international and local tourists. Some years later I rose to become editor-in-chief. I think the major reason is adaptation and flexibility. This is something lacking in many journalists who have practised in traditional journalism. The willingness and flexibility to accept the changing world of journalism and readiness to embrace it.

You are a scholar, published author, and a newsmaker. How do you marry all these roles in a way that one does not infringe on the other?

I want to be a media scholar, I'm not yet a full-blown scholar even though I have publications in journals. Yes, I am a published author. I don't know about being a newsmaker. One needs a lot of discipline to sit down to write. It really does not take a lot to manage. Focusing on your goals can help you achieve a lot and you can always manage your time. For example, when I enrolled for Masters in Media and Communications at the Pan Atlantic University, I was by then an editor and though it was tough, I still managed to see the programme through.

Your last book, 'Are You Not A Nigerian?' comprises your thoughts on diverse issues that are key to Nigeria's nationhood. Did the publication ever cause you problems?

No, why should they? Everybody knows the fundamental issues wrong with Nigeria. What I did in the book is to advance my thoughts on the socio-political issues that have dominated discourse in the country. And these are diverse issues about how our diversity has rather than being a source of strength and development has caused a lot of developmental challenges. So what I did in my book is to highlight these issues. And beyond highlighting them, it is also a way to document and preserve my writing.

Fake news and sensational content seem to be the order of the day, and untrained news readers fall prey to this every other day. As the editor-in-chief of one of the largest news portals in Africa, what do you think can be done to combat this, and who do you think should be responsible for the solution?

Fake news has always been with us. But we cannot deny the fact the emergence of social media has contributed to amplifying it. Digital penetration has also ensured more people see these content. But the good thing is that major online platforms understand and acknowledge the danger of fake news to human interaction and national security. Online media organisations are cooperating with fact-checking outlets to ensure fake news don't make it into their publications. Fact-checking is important in the effort to combat fake news. So responsible media has a duty to develop safe practices to reduce and stamp out fake news. I also think newsrooms must develop processes using technology to spot fake news. They must also develop red flags to identify fake content during sourcing. Education is important. But what I see as a challenge in an effort to combat fake news is how to convince a highly illiterate population to identify fake news. Remember those who peddle fake news do it for a purpose-either to make money or push an agenda and people tend to believe conspiracy theories based on their bias, which could be religious or ethnic. So really, the media has to be responsible and understand how fake news impacts society.

With the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging all around the world, what would you say is the future of traditional media employment in Nigeria?

COVID-19 will come and go depending on how soon a vaccine is found. But yes, at present, the future of traditional media jobs have been greatly impacted and it will take a while for this. But let me emphasise that COVID-19 is not

### Fact-Checking Technology, Key To Combating Fake News – Olupohunda

the reason why media jobs are being eroded. The emergence of digital media is the reason why the practice of newsprints has been impacted. There is an ongoing debate about how newspapers will disappear with the dominance of digital media. I don't think this will happen in a traditional society like Nigeria where a generation of news consumers and advertisers still consider traditional media a major source of news. I think both will exist side by side.

What's the biggest challenge you've faced as an editor of an online platform?

I think the major challenge for me will be the threat of fake news. But like I explained earlier, we are fighting fake news with technology and of course with internal checks by educating writers and making them see the consequences. At Opera News, for example, we have strict rules and internal guidelines which we share with the writers. Repeated violations of our platform, rules and regulations can lead to a ban from the Opera News.

What next can we expect from Bayo Olupohunda, what's the next for you?

I want to write more. There is a lot of gap in the media which needs to be filled. I think there has been too much focus on political reporting at the expense of social issues. With the failure of many institutions in Nigeria, the public expects the media to be their voice especially that of the disadvantaged groups. I hope I can also complete another book and eventually teach media to young journalists in future.

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<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/76/159565336948.jpeg>

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## Uneven Steps: Journey of nightmares

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 27, 2021 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1978 words

### **Body**

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It is not often that you have a book review begin with the author; but the fact remains that the content of a book is as good as the writer. The author transfers his knowledge and personage onto the package. The integrity of the author gives impetus to the book and believability to the content.

The author of *Uneven Steps: The story of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE)*, Mr Lanre Idowu, can be described as a tested combatant and a Field Marshall in journalism. He is a frontline participant in its affairs and a first class traveller in the journey of the Guild of Nigerian Editors (NGE). So writing about the journey of the guild, for him, is like reliving an experience.

The main title of the book, *Uneven Steps* summarises the story of the guild. It signposts a travel episode of a giant who toddles along on a necessary trip harassed by headwinds: climbing hills and descending valleys with pain and stress; yet clinging on to the hope that along the way it will encounter a benevolent spirit that will confer on it the kind of status commensurate with public expectations of its members.

A giant that is always apprehensive of the verdict of history, going by the original intentions of the founding fathers; and the realities of modern times, particularly as it affects the practice and the status of the body of practitioners. A journey full of nightmares: some imagined, some imposed; but largely self-inflicted.

The book narrates how sometimes the guild moves closer to attainment of its ideals; but as hope rises, the factors that hold all of us and the country hostage sneak in, and the light dims and the concert goes awry. When it happens, the editors and the guild walk the scene with uneven steps. Editors are not alien to sour grapes, they encounter them in their search for what makes them what they are; in the process they eat some, and the experience often has never been palatable.

So, going through the book, it looks obvious that the state of the NGE, which is just about a year younger than the country itself, is not different from the story of the country - audacious but not firmly established, moving but unstable. At some stage the steps would be firm but along the line they would wobble and then become uneven. In fact, a giant with feet of clay!

### Uneven Steps: Journey of nightmares

The guild was given birth to by great minds and 'ancestors' of the journalism profession, eminently acknowledged in Chapter Three. It was produced in the factory of rebellion, to avert annihilation by capitalists who saw the media as the vehicle to drive and sustain their ambitions. It was also to stave off discrimination in the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ). It was, therefore, a child of circumstance.

Idowu says it was, in part, the product of reverse discrimination in the NUJ. The editor was a hired hand who could be directed and fired at will. But editors are not agberos whose major pre-occupation is to load vehicles with no qualms as to capacity and safety considerations. The agbero's interest is to load the vehicle and get his commission - whether or not the vehicle gets to its destination safely, is none of his business. Editors are not cast in that mold.

The pioneers wanted protection and relevance; they needed to do their jobs professionally, and with integrity. They formed the guild. They started the journey well, but the vagaries of weather and the harshness of the geopolitical tendencies coupled with the whims of the economic climate affected the smoothness of the journey, leading to tiredness, stress, despondency and ultimately uneven steps.

Notwithstanding tha Idowu himself is a high priest in the congregation, he never pulled his punches where the sacrament went sour. He never also failed to beam the shining lights where appropriate. He is not one who allows sentiments to interfere with his conclusions. Wherever he saw a spade, he called it by its real name.

The book is done in a 6x9 inches format with 214 pages, including 20 pages of front matter (Dedication, Abbreviations, Tables, Foreword, Preface and acknowledgements) and 45 pages of back matter (References, Appendixes and Indexes). There are 16 pages of images of past officials and events of the Guild. It is a catalogue of the triumphs and travails of the Guild in its sixty years. It is dedicated to the continued search for meaning and responsibility in the media and its promotion as a strong pillar of democracy and an agent of national development.

The main section starts with abbreviations of regular organs and institutions mentioned in the book; then tables of laws and cases, followed by the Foreword written by a revered 'ancestor' of the profession, the late Prince Tony Momoh. The author wrote the Preface covering almost three and half pages. Acknowledgements and the Content pages follow before the first chapter.

The main story is set in 17 chapters. The first chapter talks about the birth of the guild - In the beginning; followed by The Press and Independence; The Guilds founding fathers; The Guild under military rule (1966-79); the Guild in the Second Republic (1979 - 1983); In search of the Guild (1983 - 1988); Resuscitation of the Guild (1988); Between Resurgence and Grovelling (1988-1992) and the Guild and Military Repression (19933 - 1998), in that order.

Other chapters include: A more assertive Guild; Constitutional Crises in the Guild; The Guild's fellowship Award; Who is an Editor; The Editor in the Digital Age; The Associate Membership Conundrum; Who funds the Guild and The future of the Guild.

The book paints the Guild as a not too healthy child: a child with a fainting spirit; a body that is often missing in action during critical times - it disappears and returns limp; often brought back to life through a resuscitation process. For instance, in Chapter Six: In search of the Guild (1983 -1988), Idowu wrote that during the turbulent years of Decree No. 4 of 1984 when 'the law was in no mood for journalistic adventurism' and when media houses were haunted at will, including the proscription of Newswatch magazine (Proscription from Circulation, Decree No.6 of 1987), the guild was in limbo.

He put it this way: 'While the NPAN and NUJ were in touch with the government to cut short the ban of Newswatch, the editors were missing in action. Since the fallout of the Minna Convention of 1982, there had been no professional body of editors to engage government'. It took some kind of Necodemus moves, using some editors in government-owned media as medics, to bring the ailing Guild back to life. Idowu saw the move as part of the grand design by 'government to woo the press, construct a semblance of amity and empanel a professional association for periodic engagement'.

### Uneven Steps: Journey of nightmares

Pages 56 to 63 covering two chapters unveiled the helpless and seemingly escapist nature of the Guild at some point, even in the face of threats, torments, torture and emasculation of its members and the media. For instance on page 57, veteran ***journalist*** Chris Okolie was quoted (1988) as telling an executive member: 'During the murder of ***Dele Giwa*** your executive kept mute. So, too, was your executive helpless when Ray Ekpu was charged with murder and arson. The executive did nothing when Daily Sketch and Tribune editors were put under pressure. Likewise the same executive looked the other way when Newswatch was proscribed for publishing the Politbureau report'.

The Guild was still recuperating when new viruses were introduced into its system - the regular trademark of our woes as a political entity - Region and Religion. Coupled with the non- categorical definition of who an editor is in the electronic media, these became the underlying ailments that further crippled the Guild, a disability it is still struggling with till this day.

It was at the Minna Convention of 1982 that the infection occurred. In spite of the quality of practitioners then, the fumes of politics and the rascality in some quarters choked the Guild and it was placed on a ventilator until the Babangida regime in 1988 applied pressure on its chest; and was subsequently revived by proxy editors from government-owned organisations. Chapters Six and Seven deal with those issues.

So, did the Guild get well soon? Chapters Seven to Nine did not seem to discharge the patient, as the record shows that the status was between resurgence and groveling, especially as members came under another round of military repression between 1993 and 1998. It was not until 1998 that the Guild was on its feet and became more assertive; but the excitement of recovery after being bedridden for a long period and the zeal to fortify its ranks against another epidemic of the Minna dimension led to a constitutional crisis that almost returned the Guild to the casualty ward (Chapter 11).

One nagging symptom that is yet to find appropriate prescription and remedy is the editor himself. Who is the Editor and who should be a member of the NGE? If an ailment is not properly defined and diagnosed, prescription and treatment become difficult. And that's a major challenge of the Guild. From the presentation, this seems to have become a problem since the Minna Convention, as indicated in Chapter Five.

In Chapter 13, Idowu states that the original intention of the Guild was to have a club of de jure and de facto editors who, in law and in fact, determine what goes into publications. This, it is stated, made it easier for the founding fathers to agree on who a newspaper editor or deputy was. 'It was also not controversial to determine who qualified as an associate member'.

Throughout the book, the issue of professionalism and ethics rings loud. The desirability or otherwise of a Press Council can also be found in chapter 4. In fact in Chapter 8, the book quotes one of the Guild's past presidents, Alhaji Waida Maida as having told his colleagues in 1991 that 'the media are gradually losing believability and we must do something to arrest this trend. We ought to appreciate the weight of our responsibility in the sustenance of democratic rule once the military hands over to the civilians'. Whether that has been achieved, the answer blows in the wind.

It's not all gloom. Apart from indications in about three preceding chapters, the concluding chapter on the Future of the Guild states clearly that there is a lot to commend the body for, if assessed by its stated objectives. For one, the search for a code of ethics has been successfully completed and periodic enlivening of its provisions, especially at periods of general elections, is ongoing.

The author displays a monumental power of recall and a professional grasp of perspectives. He made about 74 citations from key players to back up his narrative on particular subject matters. The book is a befitting trophy for the Guild at 60. It is one book that every ***journalist***, journalism teacher, journalism school and those interested in the growth of journalism practice, should have. In fact, it should find space in every library. It is both a reference book and a history book.

The writer has done his bit in chronicling the journey of the Guild in the last 60 years of its existence. Although the founding fathers championed a course that was meant to give impetus to the practice and the profession, lack of

### Uneven Steps: Journey of nightmares

trust and leadership incongruities threatened the concord that existed in the fold at the beginning, a development that has persisted till this day.

There is, therefore, the need for members to arise, like the tribune of old, and form a vanguard to protect and pilot the affairs of the body. We must channel all our efforts towards building a strong independent body that can, in one accord, deliver a sucker punch when challenged. We must resolve at all times to remain steadfast to the ideals of the profession and the nurturing of a galaxy of stars. We should be an inspiration to other professional bodies, God being our guardian.

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## EBONY, and Ebonygate revisited

The Nation (Nigeria)

August 13, 2019 Tuesday

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### **Body**

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WITH the recent sale by public auction of its archives of more than four million black-and-white photographs, some of them prize-winning and some never published before, the monthly lifestyle magazine EBONY which defined and captured the black experience in America like no other for two generations has finally gone out of business.

Priced at \$46 million, the archives were sold for \$30 million. The proceeds will be used to offset part of the debts of the Johnson Publishing Company, owners of the magazine. The company filed for bankruptcy liquidation, some three years ago, unable to arrange financing or a sale.

Fears were rife that EBONY's iconic pictures would fall into the hands of a private-equity firm that may choose to dispose of them as it pleases. In the event, they were purchased by a consortium of four leading private foundations, which will donate them to the National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution and the Getty Research Institute.

This arrangement guarantees the archives will be preserved for posterity and made accessible to the public

EBONY was launched in 1945, in Chicago, by John H. Johnson, a visionary entrepreneur concerned 'to show the Negroes (as African Americans were then called) but also white people that Negroes also got married, held beauty contests, gave parties, ran successful businesses, and did all the other normal things of life.'

Johnson's daughter, who succeeded him as publisher, said the mission was to make EBONY the 'curator of the African-American experience, past, present, and future.' It fulfilled the first two parts of its mission admirably. But its future now lies behind it, sadly, after a run of 71 years.

Within a few years of its debut, EBONY became a habit. There was hardly any black home in the United States where you would not find a copy. It was read and passed along, to be read and passed along until every member of the household had savoured its contents. Those who could not read were rewarded with its white-and-black pictures that captured arrestingly all aspects of black culture, from the ghetto to the executive suite, and the Boardroom, and ultimately to the Presidency.

It was a lifestyle magazine with a difference. It depicted African American entertainers, athletes and movie actors and performing artistes all right. But it also showcased black scientists, lawyers, diplomats, legislators, community leaders, inventors, engineers, astronauts, corporate executives, commanding officers in the armed services and, generally, achievers in every sphere of American life.

## EBONY, and Ebonygate revisited

Its tone was optimistic, upbeat. But you could never accuse EBONY of puffery, for the stories were substantive, well researched, and very well written. The photo-essay it published from time to time was a model of story conception and execution.

Its stablemate Jet, published in a much smaller format, debuted in 1951 as 'the weekly Negro news magazine.' Together, EBONY and Jet captured the essence of black life in America like no other journals. Their challenge was to define or redefine for America black Americans, who were for the most part presented with mutilated images of themselves by the dominant media.

The field was not entirely bereft of black journals. There were, for example, the Chicago Defender, the Baltimore Afro-American and Amsterdam News based in Harlem, New York. These were important voices and vehicles in their communities, but their circulation and impact were modest.

At the launch of EBONY, many newspapers in the American South, did not publish pictures of blacks as a matter of policy. Large sections of the print media did not report the stirrings that culminated in the civil rights movement, the sit-ins and protests that challenged Jim Crow laws and caused them to be abolished. It was only in the late 1990s that a newspaper in Jackson, Miss, sought to atone for this denial by omission and published supplements chronicling important news stories of the civil rights it had not reported.

Television was just as complicit.

EBONY changed all that. Black people, many of them for the first time, could see black people like themselves as leading achievers and key public figures, in positions they did not know black people could hold and performing roles they never thought black people could play; they saw Africans in their colourful native attires on the world stage as kings and presidents and prime ministers and statesmen.

It fostered black pride. It promoted Black role models and fired black aspirations. Its yearly issue profiling the 100 Most Influential Blacks in America was a parade of excellent role models for aspiring African Americans. And if you wanted to reach the attentive black audience EBONY was the medium that gave you the best value for your advertisement budget.

The coming of the Internet opened the era of free content. Television generally, and cable television in particular, offered round-the-clock programming that gravely undermined newspaper and magazine readership. Advertisers shifted to digital platforms and television even as newspaper production costs soared, forcing such venerable publications like TIME and NEWSWEEK to abandon the business model that had served them so profitably for decades.

EBONY's fortunes contracted in this altered environment. Debts mounted. Operations became unsustainable. Unable to arrange financing or find a buyer, it filed for bankruptcy liquidation three years ago. The sale last month of its photography assets closed what will go down as one of the most eventful chapters in the history of American journalism and black culture.

Unfortunately, generations of Nigerians will probably remember EBONY in an entirely different context

Despite its iconic status in the African American experience, the magazine had no market presence in Nigeria or anywhere outside the United States. Many Nigerians were acquainted with it only by its reputation. Some had read pass-along copies at infrequent intervals, courtesy of Nigerians living in or returning from the United States. You certainly could not pick up a copy at the newsstand as you could TIME and Newsweek.

Still, in 1990, EBONY magazine figured in Nigerian politics the way few foreign journals had done before or since. In the process, it bequeathed the term Ebonygate to the nation's vocabulary of sleaze.

Military president Ibrahim Babangida's benighted Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) had sapped the economy, turning basic needs into luxuries and eviscerating the middle class. Hunger stalked the countryside, and many Nigerians were reduced to rummaging through dustbins for food scraps.

## EBONY, and Ebonygate revisited

Anti-SAP demonstrations, which turned violent in many cities, broke out across the country, fuelled by rumours that Babangida had stashed away some \$3 billion from the national treasury in foreign banks, and that he and his wife owned, among other properties, a diamond watch factory in France.

The organizers cited EBONY magazine as their source.

Conspicuous among the teeming protesters in Lagos was the respected educator and founder of Mayflower School, Ikenne, Dr Tai Solarin, in his trademark floppy hat, khaki shirt and shorts. In an interview he had made some reference to Babangida's rumoured offshore wealth - a key grievance of the demonstrators.

The claim that the story came out of EBONY was implausible through and through. It was not EBONY's fare. But no matter.

State security officials seized Solarin and subjected him to a brutal inquisition on live national television, conducted by Col. Kunle Togun, who had been living under a cloud of suspicion of complicity in the 1985 parcel-bomb murder of the crusading *journalist, Dele Giwa*

What was Solarin's source? Did he verify it? As an educator and an influential citizen, was he unaware that he had an obligation to verify the information so as not to lend his authority to subversive rumours?

Official desperation did not end there. The authorities dispatched a team to Chicago to urge EBONY publisher Johnson to state categorically, for the public record, that at no time had the magazine carried the story attributed to it. Johnson refused the strange demand.

And to this day in Nigeria, Ebonygate carries the resonance of rumour, gossip, or falsehood, a slur on the reputation of the foremost journal of the African American experience that was.

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## Why Nigerian government should kill NBC

PM News

August 21, 2022 Sunday

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**Length:** 2580 words

### **Body**

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The hypothesis which states that words, either written or spoken, are the worst enemy of despots and totalitarian regimes has been tested overtime. Words are lethal, superior to mortars and armaments of war and penetrate deeper than bullets. Words are equally known to eventually precipitate the collapse of despotic regimes. It then stands to reason that dictators must wage war on words.

Merve Buyuksarac found out the above when it was almost too late. Crowned Miss Turkey in 2006, Merve's brush with the imperial power of Recep Tayyip Erdogan began like a joke. On her Instagram page, assuming that poetic license shawled her from the biting proboscis of imperial power, she poured scum at what she referred to as high level corruption and sleaze in Turkey. Couching this in very inviting poetic lines, Merve located Erdogan as the kingpin and epicenter of the rot. Pronto, as the Americans say, she was arrested and on May 31, given a suspended prison sentence of 14 months. Turkey frowns at such impudence of insulting the imperial office of the president. Such affront could net its violator up to four years imprisonment. More than 1800 people have run afoul of this law.

Like Erdogan, Tunisian President from 1987 to 2011, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, widely known as Ben Ali, was ruthless and diffident of the possibilities of free speech. He was dictatorial, repressive and his 23-year rule of Tunisia was signposted by manacles and barbs. Amnesty International, Freedom House and other international human rights group voted Ali's regime as terror personified and his regime authoritarian because he muzzled free speech. Under his watch, Tunisia became a police state and ranked 144th out of 173 countries of the world in repression of free speech.

Ben Ali abridged fundamental freedoms in the bid to sustain his authority. He did this by limiting the spread of information and suppressing citizens who wanted to speak out against his government's multiplicity of violations of human rights. If you dared oppose Ali in the media, you were due for harsh consequences, the least being imprisonment. Apart from arbitrary jailing, he also generously deployed arbitrary disappearance of activists and journalists who had the temerity to speak against his demonic rule. The way he censured and censored free speech was through the control of information that could be channeled past the Tunisian borders. Smuggling books into Tunisia was the only way out for anyone who craved information. But you had to pay the very corrupt Tunisian

## Why Nigerian government should kill NBC

police heavy bribe. If, for any reason, the police failed to play ball and you were caught, the smuggler was liable to a long jail sentence.

When foreign censure was becoming boring and jangling to him, Ben Ali decided that privatization of the Tunisian media would do the magic for his censorship of free speech. This was unbeknown to the rest of the world. The world then gave him unmerited applauses. The claps had not abated by the time he bared his fangs. He ensured that his daughter, Cyrine Ben-Ali, secured ownership of the only internet provider available in Tunisia. Of course, a welter of critical journalism outfits sprung up to take their destinies in their hands. One of such was Kalima. Kalima was a media group that published an online magazine and also had a radio outfit. In 2009, Ali shut Kalima down for being too critical of his government and family. In Tunisia, not only did journalists face heavy censure, Emperor Ali also foisted a regime of heavy police harassment on news disseminators. The ones unlucky to get arrested by his goons were often mercilessly tortured.

On January 14, 2011 however, Ben Ali's cup ran over. Like the proverbial offspring of a cobra that ensures its death, the Arab Spring revolution suddenly erupted, with Tunisia as its test case. On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, the later-to-be-famous street vendor, suddenly set himself on fire and his self-immolation became a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution, christened Arab Spring, ultimately setting alight the whole of the Arab enclave. It became a vote of no confidence on autocratic leaders. Bouazizi's wares had been confiscated, as well as being humiliated and harassed by a Tunisian municipal official and her aides. In the midst of this month-long protest, sensing that his time was up, Ali and his wife, Leila and their three children, fled to Saudi Arabia. He subsequently died on September 19, 2019 in exile.

Despots and totalitarian governments all over the world, including those who shawl themselves with veneers of democracy, cannot stand free speech. Their modern day variant dictators are smart enough to know that a war on freedom of speech is a war against their existential survival.

It is why despots' first priority in government is to impose restrictions on freedom of speech. This was what the Russian Bolsheviks did in 1917. The very day after the coup d'etat that ushered the regime into power, its first assignment was limiting freedom of speech by proclaiming the 'Decree on the Press,' through which newspapers considered to be 'sowing discord by libelous distortion of facts' were shut down. It was same way that, a few months after its entry into power in 1933, the German National Socialist Government began attacks on books and acquisition of knowledge. It burnt books in their millions, followed by an introduction of knee-jerk censorship by its Ministry of Propaganda. If you check the ratings of press freedom by international organizations as Freedom House, communist states like Vietnam, Cuba, China, North Korea and harsh despotic governments like those of Syria, Iran, Belarus, Sudan and Turkmenistan lead from the rear. To ensure their survival, totalitarian states pad themselves up with very strong propaganda machine with which they shore up an obvious dearth of free speech and credible information, all geared towards the manipulation of the people's minds.

Asked what his disposition would be to free speech when he forcefully took over power from Shehu Shagari at the twilight of 1983, a dour General Muhammadu Buhari unapologetically proclaimed, like a tiger about to tear flesh off an animal's bones, that he would, with his bloodthirsty military Decree incisors, peel off the flesh of free speech. He said this in an interview with the trio of **Dele Giwa**, Yakubu Mohammed and Ray Ekpu on February 6, 1984. For Nigerians to now expect a man who had such untainted disdain for free speech in 1984 to have purged himself of his self-constitutive baying for blood of press freedom would be expecting a tiger to morph out of its bone-crushing tigritude.

Military despots like General Buhari knew that the Nigerian press has a very rich history, indeed, that the Nigerian press is older than and predates the Nigerian state. With the installation of the first printing press in 1846 by the Presbyterian Church in Calabar and the founding, eight years after, precisely in 1854, of the Iwe Irohin by the Reverend Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society, (CSM) the Nigeria which came out of the 1914 amalgamation was younger in historical antecedents than what is today the Nigerian press.

Since 1846, the press has been a formidable influence in the growth of Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of the patrons of the Nigerian press, who published the ubiquitous West African Pilot newspaper, while eulogizing the history of

## Why Nigerian government should kill NBC

pioneers of Nigerian press, said their activities were 'identical with the intellectual and material developments of Nigeria', while also submitting that Nigeria produced a 'galaxy of immortal journalists!' who played a unique part 'in this corner of the earth in the great crusade for human freedom.'

. Thereafter, for 35 years, the Nigerian press moved with Nigeria in its travails under the emergent military rule. Since 1999 when full-blown democracy returned to Nigeria, the press has had a wider horizon. There are more modern equipment and even multiplicity of platforms for mass communication. The radio is no longer strictly controlled by the Federal Government as the Radio Nigeria, a federally owned organization, nor is television strictly owned by government. Social media has widened the space and made information dissemination available on the web of the wide world. The radio has today grown to become a very powerful octopus of the Nigerian media, with the multiplicity of radio ownership.

As said earlier, to run a regime which unpretentiously simulates the totalitarian government in China or Turkmenistan, in a 21st century world that has total aversion for despots, Buhari needed a character like Lai Mohammed. Adolf Hitler also needed Lai's professional ancestor, German Nazi politician and Gauleiter of Berlin, Paul Joseph Goebbels. Goebbels had turned the spleen of the world in his official assignment as chief propagandist for the Nazi Party, as well as Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933 to 1934. To be able to clone Goebbels effectively, Lai must have mopped up all essays on this unexampled propaganda warlord. Buhari must have been fascinated by Lai's very mercurial showing as ACN and APC propaganda terror machine. Today, Lai has had an exemplary mastery of the game of divisiveness, crass governmental lies and artful manipulations.

The first thing Lai did upon being announced minister of information was to do a generational circum-guessing of what Goebbels would do if he were to be nominated by an Adolf in a 21st century Nigeria. Unlike Europe or Germany of the 1930s, the print media has lost its savour massively. The hugely pillaged Nigerian economy and the unfavourable global economic climate have largely affected the purchasing power of readers. Newsprint has risen to somewhere close to the stratosphere where only a few hands could reach. While the Nigerian print press recorded over a century of pervasive influence, respect and contributions to communication, there is no doubting the fact that its influence is waning. Some extremist views even submit that newspaper press is nearing its extinction.

The advent of the social media and internet usage has relegated hardcopy news to a secondary role, prompting a navigation of the print press online and de-emphasis of printing. The internet then became breeding ground for billions of citizens of the world and a borderless ground of opportunity to share opinions freely without let. It also became a floor for exchange of personal and group communication. Like the biblical account of the devil that is roaring, seeking who to devour, despots also moved with citizens to the internet. It became a hunting ground for tyrants whose disdain for freedom of expression is as rotund as a bed bug that has amply sucked its victim's blood.

All dictators needed to do was to transit from their old tactics of silencing dissidents and journalists into a new tactic of muzzling authors of tweets and posts that affront their quest to continue to luster in their imperial fiefdom. The road to repression by totalitarians today is paved with bile and hatred for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram aficionados. However, the pestilence of dwindling believability of news received from the internet, through the orgy of fake news, has cast a huge pall on cyber information. For totalitarians and despots, the only alternative left is for them to activate their terror on the broadcast media of radio and television.

Broadcasting is unique and is growing in leaps and bounds as means of mass communication. While its effect is instantaneous and possesses tremendous power to penetrate a multiplicity of locales in a matter of minutes, this power is rivaled only by social media as means of communication. The power of the broadcast media is also in that, voices, videos and pictures can be transmitted to a large number of listeners and viewers who reside in thousands of kilometers distance.

Broadcast media's pervasive influence is a threat to despots and budding Haitian Papa and Baby Doc regimes like Buhari's. So when, towards the twilight of last week, through its puppet, the National Broadcasting Commission, (NBC) the Buhari government revoked the licenses of 52 broadcast media houses, it merely thought out of its

## Why Nigerian government should kill NBC

despotic box. It was same thing Tunisian Ben Ali did by appointing his daughter as sole licensee of internet broadcast.

Like all modern day despots who fashion novel methods of abridging free speech, Buhari chose an innocuous, economic weapon to deal with press freedom and free speech. This tactic falls in line with what the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar did to poet Maung Saungkha in Burma. Writing on his Facebook post that he had a tattoo of Myint Swe, Acting President of Myabnmar, on his penis, Saungkha was arrested, tried and found guilty for defamation. He was then sentenced to a six-month jail term. It later turned out that the poet lied - he actually possessed no such tattoo! To the Swe puppet and the puppeteers however, the mere fact that Saungkha made reference to such 'heinous' issue in an off-color poem courted the imperial wrath of the state.

NBC's ostensible grouse with the broadcast outfits was that 'they failed to renew their licenses as required by law.' Saddled with the role of regulating the broadcast industry, NBC has acted more as a cudgel in the hands of Buhari's Goebbels in its arbitrary imposition of fines on TV and radio stations over programmes that questioned the legitimacy of the Buhari government. After paying a huge sum for licence, the NBC again arbitrarily demands a 2.5% to be paid by these broadcast houses for every year of their operation. This is in an era where electricity supply is near zero and where diesel is sold for about N850 a litre. Nigerians have also queried the quixotic addition of the line, 'in view of this development, the continued operation of the debtor stations is illegal and constitutes a threat to national security,' to reasons why the NBC had to revoke the licences of the outfits.

Unknown to it, by shrinking the space against credible sources of information as represented by the 52 broadcast outfits which operated under the radar of the NBC, the Buhari government gave vent to a goblin it had repelled from mutating in the Nigerian space - multiplicity of fake news. As opposed to its manual of operation as broadcast regulator in its advisory capacity to the federal government, the NBC has become the Rottweiler of the Buhari government. It is neither autonomous, independent nor does it shun interference. The over-politicization of the commission and how the so-called regulator has morphed into Lai Mohammed's attack dog is a miserable mutation. By hacking those 52 broadcast media with its sledgehammer, Buhari has rendered many Nigerians jobless.

When you look at the Nigerian governmental firmament to find out where the repressive weapon of the Buhari government against free speech is hung, look no further: It is in NBC! The government does not want to hound individuals into prison as it did with Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, via draconian Decree 4 of 1983 in its first coming. This has the tendency of attracting unnecessary attention and international odium. Its target now is institutional repression. That is why Nigerians must not take this arbitrary despotism cloaked in the shawl of economic generation for the Federal Government lying low. Our ultimate must be to see the end of NBC.

\*Festus Adedayo, journalist, lawyer and public affairs analyst, writes from Ibadan

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## Tony Momoh: A Statesman

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

April 23, 2019 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1719 words

**Byline:** Our Correspondents

### **Body**

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Prince Tony Momoh, the 165th child of King Momoh I of Auchi is 80 years old. I have known him for 42 years now. As a young reporter in the Nigerian Chronicle in Calabar I was one of the ambitious young men who wanted to sit on the editorial chair when it fell vacant. Six other people had the same ambition. So our General Manager, Chief Effiong Essien, an ex-staff of the Daily Times, thought it was a good idea to bring a respected *journalist* from a respected newspaper to come and do the needful. For Essien who was a stickler for excellence it was a nice way of keeping ethnic titans at bay if the decision as to who should edit the two titles in the Corporation was done by a prominent Editor as Tony Momoh, who was at the time the Editor of Daily Times. In the 70s, if you sent a young person to buy you a newspaper you didn't need to tell him the name of the paper. He knew that it was the Daily Times. That is the level of reverence with which the Daily Times was held at the time. That reverence was shared by any man who sat on the chair as its Editor. He was seen among journalists at the time as the *primus inter pares*.

Momoh was brought into Calabar to conduct a written, practical test for the seven of us who wanted the job of the Daily and Sunday Editors. I applied for the post of the Sunday Editor but we all took the same examination. The next day we all went to the Public Service Commission for an interview. Momoh was there too. When my turn to be interviewed came I was told "you came first in the written exam." I said I didn't know. And they asked why I did not apply for the post of Editor of the Daily paper. I told them we were informed that the Ministry of Information had its preferred candidate for that office. They said there was no such thing, that they would take their decision based on the written exam and the interview. They asked me the difference between a daily and Sunday newspaper. I told them. They asked me "can you edit a daily newspaper?" I replied in the affirmative. The job – a job I did not apply for – was given to me much to the dismay of the ethnic jingoists who were pushing for their candidates. I was told that Prince Momoh told the interviewing panel that since they bothered to bring him to come and conduct a written test it was better to stick to the result of the test. Those were the days when merit was a cherished asset in Nigeria's public service. But on assumption of duty as the Editor of the Nigerian Chronicle I realised that my problems were just beginning. I had won the battle but not the war. The fellows in the production department who were largely from the tribe that wanted their son to be the editor gave me hell. I had to report them to the General Manager, Chief Effiong Essien, who called them to order.

### Tony Momoh: A Statesman

Tony Momoh had been almost everything there was to be in the journalism business, editor, a trainer, a manager and a member of the Press Council under the venerable Alade Odunewu.

When he was appointed Minister of Information by President Ibrahim Babangida he had a rough time from his colleagues who thought that he was the mastermind behind the enactment of a Press Council decree that was the equivalent of a censorship code. They frustrated the functioning of the Press Council decree until it was reviewed. The day the revised version was to be launched I asked Alade Odunewu whether he had read it, he answered in the negative. I was worried that we had all assembled to validate a Press Council whose content we were not aware of. Alade Odunewu said to me that Momoh had assured him that there was nothing to worry about. That was the level of trust that Momoh was able to extract from his colleagues even on an issue that was crucial to the survival of their industry. The press Council issue resurfaced during the Administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar. At that time Malam Ismaila Isa was the President of the NPAN and I was the General Secretary. We labored to panel-beat the Press Council decree into a tolerable shape but the officials thought they knew better. They injected all kinds of obnoxious clauses that made nonsense of our efforts at reaching an acceptable decision. It was a big surprise that the 8th National Assembly had a brain wave and dusted up the idea in quite a draconian form at a time that the revolution in digital journalism has made the Press Council idea an anathema.

When the Head of State, Sani Abacha, came up with the idea of the National Mass Media Commission and Press Court in the 1995 Draft Constitution it was Momoh, who we called upon to look at the fine prints and tell us the unseen implications. We held series of meetings which led to the publication of the position of the Nigerian Press Organisation. It was a testy period for the Nigerian press. On one occasion, Uncle Sam Amuka, publisher of the Vanguard and Life Patron of the NPAN, said to me: "Ray, you have to draft the communique for these meetings at home and bring so that we do not waste too much time at these meetings. If we spend too much time discussing, we may all be rounded up and put in prison." His advice made me a proactive Secretary of the group.

When Momoh was the Minister of Information he did something that I cannot forget. He called me to come and see him in his office in Lagos. When I got there he told me that President Babangida was planning to go to France in a month's time. He needed a document published in English and French for the trip. His officials in the Ministry told him they would need three months to produce it. And he did not have three months to spare. So he said to himself, I know a group of people who can do it within two weeks, the Newswatch Boys. That is why I sent for you, he said. I waited in his office while he arranged for the funds for the execution of the job which had a two-week deadline. I collected the money and the materials and told him he could go to bed, that we would deliver on schedule. I came back to the office and told my people it was an emergency and that if the Minister thought we had the magic we needed to let him know that indeed we had it. We delivered the job to Momoh's house within five days – on a Sunday. He trusted us and we delivered nine days before the deadline. When I called him on that Sunday to say I wanted to come and see him he said "I hope there is no problem." I said, "There is a problem. That's why I want to come and see you." When I got to his house he was in panic. He asked "what is the problem?" I said, "the problem is that I have come to deliver the job." We both laughed. He was eminently relieved.

**Dele Giwa**, the first Editor in Chief of Newswatch was from Edo State, the Auchi area from which Momoh comes. Both of them had worked in the Daily Times. Both of them admired each other's professionalism and dedication to duty and got close. When we started Newswatch, Momoh was the Minister of Information and **Dele** related to him well. When **Dele** was killed in the parcel bomb incident Momoh was saddened by it and promised, without knowing who might have done the deed, that the government would investigate the assassination. As events unfolded and we pointed accusing fingers at some government officials Momoh backtracked. He said that a "special probe would serve no useful purpose." I was sorry for him because he was in a difficult situation, the equivalent of being between the rock and the hard place. I knew there was nothing he could do. He could not set up a commission of inquiry on the matter by himself nor could he compel his bosses to do so. I am sure it was a sad moment for him too. He lost a man who was like his brother in such circumstance and he could do nothing to get to the bottom of the matter. The next challenge for him was on the burial of **Dele**. The family had decided that we could bury him in Lagos. Momoh stepped into the issue and wrote a letter to me saying that by their custom eminent persons are never buried in a foreign land. I told him it wasn't his decision but that of **Dele**'s family. Eventually the corpse was taken to Ugbekpe Ekperi, **Dele**'s village, for burial because several people appealed to the family not to create a situation where there would be a riot in Lagos if they insisted on burying him in Lagos.

### Tony Momoh: A Statesman

Momoh has fought many battles in his illustrious life. He challenged the Senate under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Wayas on the issue of disclosing information received in confidence. The Senate had summoned him when he was Editor of Daily Times to appear before it. Rather than subject himself to the possible harassment that awaited him he took the Senate to Court asking the court to declare that a **journalist** had the right to withhold information that he acquired in confidence.

Momoh, on one occasion, had challenged an armed robber who attacked him. Momoh disarmed him and took the rifle to the police. If you needed the evidence of his courage, there it is.

His foray into politics apparently surprised many of his friends and admirers because he doesn't look like the political type. How could the crookery in Nigeria politics have any drawing power for him? Apparently, he went into it because of his belief in the Buhari mystique or the faith in his touted saintliness. He was Chairman of the Congress for Progressive Change, Buhari's party which did not make any significant electoral impact. With the merger of some parties into the APC Momoh also went along, staying by Buhari's side all the way. He made a famous statement to the effect that if President Buhari does not perform they should be stoned. The jury is still out. Even though the government has not performed wonderfully, no one has stoned them apparently because, as civilised people, we do not want the Taliban punishment formula in our country. So Momoh and co have escaped the stoning that he asked for but we have been stoning them with our tongues.

Something that has to be said about Momoh's foray into politics is that he has conducted himself decently, leaving the established rabble rousers in his party to do their dirty business. I think everything considered Prince Tony Momoh, **journalist**, lawyer and politician deserves, by his public and private conduct, to be recognised as a statesman.

The post Tony Momoh: A Statesman appeared first on Independent Newspapers Nigeria.

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## We need selfless, incorruptible leaders —Cleric

Nigerian Tribune

September 24, 2017 Sunday

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### **Body**

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The Archbishop of Ecclesiastical Province of Lagos, His Grace, Dr Michael Olusina Fape, on Sunday, said that Nigeria needs selfless leaders to bring back its lost glory.

Just as he added that the blood of innocent Nigerians gruesomely murdered in the likes of the former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, wife of the late acclaimed winner of June 12 1993 Presidential election, Chief MKO Abiola, Kudirat and veteran journalist, Dele Giwa, Pa Alfred Rewane are crying for justice.

He stated this in his sermon in his sermon to mark the 57th Independence anniversary of the country held at the Cathedral of St. Peters', Ake, Abeokuta, the nation's leaders, both past and present, should be held responsible for the woes of the country.

He described them as 'corrupt' and 'clueless' leaders, while expressing regrets that the country had been slowed down because of bad welfare packages for retirees, poor educational sector, bad infrastructure and poor health sector.

The cleric noted, 'We have been seeking the face of God, but have not turned from our wickedness. We have shed bloods of many innocent souls in this nation. From Dele Giwa to Bola Ige to Alfred Rewane to Funsho Williams to our Kudirat Abiola and many more. You can still count on. And the blood of these innocent ones are crying for vengeance.'

'Should we continue in sins and ask for forgiveness, absolutely no.'

He said that for the country to have survived the civil war, coups and counter coups and 17 years of uninterrupted democracy calls for celebration.

The cleric urged Nigerians to seek and pray for forgiveness.

'Many nations went into civil war but never came out successfully. We went through it and by grace of God, here we are today. There have been military coups and counter coups. And eventually, we have come to the period of democratic dispensation. For 17 years unbroken and beyond, our democracy has been intact by grace of God, Halleluyah. Someone says the worst democracy is better than best military rule. There have been accusations and counter accusations, but in spite of all the Lord has kept us together.'

We need selfless, incorruptible leaders —Cleric

'As we are celebrating 57 years of our existence as an independent nation, I want to tell you my brothers and sisters, Nigeria is sick. There is no doubt about that. Then, when can we actually say a nation is sick and it is in need of healing? A nation is sick when it is confused on which path is to tread giving the enormity of the challenges that are bedeviling it because of the clueless leaders at the helms of affairs whether past or present governments.

'Brethren, can't we say a nation is sick when the leaders know what to do but because of arrogance and selfish interest they have put those they are ruling perpetually under their feet to be trampled upon because of the power they exercise? Someone says nothing makes armed robbers different from ordinary person rather than the gun they are using.

'When is a nation sick? Is it a time like this when there are agitations for restructuring right from the South West? Is it a time like this when there is agitation for Republic of Biafra in the South East? Is it a time like this when there is environmental degradation in the South-South?

'Is it a time like this when the minority Christians in the North are not able to exercise their religious rights? Brethren, I want to say Nigeria is sick but God will heal us.'

The state deputy governor, Mrs Yetunde Onanuga, shared the same opinion with Fape that all is not well with Nigeria.

She, therefore, cautioned that against any form of violence act and sued for peace among Nigerians.

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2017

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## 50 Moon years and Soyinka

The Sun (Nigeria)

July 20, 2019 Saturday

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**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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One man sat comfortably on his airplane seat. Another man came and commanded the old man to stand up because that seat was his. He brought out a partly torn boarding pass "certificate of occupancy" to prove ownership of the disputed seat, his little land, his temporary kingdom in the plane. The old man whose [...]

The post 50 Moon years and Soyinka appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

One man sat comfortably on his airplane seat. Another man came and commanded the old man to stand up because that seat was his. He brought out a partly torn boarding pass "certificate of occupancy" to prove ownership of the disputed seat, his little land, his temporary kingdom in the plane. The old man whose whole life has been a life of drama—literally and metaphorically—finds himself in another drama of the absurd. Knowing that the young man is right, he complies and drags up his 85-year-old body to take another seat in this combined error of comedy and tragedy called tragicomedy.

Another man watching the surreal drama tries to take it all in but he finds it difficult to understand, wondering: How can young men of today behave like this to an old man? Doesn't this guy know Prof. Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Literature Prizewinner and Nigeria's most famous brand? The man watching is the son of a journalist. He has learnt enough from his father to know that absurdity is the real definition of news—what the eyes cannot believe. Surreptitiously, he takes a picture of the incident and posts it on social media in an age where everyone with a mobile phone is automatically a crack reporter and an ace photographer. In a twinkling of an eye, the picture of Soyinka sitting, reading, next to the recalcitrant young man had gone viral, triggering, a national debate about right and wrong. Kudos to Tonye Cole, son of an eminent journalist Dr. Patrick Dele Cole, the man who discovered my late editor and mentor Dele Giwa and brought him back home from America where he was working with the New York Times as a news assistant to join the Daily Times. For his scoop, I will nominate Tonye Cole for a journalism prize. I will also offer him a copy of my 50 WORLD EDITORS, a book of conversations with

## 50 Moon years and Soyinka

newspaper editors and news media gurus around the world—editors from prestigious newspapers like the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, New York Daily News, The Times of London, CNN, the Financial Times plus news media icons in Nigeria including Segun Osoba, John Momoh of Channels TV and Nduka Obaigbena who was 60 on Sunday, all sharing their stories of adventures in journalism. I had earlier interviewed Tonye Cole, an oil magnate from the Sahara Group and featured him in my new book 50 NIGERIA'S BOARDROOM LEADERS—Lessons On Corporate Governance and Strategy where he shared his interesting boardroom learning curve in a chapter titled: From Atlas Mara to Sahara With Boardroom Wisdom. But this is a story for another day.

Today, I have two things on my mind: 50th anniversary of man on the moon and Soyinka at 85. It all started with a visionary American President John F. Kennedy's decision to be the first to launch his nation into "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth" thereby beating the Soviets who were ahead in the space race. He made his moon speech on May 25, 1961. And on 16 July 1969, Apollo II took off from earth and landed on the moon on July 20, 1969 with that famous speech by Neil Armstrong: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Today is exactly the 50th anniversary of the day man first stepped on the moon and broke the virginity of the Luna goddess and all the myths of the moon as ancient as time.

In the book Moon Sense—you can Google it—another Soyinka by name Soyinka Ogunbusola (no relation of Wole Soyinka) takes us back to the era before moon landing when from time immemorial the moon influenced the affairs of man and life on earth in general. Soyinka Ogunbusola wrote in Moon Sense: "Man, mineral, plant, bodies of water; the moon has her undeniable affect over it. In West Africa our ancestors the Fon people of Togo knew when to plant seeds in the earth by considering the moon phases, the ancient Yoruba of Nigeria knew when to perform certain initiations according to the phases of the moon. Those seafaring ancestors in Mali knew the strength of the tides varied greatly with the lunar phases."

As at the time of the moon landing, our literary giant Wole Soyinka was a young radical of 35 and a prisoner of conscience accused of collaborating with the Biafrans by travelling secretly to meet with Gen. Ojukwu in the bid to stop the spilling of blood. An act that should have won him a Nobel Peace Prize long, long ago. But they kept him in prison, in solitude. "Solitary confinement is not a very pleasant experience, especially prolonged solitary confinement," Soyinka says in a conversation with Christopher Bigsby. "I stayed in a little hut, in a little compound, all by myself, with depersonalized guards looking in from time to time, who were scared they would be shot if they were caught talking to me, because the war was still on and I was supposed to be a dangerous war criminal. So it was a little bit rough. But I evolved certain mental exercises, to which I adhered religiously. I did physical exercises and set myself problems. I tried to reinvent mathematics, for instance. That was fun, great fun. I loathed mathematics in school, loathed it, but now I became fascinated by many problems. I think I even discovered the law of combinations all on my own in that prison."

In prison, it was Soyinka's ex-wife Laide who first broke the news of the moon landing to him. "Wole was being held in solitary confinement," she told us in the debut story that launched Weekend Concord, the first paper I edited in 1989—some thirty good years ago. "He got the directorship of the School of Drama in Ibadan and so we moved to Ibadan in 1967. That was when the Gowon incident happened. I think by August he was already being looked for. He therefore wasn't able to take over fully at the School of Drama. He was in custody, being transferred from prison to prison. I was able to see him in Lagos. I remember the fuss of the security personnel who took me to him, how the man was going round and round to confuse me so that I wouldn't know the way. I saw him once again when he was in Kaduna. I told him the Americans had made it to the moon. He was so excited. It was quite a worrying time for us. Since I grew up as a radical myself, I could appreciate what he was doing: these are the people who really change the society for the better. Wole's detention was very destabilizing for the family. As lovers it would have been okay, but with the kids, the family needed some stability. I then had to play both father and mother at the formative period of the kids and I also had to attend to my job. Somebody had to warm the home front.

"I remember writing an article at the time to deny Tony Enahoro's claim (as the mouthpiece of government) that Wole had tried to escape. It was that time they transferred him to Kaduna. I said this might be a ruse to try and eliminate him. The papers were afraid to publish my rejoinder, especially the Daily Times and Morning Post. They

## 50 Moon years and Soyinka

were attacking Wole on all sides to destroy his reputation with people, since he was so popular. It was surprisingly the New Nigerian that was able to carry almost full length my open letter to Gowon. It was unexpected of a northern paper. I was very surprised.

"Radio Biafra carried it at a time that Wole was dead in prison custody. Achebe was said to have read the obituary on Radio Biafra. I didn't hear it but people said that they heard it and they were worried because they said if Achebe could read that kind of obituary, Wole must have died. I insisted on seeing him. He was able to smuggle out messages now and again from prison."

All this happened 50 years ago and I needed to recapture these stories to remind some of our youths today who never knew Soyinka and what he stood for. And to Soyinka, let me end with a quote from I Samuel 20 v 5: "Tomorrow is the new moon." May your seat not be empty, sir. And like Moses who was a hundred and twenty years, may your eyes not dim. Nigeria still needs you. Happy birthday Prof! Wishing you more years ahead in good health.

The post 50 Moon years and Soyinka appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## The black monk (3)

Business Day

April 1, 2019 Monday

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Length: 1277 words

### **Body**

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What was hilarious was how when the coup that toppled President Shehu Shagari on 31st December 1983 was being planned, one of the ring-leaders Major-General Ibrahim Babangida was despatched to go and brief the Chief of Army Staff, Lt-General Mohammed Inuwa Wushishi who was his kinsman.

Babangida informed Wushishi that a coup d'état was imminent but he would come to no harm and that he would become the new Head of State. Little did Wushishi realise that he was being sold a dummy. As soon as the coup was successfully executed, Lt-General Wushishi was dumped and replaced by none other than Major-General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.

The military have a long history of mysterious deaths - from friendly fire to air crashes. Till today, the C130 air crash which occurred on 26 September 1992 remains a mystery although there is no shortage of wild speculation. In one fell swoop an entire cadre of top military officers were wiped out.

As for the ADC crash which claimed the lives of the former principal (Headmaster) of King's College, Lagos, Mr. Ajumogobia and one of the most distinguished old boys of the college, Professor Claude Ake who was a fierce and unrelenting critic of the military, the rumour mill went into overdrive that it was the handiwork of the military.

As for the bombing of ***journalist Dele Giwa*** who was one of the founders of the formidable 'Newswatch' magazine, the film went to great lengths to dwell on both the circumstantial and substantive evidence of the military getting its own back - a reversal of the long-standing dictum that the pen is mightier than the sword. Obviously, whoever came up with that conclusion did not reckon with prevailing circumstances and the availability of lethal weapons ranging from AK47s to bombs as well as an arsenal of non-detectable poisons and toxins.

Another remarkable aspect of the film is the menu of several accounts of the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed on Friday 13th February 1976.

Here are a few samples:

'How General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated on Friday, February 13, 1976'

By - Tunde Ososanya

### The black monk (3)

On the fateful day that life was snuffed out of the head of state and his ADC, Lt Akintunde Akinterinwa, they had left Murtala's personal house in Ikoyi for Dodan barracks, the seat of government, when the coup plotters attacked them.

According to the lone survivor and orderly to the head of state, Staff Sergeant Michael Otuwu, who recalled the event of that day in an interview with The Authority Daily, the head of state was seated beside his ADC, Lt Akinterinwa, and he (Otuwu) was directly seated in the front passenger's seat, while Sergeant Adamu Michika was behind the wheels.

In the interview, the orderly disclosed that their vehicle stopped before a row of cars at a junction, adding that there was a man in traditional attire (who would later be identified as Dimka) who approached the vehicle, removed his robe and pulled out an AK 47 rifle, shooting the driver in the head.

The vehicle had automatically been disabled after the driver was killed, then other soldiers dressed the same way as Dimka, ran toward the car sprayed bullets on it.

The orderly said: 'The Head of State, his ADC and I all ducked while the shooting lasted.'

He said he heard the gunmen running towards the Radio House, adding that a few minutes later he noticed that the injured ADC opened his door, apparently to come to the aid of the equally injured Commander-in-Chief.

It was the opened door, the orderly said, that alerted the assailants that the people in the vehicle were not dead. So, they returned and opened fire on the car to finish the job.

The orderly said that Generals TY Danjuma and Olusegun Obasanjo were lucky because they were also targets but escaped because they did not leave for their offices as early as Murtala, adding that they heard the radio announcement which may have altered their movement plans.

Otuwu added: 'I was his orderly throughout to his last day during the Dimka coup. I was inside the car with him when he was killed. On the morning of that February 13, we were going to the office. Sergeant Adamu Michika was the driver; Lt. Akintunde Akinterinwa, his ADC, sat behind the driver. As an orderly, I was in front with the driver. While the head of state sat behind me - I was the one who opens the door for him. That fateful day I came up in the morning to carry him to the office in Dodan barracks.

We got to the former secretariat, now at Ikoyi, which was under construction. Before the place they call Alagbon junction, near the labour office. The official car was a Mercedes Benz 600. It is still at the national museum. There were about four or five vehicles in front of us. You know at that junction there was traffic. We didn't go with sirens. During his time, we didn't go with escorts with the accompanying out-riders, road-closed signs and all that.

So, when we got to the Alagbon junction, the traffic warden stopped the vehicle and we were in the queue. We were the fifth or sixth vehicle behind the forward vehicles that were stopped. That secretariat was under construction. They put zincks around the compound behind that secretariat. Then some soldiers came in Agbada carrying AK-47 rifles.

They wore uniforms but covered them with Agbada. They had their Kalashnikovs with Agbada cover-up in form of camouflage. We never knew they were even waiting for us. Then one soldier from Golf Road shot and got our driver, Sergeant Michika. Our motor was neutralized. Between me and the driver was an arm-rest. On that arm-rest was Oga's brief case. In this brief case he puts civil dress he could use as needed. When he wants to go to Mosque, he does not like going back to Ikoyi to change.

Then some other soldiers converged on us. I can't recall their number. They began to spray us from the back. All of us took cover. I fell on top of the driver; the blood of the driver covered my head. They thought the bullet got my head.

After the first shooting and without return of fire they must have assumed that we were all dead. The shooting was actually in two phases. They ran to the NBC to announce the assassination. They shared themselves into three.

## The black monk (3)

There was a group waiting for Obasanjo when he was about to go to the office. Also another group was waiting for T.Y. Danjuma at Bourdillon - our own was at Ikoyi Road. It happened we were the first target that moved early from the house to the office.

Before Obasanjo and T.Y. Danjuma moved to their offices they have already heard the radio announcement. By the time of the first shooting, we being the target and their running to NBC to go and announce that they have already finished their assignment, the ADC who was still alive, thinking they were gone, opened the door of the Benz.

In the first spraying of the car, except the driver who was killed, the three of us were injured but not dead. On observing the car door opening, one of the attackers, still within range, a major, called to the others: 'he never die, he never die'. He was calling his group to return.

This time around when they came back they finished their entire magazines. That was what happened. They carried everybody to the mortuary at Igbozere hospital, not far from Kam Salem police headquarters. Because of the extreme cold of the mortuary, my left hand started shaking and one of the attendants saw it and called the nurses or doctors and said somebody was still alive.

From there they checked and confirmed that I was still breathing. So, they had to look for a vehicle to carry me to Dodan barracks. From Dodan barracks they looked for an ambulance and carried me to a hospital, Awolowo road hospital, a military hospital.'

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2019

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## **My Journey: A Personal Story by Kingsley Moghalu**

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

July 26, 2021 Monday

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**Length:** 1770 words

### **Body**

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104 views | Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu | July 26, 2021

As a young man out of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Enugu Campus) in the mid-80s, I consciously sought and acquired experience that would position me for leadership on the world stage and in my country. First I did my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) assignment as a Legal Officer at Shell Nigeria HQ in Lagos.

First class global multinational. Dominant in Nigeria's petroleum industry. I worked hard as a "Corper" and was kept very professionally busy by my supervisors Dr. V.O. Achimu the Company Secretary and Head of Legal, and Mrs. Efe Omole, a senior corporate lawyer in Shell. Then I joined Newswatch, founded by Nigeria's most influential journalists of that era, the quartet Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, and Yakubu Mohammed, as its general counsel. In media, 'twas THE PLACE.

To further internationalize my CV, and doubling as a lawyer/journalist, I became a special correspondent for influential foreign newspapers and magazines of the era such as South magazine, Christian Science Monitor, and Africa News (today's AllAfrica Global Media). But I wanted, as I put it on my CV as my goal, "a career of distinction in international affairs". Possibly in the Nigerian Foreign Service, following the footsteps of my now-deceased dad, but preferably in an international organization like the United Nations, Commonwealth Secretariat, or in the Organization of African Unity (now African Union). That meant, at the very least, getting a master's degree. From where? I thought it through, and had been advised by my own research and by mentors that one of the best moves for such a career was to obtain a master's from the prestigious Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Massachusetts, USA.

I applied while working at Newswatch. I was admitted in 1990, but could not afford the \$25,000 tuition fee. But I was determined. I deferred the admission by one year, and started looking for money. All the rich businessmen I approached turned me down.

Frustrated, I wrote to Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi, immediate past Foreign Minister of Nigeria in the Ibrahim Babangida government. Akinyemi was an alumnus of The Fletcher School, having obtained his master's degree there in 1966 and then gone on to Oxford University for his Ph.D.

## My Journey: A Personal Story by Kingsley Moghalu

He replied and gave me an appointment to see him (no email then, everything was by snail mail! so all this took several days!). I met him in his office then on Victoria Island, introduced myself and submitted my CV. He read it with interest, and was impressed.

"Well, young man", he said, "I don't have the kind of money that will enable me pay your fees, but I'm impressed you were admitted to The Fletcher School. I will write to the school and recommend you for some sort of support and let's see how they respond". I was relieved.

This "Big Man" did not know the struggling young man from Adam, but had given me audience and was actually trying to help. "God, I am in your hands" I prayed silently. He asked me to come back & take a copy of the letter he wrote. I did. In two short, powerfully constructed paragraphs of his letter addressed to Professor Jeswald Salacuse, Dean of The Fletcher School at the time, Akinyemi introduced me as "a future leader in Africa", and said my impressive CV at the young age of 27 was an indicator of this assessment in his view. He then asked the school to consider me for financial support to enrol.

Two months later I received a letter from Fletcher awarding me the Joan Gillespie Fellowship for identified future leaders from India, Nigeria and Algeria. Now to get a visa and leave, Ray Ekpu, my boss at Newswatch, and Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, Managing Director of The Guardian at the time, introduced me to the United States Embassy in Nigeria. The American Embassy was impressed with my admission to The Fletcher School , a training ground for many American and world leaders in diplomacy, politics, business, military and security affairs. The embassy asked me to send over my passport but not bother to come physically to their office in Victoria Island, Lagos. They stamped my student visa and on top of it, awarded me a travel grant that covered my air travel ticket to the US!

When I arrived at Tufts University, the world opened up. I worked hard to excel academically and survive financially, serving two professors as their research assistant and somewhat envious of the American students from wealthy homes who had credit cards given them by their parents and did not need to work.

From The Fletcher School I joined the UN, my dream career. I started as a junior Associate Officer and rose to the rank of Director and later served on a special assignment at the political rank of Under-Secretary-General. From conflict resolution and nation building assignments in Cambodia, at UN Headquarters in New York on the Angola, Rwanda and Somalia Desks under the supervision of Kofi Annan, back to the field in Croatia and later as Legal Adviser and Spokesman of the International Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, and then to the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland as Head of the Global Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Team at the \$20 billion Global Fund in which I also played risk management roles, it was a versatile, satisfying and successful career.

In 2006 while I was based in Geneva with WHO, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed me a member of the high-level Redesign Panel on the UN Internal Justice System. Working at UN HQ in New York for six months with Mary Gaudron , our chairperson and an Australian Supreme Court Justice, Louise Otis, Canadian Appeals Court Judge, eminent Egyptian international lawyer Professor Ahmed El-Kosheri, and Diego Garcia Sayan, former Foreign Minister of Peru, we overhauled the internal dispute resolution (between staff and management), accountability and transparency framework governing the world body's 60,000 staff around the world as a core component of management reform. The UN General Assembly ratified our recommendations and voted them into UN administrative law. It was a watershed moment in the history of internal UN governance.

While in Geneva, I enrolled in January 2004 as a part-time PH.D. candidate in International Relations at the London School of Economics (LSE). I wrote my 500-page doctoral dissertation in 12 months, shattering all previous records at the university, and graduated in October 2005 with a doctoral degree. In December 2008 I resigned from the UN after nearly 17 years and founded Sogato Strategies, a risk management consultancy in Geneva serving global multinationals seeking business opportunities in Africa.

This enjoyable experience of self-employment was suspended when I was appointed Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria by President Umaru Yar'Adua of blessed memory, on the recommendation of then Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, and confirmed by the Senate. The CBN was, and is a very powerful and consequential institution. This development, however, was a disruption of my earlier plans. But it was, I came to believe later,

## My Journey: A Personal Story by Kingsley Moghalu

divinely ordered for reasons only God knows fully. It came out of a seemingly "by-chance" encounter with Sanusi at the World Economic Forum meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, where he proposed the idea, entirely of his own volition and unsolicited, of my returning home to Nigeria to serve as his deputy and head the CBN's Financial System Stability (FSS) Directorate that would implement the extensive reform in the banking sector that he had in mind. (Sanusi was just roughly a week into his confirmation by the Senate as the CBN Governor at this time). He later ran his decision to recommend me to Yar'Adua by Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, then Managing Director of the World Bank, and she gave her strong agreement with it.

When I reported for duty at the CBN on November 6, 2009 after the Senate confirmed my appointment a week earlier on October 27 (my appointment had been announced in August by Segun Adeniyi, Spokesman for President Yar'Adua) I found several letters of congratulation waiting for me. One of the ones that meant the most to me was one from Prof. Akinyemi. "Dear Deputy Governor", he wrote, "Need I say anything more? Congratulations". That was it. Two sentences, harking back to our meeting and his intervention 19 years earlier in 1990.

I am proud to have served my country in such an important leadership role where I made contributions that reformed our financial sector and payments system, including the development and introduction of the Bank Verification Number (BVN). In the CBN Monetary Policy Committee, we progressively brought inflation down to a single-digit 8% by 2014.

After a five year tenure at the CBN, I was appointed a Professor on the faculty of The Fletcher School and taught the course Emerging Africa in the World Economy for two academic years. This was by courtesy of another helping hand: Admiral (Dr.) James Stavridis (Rtd), Dean of The Fletcher School and former Supreme Allied Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the military alliance of the Great Powers of the western world, who himself is also a Fletcher alum. It was an honor to have gone to school there; to be appointed a professor at this top global graduate school of international affairs was a double honor.

But while teaching at Tufts University from 2015-2017, my mind turned to the increasing poverty and insecurity at home in Nigeria. I began asking myself why I was in Boston developing the human capital of citizens of the United States, Japan, France, Canada, Ghana, Switzerland, etc when my country was clearly adrift. I made the decision to return home to run for President in 2019. The rest is recent history.

The morale of this story for young people is this: think beyond mere success to impact and consequence in whatever you do. Work hard, and be very strategic. I always aimed for the best of institutions in my career and did not settle for less. I know, the world today is very different, but it offers even more opportunities, and success has become more democratized with the age of the internet, globalization, and high technology. But the same principles apply.

All of this, and much else, are what I bring to my current aspiration: I want to help build a nation that will give our youth great opportunities in the 21st century. We are all God's children too, entitled to a place in the sun. Africa, and Nigeria, will truly rise one day! It's always darkest before dawn. #Ends

Ifekaego Nnewi

July 24, 2021

Bolaji Akinyemi CBN Fletcher School Geneva Kingsley Moghalu UN

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2021



## OF KARMA, CAMA, THE CHURCH, AND MUSHROOMING CHURCHES (1)

Nigerian Tribune

August 23, 2020 Sunday

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### **Body**

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Karma or the Law of Karma is an expression usually used - though not exactly appropriately - to mean comeuppance or reward for an evil that someone has done. According to Wikipedia, Karma means 'the result of a person's actions as well as the actions' themselves. It is a term about the cycle of cause and effect. According to the 'theory of Karma', what happens to a person happens because they caused it with their actions'

'The 'theory of Karma' can be thought to be an extension to Newton's third law of action and reaction where every action of any kind, including words, thoughts, feelings (and) the totality of our existence have a reaction, same type of energy coming back to the one that caused it.

'In terms of spiritual development, Karma is about all that a person has done, is doing, and will do. Karma is not about punishment or reward. It makes a person responsible for their own life, and how they treat other people.

'(In) The 'theory of Karma'...All living creatures are responsible for their karma - their actions and the effects of their actions'

The popular understanding of Karma differs from Wikipedia's in that karma is generally seen as 'punishment' or 'reward' Thus, Karma is seen as a REWARDER of good and evil that cannot be escaped from by anyone, no matter how smart or well-connected that person might be. In popular consciousness, Karma has to do with retributive justice dispensed with certainty by an incorruptible judge or arbiter.

Unlike what former president Olusegun Obasanjo alluded to in his recent controversial 'condolence' letter on the late ex-Senator Kashamu Buruji, death is not the only inescapable and incorruptible REWARDER that people zero their mind on when they speak of Karma. A lot of people are deemed to have been cornered and upended by Karma without their kicking the bucket.

Usually in popular consciousness, therefore, Karma speaks of the evil that men do which not only lives after them like Antonio posits in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar but which perpetually haunts like the ghost of Banquo in Shakespeare's Macbeth. Like the assassinated inimitable Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa, said, man's injustice to man will not go unpunished but will 'be rewarded, if not now, then, certainly later; if not by man, then, certainly by God...'

Giwa's description, thus, better approximates the popular notion of Karma than Wikipedia's. Scripture says whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap (Galatians 6: 7 - 9). The recently departed crooner, Majek

## OF KARMA, CAMA, THE CHURCH, AND MUSHROOMING CHURCHES (1)

Fashek, said no one plants cassava and reaps cocoyam. And God is no respecter of persons. I feel like suggesting that Karma could be one of the many tools or vessels at God's disposal.

CAMA sounds like Karma but there is a world of difference between both. The Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020 was, on August 7, 2020 signed into law by Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (retired) and it immediately drew the ire - and rightly so - of the Presiding Bishop of the Living Faith Church Worldwide, David Oyedepo. Oyedepo's angst was against a section of the law which purports to give government officials the power to remove the board of trustees and even close the bank accounts of any church without recourse to the courts.

Bellowed Oyedepo: 'In the document, they said the Registrar-General can remove the trustees (of the church) without recourse to the court. Don't try it! This must be from somebody who woke up from the wrong side of the bed after dreaming...' Not so, Bishop; no one woke up from the wrong side of any bed. This is well thought out; it is pure and simple creeping fascism. Full-blown dictatorship has started to bare its fangs. Wealthy and influential church leaders who command the attention of millions of followers not only in Nigeria but also all over the world are seen as critical opinion moulders who must be silenced way ahead of 2023 so that the cabals dictating the pace of things in Nigeria can have it smooth sailing from now on.

Another critical section of the society they are bent on caging is the media, especially social media. That is the import of their hate speech law and the whopping N5million they are imposing as fine. Remember, they once mulled even the death penalty as punishment for so-called hate speech while Boko Haram murderers are gifted with rehabilitation! The so-called hate speech law is a reincarnation of the obnoxious and draconian Buhari's Decree Number 4 of 1984. Witness how they tried to rubbish Obadiah Mailafia just like the self-proclaimed evil genius, Ibrahim Babangida, did to Tai Solarin, and how they slapped a fine of humongous sum on the medium that published Mailafia's interview!

Freedom of speech is under attack; freedom of religious worship, no less! The positive provisions of CAMA 2020, such as the promotion of the ease of doing business, are mere camouflage and detour; those are not their goal or real intention or else, they would have stopped at that; gagging churches is the target, particularly the outspoken ones like Oyedepo and the others that speak against the many atrocities of the Buhari/APC regime.

Oyedepo's hot words on this matter was vintage Oyedepo. We have heard him roar over issues that touch his soul again and again. But the Government's response - that Oyedepo obey or get himself another country - is most reckless and patently irresponsible. No government properly so-called talks to its citizens that way. Only an army of occupation behaves like that! But I did not get the riposte I expected from the Bishop! Oh yes, a new country is on the way; a brand new country of the free born is in the offing! A country that we can truly call ours; not this contraption that the sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, described as a mere geographical expression and which has bluntly refused to come of age!

Recall that CAMA is not the first attempt to cage churches under this administration. In late 2016/early 2017, the Financial Regulations Council, waving the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act No. 6 of 2011, had announced a maximum period of 20 years for the head of all registered churches, mosques, and civil society organisations. Implemented, that regulation would have swept off all the notable church leaders in the country but public uproar forced the government to beat a quick retreat.

That law is cooling its heels on the shelf. Now, it has been joined by CAMA 2020. Even if 'they' calm down on their implementation for now, don't be too sure they will not flag them at an opportune time in future. I am sure you know who the 'they' are! The churches, thus, stand on slippery grounds, if I may use that term. But where were the church leaders when the CAMA bill, for instance, was making its rounds in the National Assembly? How many representations did they make to the legislators? Are there no Christians in the NASS? Is there any notable church leader who does not have members in the NASS? What efforts did they make to kill the bill before it became law? Is this not the same country where the Vice President is not just a Christian but also a senior pastor?

How many times did the church leaders picket the National Assembly on account of these obnoxious laws and regulations? What advocacies did they embark upon? How many press conferences did they address on the issue? Where were the CAN, PFN and such other leaders of Christendom? What is their relevance if they cannot

## OF KARMA, CAMA, THE CHURCH, AND MUSHROOMING CHURCHES (1)

undertake the simple task of defending their own interest? Will someone who shirks the responsibility of defending his own interests be minded to defend someone else's? That must be why Christians all over the country - the North especially - have been as the prophet Micaiah described them in 1 Kings 22: 17 - as sheep scattered upon the hills that have not a shepherd!

I wish I could speak in harsher terms to Nigeria's church leaders! In my secondary school days, not only did we skip reading the Book of Job, we expunged it completely from our Bible, in the erroneous belief that the 'curses' contained therein were grievous and might rub off on us! In like manner, I wonder these days whether some church leaders have not expunged from their own bible the Book of Nehemiah and the valiant deeds of Elijah!

Otherwise, where are the Nehemias of this generation? Nehemiah 4: 14 - 18 says: 'And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses... And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shield, and the bows, and the habergeons...They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded...'

Where are church leaders like Elijah? 1 Kings 17: 17 - 19 says: 'And it came to pass, when (king) Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and has followed Baalim'

Where are Christian youths like the three Hebrew sons? Daniel 3: 13 - 18 says: 'Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?...Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up'

Oh, Lord God: In these days of great trials and tribulations that try the soul of Your people; in these days of famine, darkness and the sword; when the hirelings parading as shepherds abandon Your flock to look after their own selfish interests:

Oh, that these were the days of Elijah/Declaring the word of the Lord without equivocation/Sending down fire from heaven! Oh, that these were the days of Your servant Moses/When righteousness exalts a nation! Oh, that these were the days of Ezekiel/So that the dead, dry bones of many a church leader may rise again! (Donnie McClurkin paraphrased).

But who stole the thunder of today's church leaders? What quenched their fire and dulled the edge of their sword?

**Load-Date:** September 26, 2020

New book blames Odili for political violence in Rivers, Amaechi, Wike for profiting from it



## New book blames Odili for political violence in Rivers, Amaechi, Wike for profiting from it

Business Day

November 14, 2018 Wednesday

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**Length:** 667 words

### **Body**

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A new book unveiled in Port Harcourt at the weekend traced the introduction of violent politics in Rivers State to former governor, Peter Odili, and blamed former governor Chibuike Amaechi and the incumbent, Nyesom Wike, for continuing to benefit from it.

The revelation is contained in volumes one and two of the series titled, 'Footprints of Nkpo Sibara, Dele Giwa and Ken Saro-Wiwa,' written by Patrick Naagbandon, a travel journalist and author.

The books are broken into chapters and are mainly a collection of articles initially published in the writer's column (The Town Crier) - starting from 2005 - in several local and national newspapers like Port Harcourt Telegraph, National Network, The Guardian, National Concord, Sahara Reporters, The Neighbourhood, Daily Sun, Vanguard, The Humanity, and The Beacon.

In the 297-paged volume one, for example, Naagbandon said Odili celebrated his 60th birthday in Abuja because Port Harcourt was unsafe due to the activities of armed youths, most of whom took their career in the period Odili was governor. He wondered how Odili is touted as a man who governed well when he can no longer live in the state.

Pressed during an interview with newsmen, Naagbandon said unequivocally that Odili laid the foundation of what was happening today. For cultism, he empowered criminal gangs, which he used for election purposes during his time as governor between 1999 and 2007.

The author of The Last Militant and The Fury of a Fisher Woman also said the guns-empowered youths were now running rampage, making Port Harcourt and Rivers State, at large, unsafe.

He also indicted immediate past Governor Rotimi Amaechi and the current Governor Nyesom Wike for building on and benefiting from Odili's creation of insecurity, instead of nipping the evil at the bud. 'He (Odili) laid the foundation for arms struggling and gun struggle in this place. These are issues highlighted and I am not just saying it because I want to make any cheap point out of that.'

While the books also explore the life and events - good or bad - of many popular characters like Dele Giwa, Ken Saro-Wiwa and former Enugu governor, Chimaroke Nnamani; Naagbandon said his reason for highlighting Odili's unknown past was because he had no other home except Port Harcourt. I stand by every word contained in the book, he said.

New book blames Odili for political violence in Rivers, Amaechi, Wike for profiting from it

'I am saying it because I am angry; because, some of us, we do not have any other home. This is our home. Nigeria is our home and if this society eventually collapses, where are we going to run to? That is why we must fight to rescue this society out of that (evil). That is why this book was published.'

Rivers State has in recent times been a reference point when it comes to conflict and violence, especially those traceable to cultism.

It has been the case since the reign of Peter Odili, with the situation hitting high heavens during election seasons when several deaths are usually recorded.

For example, several communities in Ogbia/Egbema/Ndoni, Ahoada West and East local government areas were run and ransacked by rival cultist groups, leading to economic crippling and displacement of hundreds of natives in such communities as Egi.

Between 2015 and 2016 when the general and rerun elections were conducted in the state, not less than 20 persons were reportedly killed.

Former Governor Rotimi Amaechi and current Governor Nyesom Wike have since 2013 been at loggerheads, each accusing the other of sponsoring violence and insecurity in the state.

Given that Amaechi and Wike worked under Odili as speaker and chairman, respectively, Naagbandon's indictment could be read to mean that all three - Odili, Amaechi and Wike - are familiar with the insecurity situation in the state but all failed - as governors - to initiate a policy framework that would tackle insecurity and plan to sustained peace.

Amaechi, however, declared militants as criminals and took the war to cultists. The effort was disrupted by the political crisis that came in 2012 and remained to this day.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2018

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## **NUJ demands arrest, prosecution of killers of Bayelsa journalist**

Nigerian Tribune

May 1, 2017 Monday

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Length: 267 words

### **Body**

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THE Nigeria Union of **Journalist** (NUJ) has urged the Inspector General of Police, Idris Abubakar, to ensure the arrest and prosecution of the killers of Mr Famou Giobaro, a broadcast **journalist** in Bayelsa.

The union made the request in a communique issued Sunday at the end of the NUJ National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, held in Gombe.

The communique was signed by the NUJ National Secretary, Malam Shuaibu Leman.

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that on April 16, some unidentified gunmen had killed Giobaro, a staff of Bayelsa-owned Glory FM 97.1, in his residence at INEC Road, Kpasia in Yenagoa, the state capital.

The attackers neither stole anything, nor attacked other occupants of the house, triggering speculations the killing could have been premeditated.

The union is also demanding that the case files of all slain journalists be re-opened, including those of late **Dele Giwa** and Bagauda Kaltho.

The communique further condemned in strong terms, the withdrawal of a Punch reporter, Olalekan Adedayo, from the State House and urged Presidency to reprimand the Chief Security Officer responsible for the act.

The union challenged the Federal Government to sanction state governments that failed to properly utilise the first batch of the Paris Club refund.

The communique further commended the anti-corruption war of the present administration and also called on the National Assembly to ensure quick passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, to stabilise the sector.

The NUJ commended the Gombe State Government and the State Council of the union for the successful hosting of the NEC meeting.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2017

NIGERIA SEEKS THE SLAYERS OF AN EDITOR



**NIGERIA SEEKS THE SLAYERS OF AN EDITOR**

The New York Times

December 29, 1986, Monday, Late City Final Edition

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**Section:** Section A; Page 5, Column 1; Foreign Desk

**Length:** 868 words

**Byline:** By JAMES BROOKE, Special to the New York Times

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Nigeria

**Body**

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"Hello," starts one note penned by a 15-year-old schoolgirl. "Elephant fails and cannot stand up. Dele Giwa, good-bye."

Another, typed by a college student, contains an ode to "Giwa, the Honest and Patriotic Son of the African soil."

Mourning a man they never met, these letter writers are two of thousands of Nigerians who recently have flooded the offices of Newswatch, Nigeria's largest news magazine.

On Oct. 19, Dele Giwa, the magazine's 39-year-old editor, was killed by a powerful package bomb sent to his home. In a nation generally regarded to have Africa's freest and most diverse press, the killing has grown into a major political liability for Nigeria's President, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida.

**A Blot on Rights Record**

Overseas, the incident has cast a shadow over Nigeria's generally clean human rights image. "The Government has got to get this monkey off their back," one diplomat said.

It is evident that Mr. Giwa's combative style of journalism, learned in eight years spent in New York, proved too peppery for someone in this third world society. But with no suspects in jail and the police working in secrecy, the average Nigerian has become a sleuth in a national whodunit.

Some suspect Nigeria's military intelligence agency, the State Security Service. Two days before his death, Mr. Giwa was called in by the intelligence agency for the fourth time in a year to answer questions about his coverage of sensitive political topics.

Others point to Mr. Giwa's exposes of corrupt Nigerian businessmen and drug dealers who have turned Lagos into a minor transit point for heroin to the United States.

## NIGERIA SEEKS THE SLAYERS OF AN EDITOR

And others, noting that this is the first letter-bomb killing in memory here, look with suspicion on a group of Israeli security experts who train and advise Nigeria's presidential guard.

### Unified Public Response

Although Mr. **Giwa**'s killing remains unsolved, it is clear that Nigeria has suffered a trauma deep enough to cross the tribal and geographic divisions of this fractious nation of 100 million.

"The entire country was stunned; we are getting thousands of letters from all over Nigeria," Ray Ekpu, the new editor in chief, said as he sat in the office he inherited from Mr. **Giwa**. The nation's political elite, including the President, sent condolences, and Nigerian businessmen donated services for the funeral.

Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright who won this year's Nobel Prize for literature, set up a national reward fund to try to find the culprits.

On Nov. 8, the day of the funeral, all Nigerian newspapers came out with black mastheads. It was the first such tribute since 1976, when the President, Gen. Murtala Ramat Muhammed, was assassinated.

### Raised in Poverty

Nigeria's grief over Mr. **Giwa** seems spurred in part by the average man's identification with the editor. Mr. **Giwa**'s father was a laundryman who paid his son's school fees by washing the clothes of teachers at Oduduwa College in Ife, about 140 miles northeast of Lagos, where the younger **Giwa** was editor of the school newspaper.

Mr. **Giwa**'s hopes of attending university were shattered when his high school patron, the ooni, or prince, of Ife, died before Mr. **Giwa** had completed high school.

Mr. **Giwa** traveled to New York in 1971, supporting himself by working in a plastic factory and driving taxis. In his free time, he earned a degree in English from Brooklyn College.

He later earned a master's degree in public communications from Fordham University and worked as a news clerk for The New York Times.

### Triumphal Return to Nigeria

In 1979, Mr. **Giwa** returned to Nigeria to work as a newspaper editor. Reporters here like to tell the story of his return in 1982 to Ife, his hometown, where he took part in a symposium at the university. When several students accused him of being a "bourgeois **journalist**," he invited them into his Mercedes and drove them across town to the hovel where he had grown up.

Mr. **Giwa**'s independent and abrasive style as editor of The Sunday Concord landed him in jail for two weeks in 1983, when Nigeria was under civilian rule. Two years ago, when a foreign exchange shortage severely limited the imports of Time and Newsweek magazines, Mr. **Giwa** and Mr. Ekpu launched a home-grown version, Newswatch.

The magazine grew to have an estimated circulation of 50,000, one of the largest in Africa. Acerbic reporting boosted sales. Two weeks before Mr. **Giwa**'s death, the Newswatch cover story was titled: "Nigeria - Why Nothing Works."

"Newswatch had good investigative reporters," said Chuma Azikiwe, a Harvard-trained businessman.

**'Delete** Has Gone Home'

## NIGERIA SEEKS THE SLAYERS OF AN EDITOR

Mr. Giwa's death as well as his life was marked by uniquely African touches. On the day of his funeral, hundreds of mourners spilled onto the tarmac of Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, chanting in Yoruba: "Dele has gone home. You have killed him and caused great pain."

Following tradition, his body was flown for burial to his mother's home village of Ugbekpe-Ekperi, about 150 miles northeast of Lagos.

Two months after the funeral, Mr. Ekpu says, police investigations are "just moving in circles."

Meanwhile, Lagos newspapers continue a low-key campaign: In odd corners of their pages are little boxes that read, "Who Killed Dele Giwa?"

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Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless



## **Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless**

Mail & Guardian

July 30, 2020 Thursday

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**Length:** 1651 words

**Byline:** Idowu Omoyele

**Highlight:** Biodun Olumuyiwa has been writing since the late 1980s, but has only recently published his debut poetry collection

### **Body**

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***In a Journey of Dreams* by Biodun Olumuyiwa**

Zacchaeus & Caroline Publishers, 2020

Biodun Olumuyiwa is the writer whom time forgot. He has only this year brought out his debut collection of poetry, *In a Journey of Dreams*. The book was published in Ibadan, by his own imprint, Zacchaeus & Caroline Publishers, which is named after his parents.

And yet, Olumuyiwa's work as a writer of poetry, plays, short stories and articles had begun to appear in print - chapbooks, anthologies, magazines and newspapers - in Nigeria in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the period during which he composed the poetry of his prime. And then came silence.

Having completed his undergraduate studies in 1991 - the year his father died - Olumuyiwa was posted to Calabar, the port city that is the capital of Cross River state in southern Nigeria, for his National Youth Service Corps programme. After youth service, Olumuyiwa turned away from the literary scene for several years; although he continued to write poems from 1992 till about five years ago, he did not publish them anywhere. Nevertheless, his service experience inspired *Calabar - September '91*, a poem in his new collection that uses alliteration and assonance, metaphor and rhetorical questions to evoke an atmosphere of dislocation, ambivalence and uncertainty:

"I crossed the girdle  
to the terrace of your heart  
but I am greeted only

Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless

by the dullness of your liquid laughter —

is there a pain  
which I do not see  
in the creeping ripples of your laughter?

Canard of Canaan,  
shawl of twilights,  
wet pavements of candle dreams,  
tell me,  
do you mourn forever?"

Olumuyiwa has been something of a shape-shifter, not just in the variety and quality of his work, but also in terms of his name(s). He was born Godwin Afolabi Abiodun Eniayewun in the ancient city of Abeokuta, capital of Ogun state in southwestern Nigeria, in 1965. In September 1991 he became a born-again Christian and, in June 1998, changed his (Yoruba) surname from Eniayewun to Olumuyiwa "because a deeper understanding of my Christian faith showed that the image presented by the meaning of my surname was not in harmony with my Christian belief". The name Eniayewun translates as "A person desired by the world"; Olumuyiwa means "God brings this", "God brought this" or "God made this possible".

All the same, it was as Biodun Eniayewun that he had his article, "NYSC Camp in Retrospect", published in the October 30, 1991 edition of *National Concord*, a Lagos-based national newspaper that is now defunct. His poetry was published in the *Daily Times*, another Lagos-based national newspaper, and in *Anapoint*, the literary journal of the Ogun state branch of the Association of Nigerian Authors.

After elementary education in Ondo and Lagos, Olumuyiwa attended secondary school in Abeokuta. In 1987, he gained admission to what was Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University), Ago-Iwoye, graduating with a BA honours degree in English in 1991. While at Ago-Iwoye, he was a member of the university's writers' workshop, founded by poet and English lecturer Sesan Ajayi. In his own poetry collection *A Burst of Fireflies* (1991), Ajayi describes his most gifted student as "soul-mate, fanciful chronicler/ of septic canticles of agony".

The writers' workshop, especially through its cyclostyled chapbook series, nurtured talents such as Eniayewun, Sina Oyadiran, Anuoluwakemi Orimoloye, Olumide Akinwunmi, Ademola Aderemi, Segun Ebietomiye, Wale Ajayi, Segun Sotuminu and Alric Adeniyi Amona. The latter two, unlike Olumuyiwa, appear in *Voices from the Fringe* (1988), the anthology of contemporary Nigerian poetry in English, edited by *Harry Garuba*.

But it is to the generation of poets included in *Voices from the Fringe* that Olumuyiwa properly belongs, rather than that of millennials like *Emmanuel Iduma* (born 1989), *Gbenga Adesina* (1991) and *Gbenga Adeoba* (1993), none of whom had been born when the then Biodun Eniayewun won the inaugural Ogun State University *Tchicaya U Tam'si poetry prize* as a first-year undergraduate in the 1987-88 academic year. Incidentally, Olumuyiwa's poetry, in part, honours the great French-language Congolese poet and writer for whom that prize is named, and who has had such an enduring influence on the Nigerian's poetry:

"You must think that poets are sane -  
count me out,  
for the poet in my blood festers,  
as the hidden lyrics

in *A Game of Cheat-Heart*.

I am locked in the rupture  
of a thousand nightmares;

Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless

the songs I still polish on stones of wood ...

You do not know about my failing  
days that bleed,  
maimed like the never ending mad dreams"

These lines from the poem *In Greenland Cage* in Olumuyiwa's *In a Journey of Dreams* allude to *A Game of Cheat-Heart*, the title of a section of [\*Tchicaya U Tam'si's Selected Poems\*](#) (1970), translated by Gerald Moore. Here, Olumuyiwa's speaker repudiates the reasoning affirming the sanity of poets; he needs to move beyond the edge of sanity to be able to plumb the depths of pain and pathos concealed in suppurating lyricism of the quality and profundity found in Tchicaya's poetry.

In the 1988-89 academic year, when he was in his second year as an undergraduate, Olumuyiwa emerged first runner-up in the university's [\*Duro Ladipo\*](#) playwriting contest and won the [\*Dambudzo Marechera\*](#) short-story prize, with his entry, *Cold Blood of Innocence*, published in *Kollaj* (May 1989), the flagship journal of the university's writers' workshop. His *Between Two Deaths* is published in the anthology [\*Frontiers: Nigerian Short Stories\*](#) (1992), edited by the writer and academic [\*Asomwan Sonnie Adagbonyin\*](#).

While an undergraduate, he also wrote at least two experimental, absurdist plays under the pseudonym of Sousa Sonne Mateba: *The Parable* appears in *Ogun Onire* (1990), the students' literary magazine of the department of English; *Rattle* is published in *Spring* (January 1990), the short-lived university literary magazine that was Olumuyiwa's brainchild. Reviewing the latter magazine in Lagos paper *The Guardian on Sunday* on February 4 1990, Sesan Ajayi writes, "Sousa Sonne Mateba's (aka Biodun Eniayewun) absurdist drama piece *Rattle* actually rattles us from our realist, chronological assumptions by depicting a situation where motivation is non-existent, and where abrupt signals and indirect references rule the days."

Olumuyiwa's penchant for experimenting with form and technique is palpable throughout *In a Journey of Dreams*. The collection is dedicated to his mother and late father, "the living and the dead,/ who nurtured many dreams/ in dark nights of hope" and to his Ago-Iwoye mentor Sesan Ajayi, "whose 'urgent throbs ... nudged me here'", Olumuyiwa slightly misquoting Ajayi's own words in the poem *Forever Foraging for Faith* from *A Burst of Fireflies*: "the urgent throbs/ of/ a soul in anguish/ nudge me here".

Divided into four parts, Olumuyiwa's collection tracks the interior consciousness of its persona or speaking voice as he meditates on love and beauty, death and mourning, friendship, freedom, and the fate of peoples and places within and beyond Nigeria. The poet's spiritual rite of passage or journey of discovery is bookended by *In the Glen of Fulfilment* and *A Farewell Song*, a pair of poems capturing the antithesis of arrival and departure, initiation and farewell.

Olumuyiwa provides social commentary on epochal events and current affairs, holding a mirror to history, especially, the final quarter of the 20th century. *Still Naked*, for example, is an ode to [\*Sam Nujoma\*](#) on the occasion of Namibia's independence from South Africa:

"I see Windhoek dressed as the rainbow -  
you may not know, but I think you should,  
for you are a sign of this springing moment:  
Namibia shines through to me  
like a pageant of bliss sailing a night ...

But between you and I,  
I swear by our joy  
and the spirit of our kinship,  
bound as the waters we pain to know

Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless

because of the ruins it brought our race  
in plaguing currents,  
this land I behold is still naked.

It is still naked  
as the night-stars round our necks,  
it is still naked as our teeth  
in the abandon of our grins,  
naked as the remnant fragment of fears  
strewn over this freedom ..."

Whereas the six visions comprising the collection's title poem are infused with a spiritual, transcendental essence, the long nine-part poem, *Beginnings and Ends*, is more rooted in recognisable history. One part honours [Jack Mapanje](#), Malawian poet and former political detainee; another mourns [Dele Giwa](#) - Nigerian [journalist](#) and founding editor-in-chief of [Newswatch](#), Nigeria's premier weekly newsmagazine - who was killed by a mystery parcel bomb at his Lagos residence on Sunday, October 19 1986. One section shames [Blaise Compaoré](#) for his bloody betrayal of Burkina Faso and [Thomas Sankara](#); another is ambivalent about the Soviet Union's [Mikhail Gorbachev](#).

Yet another, titled *South Africa - 1991*, reflects paradoxically on the apartheid-to-postapartheid dispensation, and with a visionary's prescience:

"My dream is gashed in South Africa  
by the violence of cruel hearts  
and now I mourn wasting flesh  
in shallow graves -

the beginning was the end,  
but now the end becomes the beginning,  
violent days upon baking anguish.

Buried without love in timeless  
trenches of hate,  
for how long will this dream smother itself?  
For how long, when indeed  
tomorrows will die  
without songs across the tables of war,  
without love,  
to weather blistered steps?

When dreams betray dreams,  
tomorrow will die;  
hopes collapsing in violent winds  
of pale memories."

Anyone genuinely interested or invested in the health of modern or contemporary literature should savour the sensuous magnetism of Biodun Olumuyiwa's poetry, its highly affecting empathy and humanity, its sinuous grace and lush lyricism, its aphoristic wit and epigrammatic force, its timely and timeless quality.

**Idowu Omoyele is a UK-based writer**

Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless

The post [Review: Biodun Olumuyiwa's 'In a Journey of Dreams' is both timely and timeless](#) appeared first on [The Mail & Guardian](#).

[Link to Image](#)

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2020

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## Why I Ventured Into Movie Production -Foluso Lala

Nigerian Tribune

September 19, 2021 Sunday

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**Length:** 1932 words

### **Body**

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If there is one woman who likes to have her hands in different pies, then the name that comes to mind is Foluso Lala. A writer, an actress and media personality with more than 20 years experience, Lala has written over 25 movie scripts and produced a few. She was the immediate past chairperson of National Association of Women **Journalist** (NAWOJ), Oyo State. In this interview by SEGUN ADEBAYO, she speaks about her life as actress and media personality.

It seemed you have had your hands in many pies over the years. From journalism to sport and movies, what part of your formative years prepared you for this life you are living?

I had wanted to study Theatre Arts in the university with second option of Mass Communications while my father of blessed memory wanted me to study Law. My interest in theatre apart from the fact that I used to act plays in my primary school days and in the church became strong when my uncle, Ayo Thomas and Dr Sola Fosudo were studying Theatre Arts at the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University and they and their colleagues used to come to our house at Ogbomoso. Their displays then caught my attention seriously. As God would have it I ended up with Bsc and MMP in Psychology. I also have a PGD in Journalism. During my NYSC, I served in the Public Relations Office of the Nigeria Police Zonal Headquarters, Zone 4, Makurdi. My beat then was to write press releases. Afterwards I gained employment in Tribune. All along from my primary to secondary school days I've been taking part in drama with passion for writing short stories. I was engrossed in reading and summarising novels. I remembered that my father used to buy Sunday Concord newspaper for me because of my love for the column '**Dele Giwa** on Sunday'.

You were the immediate past chairperson of NAWOJ in Oyo State, what would you say was your greatest moment during your tenure?

By nature I am a very compassionate person. I always have empathy for women and children who are the vulnerable to all kinds of vices. Nature is not so kind to the womenfolk which in no doubt have effects on the children. My coming onboard as the chairperson of NAWOJ was with a hindsight of contributing my own quota in making life meaningful for the women. Let me mention two cases amongst others. My tenure went at length by way of carrying out four different surgeries on a young boy named Aanuoluwa Rafiu who suffered extra growth in his leg

## Why I Ventured Into Movie Production -Foluso Lala

and buttock. It wasn't an easy task but God helped us out. The boy is back in school and very intelligent. We also rescued a day-old baby boy whose mother deliberately delivered by the roadside to be abandoned but for providence that hooked her from running away. We sourced for assistance. The mother and child are doing well.

Talking about movies now, what informed your decision to become a thespian; does being a writer qualify one as an actor?

Like I said earlier, I had wanted to study Theatre Arts. The urge to act has been with me unabated. For me, acting is a talent and not a skill while my ability to write well doubles as a talent and a skill too. It is not automatic that a writer can as well be an actor. Some can write but may not be able to act. Some might be able to act but might not be graced to write. Whereas some are graced to write and act. Good acting requires excellent interpretation of roles with perfect body language, amongst others. In my own case, I am powered with both writing and acting. To my credit, I have over 25 movie scripts written by me and I've taken part in a number of cinema and movie productions.

You are a writer and you have been one for a long time. But you have also been acting as well. When are you going to start producing cinema-standard movies like some of your colleagues do?

I'm glad to inform you that I have produced one of my creative writings into a movie with the title ABEGAN. Any good script can be produced for the cinema but the financial implication is the main issue. Cinema work is a serious matter that requires involvement of serious investors but because people don't really know its viability, they stylishly brush it aside. And, the investors who had tasted it and found out that it is very lucrative won't tell. I have this strong belief that sooner than later I will be producing cinema stuffs, in sequence. I am in need of serious minded investors to power my heavy scripts.

For someone who had more than a stint in journalism and has continued to thrive in the business of information dissemination, what comes to your mind when you see how mediocrity is fast destroying the profession?

Firstly, let me correct your impression about having a short period of practice in journalism. I've been in the profession since 1991 till date but for between 2003-2004 on a special assignment in the 8th All Africa Games COJA. All the while I've been practising in the pen profession. I started in the African Newspaper of Nigeria, publishers of Tribune titles; Daily Times; defunct Oracle Newspaper; Alliance of Human Rights Action (AHRA) magazine and presently an information officer in the Oyo State Local Government Service Commission. Information officers are journalists with degrees in Communication Arts and/or PGD in Journalism and are members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ).

Journalism is a distinctively noble profession that commands respect from both the highly placed and the downtrodden. As the Fourth Estate of the Realm, the highly placed tremble at the sight of a ***journalist*** while the downtrodden sees journalists as their mouthpiece to voice out their mind, to table their cause in such a way that governments would work in their favour. T

With your experience in the movie industry and a professional at that, why does it seem you are yet to break into the mainstream where we get to see more of your works on screens?

Like the saying that you can't grow up to reach the sky in just one day. Those ones you see often have stories to tell before they became what they are today. It's just a matter of time. Some of the works I took part in are in the cinema like Efunsetan Aniwura: The Untold Story by Funmi Holder; Balogun Ibikunle and Lagbondonko by Biodun Eleni. Others included Alapa by Tamilore Martins-Ojo; Ohun Aye; Kinni Ero Re?; Isokan Yoruba; The Sadist; Femiremi by Bosede Adelaja Mabis; Abeni and Omolewa and other ones that I can't remember their titles. I also authored a book titled IN Awe of the King.

When should we expect a big budget movie from you or you are just going to concentrate on writing scripts and acting?

Everyone prays to do the extraordinary in their endeavours in order to showcase what they are made of. I appreciate God for the talents He embedded in me. I find script writing and acting very easy. I've written over 25

### Why I Ventured Into Movie Production -Foluso Lala

movie scripts and most of my scripts are financial heavyweights meaning sooner than later I will be coming out with big budget works. With the strength and grace of God I will continue to write, act and produce.

You seem to have a quiet lifestyle, but this appears not to be the same for some of your colleagues who keep flaunting fake lifestyles to keep themselves relevant in the business. Why are you not putting more of yourself out there?

There are so many actors and actresses who are super rich; some because of their backgrounds, some through hard work while some are into other streams of income that thrive very well. Those ones that wrongly present themselves to the public do not have same kind of background nor financial mussels to breast the kind of life they struggle to live. Such ones are very close to financial indebtedness and avoidable illnesses because they'll always want to meet up. Some of them engage in what you better not imagine. At the end they'll stretch their body, soul and spirit than necessary. There are always individual differences. I Foluso Lala don't and will never live a fake life. Fake life is a sign of inferiority complex. If you are sure of yourself why should you paint yourself what you are not? People out there are no fools, they know the truth and won't respect anyone who is not what he presents him/herself to be.

As a pretty woman, how do you keep temptations from men in check and does it come with pressure to stay scandal free?

Thanks for the compliment. You know temptation is everywhere. Thanks to God who in His infinite mercy created me fearfully and wonderfully in His image. Every human being is beautiful depending on how you see them. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the saying goes. The ones you regard as not so pretty too receive compliments from time to time and with that I am not exempted. How one manages such advances is key. The way you present yourself is also key. Polite but frank rejection is required. You don't expect me to be hopping around. I don't fool around because I respect myself. For what? My 'small me' have taste! (Lol)

Tell us about your new project you are working on and your take on sex for roles which is very rampant in the industry?

Like I said, I just produced a star-studded culture-modern movie titled ABEGAN. I thank God I was able to solely finance it. The cast gives a hint on its financial implication. The movie features creme-la-creme in yoruba nollywood including Joke Muyiwa; Rykardo Agbor; Antar Laniyan; Ladi Folarin; Yetunde Ogunsola; Tamilore Martins-Ojo; Taofeek Adewale 'Digboluja' (Abegan); Wale Akorede Okunnu; Jomiloju Olumbe; Adelani Ariyo; Bosede Adelaja Mabis; myself and a host of others.

About the sex for role in the industry, I have, with every sense of truthfulness, never experienced it. So I may not be an authority in that wise.'

As the music business continues to expand with interests from different walks of life, more record label owners have begun to show interest in the art of nurturing music acts and providing viable platforms that could help them fulfill their dreams.

One of such labels making moves to bridge the gap with plans to put music acts on the world map is Big Achievable Dreams (B.A.D), as it comes into the industry with a breath of fresh air and throwing its weight behind the career of struggling artistes yearning for a platform to showcase their talent.

As part of its plans to lead the way, the South Africa-based company in a statement said it will support artistes with music production, marketing of their contents and branding and strategic planning, one that has the capacity to put their names on and songs on the lips of many music lovers within and outside the African shores.

'We have observed how artistes are struggling to show the world what they can offer and this is why we are offering to give them quality sound production, marketing, management and packaging for artistes of all genres. This cuts across Reggae, Pop, Hiphop, classic music and the likes.'

### Why I Ventured Into Movie Production -Foluso Lala

The record label is concerned with bringing the best out of their artistes, through engaging their sense of creativity, proper guidance, strategic planning and quality management.

On a quest to rebranding and refurbishing the entertainment industry, the record label believes in making positive changes to their local and international audience through the provision of top notch entertainment from all subsidiaries; music,film,events and lifestyle.

'We have a line-up of projects that would be coming up from December; our target is to provide opportunities for people, both young and old to explore their creative side and to develop them socially, mentally, financially as well as other aspects that would yield positive productivity'.

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2021

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## **RIGHTS-NIGERIA: PROBING 15 YEARS OF ABUSES UNDER THE MILITARY**

IPS-Inter Press Service

August 25, 1999, Wednesday

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**Length:** 589 words

**Byline:** By Remi Oyo

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Aug. 25

### **Body**

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The shadows of late Nigerian rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and journalist Dele Giwa continue to haunt policymakers in Nigeria.

Saro-Wiwa, leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), was executed along with eight other Ogoni leaders in November 1995, allegedly on the orders of the late military dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha.

His compatriot, Giwa, was killed by a letter bomb in October 1986 during Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's rule.

The two murders are now, along with hundreds of others, the subject of investigations by the new Nigerian civilian government of Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo, who was sworn-in in May following 15 years of military rule.

The investigation is being conducted by a panel headed by retired Supreme Court Judge Chukwudifu Oputa, who was appointed by the Obasanjo government.

Controversial Nigerian lawyer Gani Fawehinmi, who is representing Giwa, is demanding two billion naira (\$ 20 million) as compensation for the death of his client, who was editor-in-chief of the "Newswatch" magazine before his death.

Fawehinmi is also demanding the prosecution of Col. Halilu Akiliu and Lt. Col. Kunle Togun, both retired officers of the army's intelligence corps at the time of Giwa's murder.

In the petition, Fawehinmi described himself as "friend and counsel to Mr. Dele Giwa (who) commenced and concluded a private investigation into the circumstances surrounding the cold-blooded murder of the courageous journalist.

"Giwa was lawful Nigerian citizen, entitled to his right of life and the pursuit of happiness and investigative journalism," he said.

"The deceased," Fawehinmi said, "was presented with a parcel bomb dressed in official configuration but which connected the military regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. The parcel bomb terminated the life of the deceased without any justification or excuse."

## RIGHTS- NIGERIA : PROBING 15 YEARS OF ABUSES UNDER THE MILITARY

Babangida, who ruled Nigeria between 1985 and 1993, has also been named in another petition. Dele Akande, a top Nigerian lawyer, alleges that the former President committed "criminal annulment" when he canceled the results of the 1993 presidential election, which the late businessman Moshood Abiola was presumed to have won.

Abiola died in detention in July 1998.

"The annulment of the June 12 (election) participated in by 14 million voters in the country, denied this country the opportunity to have the person they elected freely and justly to occupy the post of the president of the country," Akande was quoted as saying in a local publication in the commercial capital of Lagos this week.

Akande is also demanding that the panel summon Humphrey Nwosu, who headed the National Electoral Commission under Babangida, to tell his side of the story.

Nwosu has never granted an interview since the annulment of the polls, which resulted in the death of hundreds of protesters, the jailing of scores of others and the ultimate emergence of Abacha, the nation's worst dictator since Nigeria became an independent nation in 1914.

The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), one of the most vilified pro-democracy groups during Abacha's five-year rule, has also petitioned the panel, chronicling the "degradations" suffered by its members under the Abacha regime.

The nine-page memorandum argues that "despite NADECO's peaceful methods of resistance, the Abacha junta launched a full-scale war against its members. Where we called for dialogue, Abacha hounded us to jail, sent assassins after us, and bombers to our homes."

NADECO is demanding two billion naira (about \$ 20 million) from the government as compensation.

**Load-Date:** August 26, 1999

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## **NUJ demands arrest, prosecution of killers of Bayelsa journalist**

Business Day

April 30, 2017 Sunday

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Length: 267 words

### **Body**

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The Nigeria Union of **Journalist** (NUJ) has urged the Inspector General of Police, Idris Abubakar, to ensure the arrest and prosecution of the killers of Famou Giobaro, a broadcast **journalist** in Bayelsa.

The union made the request in a communiqué issued Sunday at the end of the NUJ National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, held in Gombe.

The communiqué was signed by the NUJ National Secretary, Malam Shuaibu Leman.

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that on April 16, some unidentified gunmen had killed Giobaro, a staff of Bayelsa-owned Glory FM 97.1, in his residence at INEC Road, Kpasia in Yenagoa, the state capital.

The attackers neither stole anything, nor attacked other occupants of the house, triggering speculations the killing could have been premeditated.

The union is also demanding that the case files of all slain journalists be re-opened, including those of late **Dele Giwa** and Bagauda Kaltho.

The communiqué further condemned in strong terms, the withdrawal of a Punch reporter, Olalekan Adedayo, from the State House and urged Presidency to reprimand the Chief Security Officer responsible for the act.

The union challenged the Federal Government to sanction state governments that failed to properly utilise the first batch of the Paris Club refund.

The communiqué further commended the anti-corruption war of the present administration and also called on the National Assembly to ensure quick passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, to stabilise the sector.

The NUJ commended the Gombe State Government and the State Council of the union for the successful hosting of the NEC meeting. (NAN)

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2017



## **OPINION: AT 78, IBB MAINTAINS HIS IMPORTANT BEATS, BUT**

The Will (Nigeria)

August 17, 2019 Saturday

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Length: 1464 words

### **Body**

General Ibrahim Babangida I had, in the past, written a number of tributes on the occasion of the anniversary of former military president, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB). I penned the last one in 2017 on his 76thbirthday titled: "At 76, IBB sustains his essential rhythm".

I had introduced the subject matter by pointing out how special the month of August is to him, being the month of his birth and the month he stepped in and out of the saddle as military president. Nothing has changed or can change the fact that the eighth month in the annual calendar holds a great deal of significance for him and intense attraction to his admirers in the contemplation and celebration of the IBB persona, which is wrapped in enigma.

The phenomenal individuality that lives on the mythical Hilltop in Minna marks his 78thanniversary on August 17. Interestingly, at an age shy of 80, IBB continues to maintain his important beats. But, it is about time he confronted his existential conundrums before he takes his deserved place in the pantheon.

At 78, IBB can laugh death to scorn. In other words, as a veritable human institution, he has overcome the fear of death- certainly no more points to prove.

He can fittingly appropriate the Latin phrase attributed to Julius Caesar, in a letter to the Roman Senate around 47 BC after he had achieved a quick victory in his short war against Pharnaces II of Pontus at the Battle of Zela, "Veni, vidi, vici", meaning I came, I saw and I conquered. As a sui generis statesman, IBB had defined his eon with the magnitude of his character, military discipline and political beliefs.

He had compulsorily fought a number of battles he had also deliberately chosen some battles to fight while in the face of imminent defeats in some other battles, he had beaten tactical retreats and, perhaps guided on those occasions by the eternal words of Demosthenes, an epic Greek orator, after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC where, according to notes, he deserted, to wit: "For he that fights and runs away, may live to fight another day." One of such occasions was the annulment of the June 12 presidential election won by the late Chief M.

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The other was the battle to return to the presidency via the ballot box, but which plan he abandoned in 2007 under the tension of counter goal and intimidation by the powers-that-be. By stepping aside amid the ballyhoo that greeted

## OPINION: AT 78, IBB MAINTAINS HIS IMPORTANT BEATS, BUT

the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, IBB had cleverly negotiated his survival against so many forces that had engaged him in a survival battle.

That episodic event was after he had been largely sustained in power with the support of a carefully selected crop of academics and brilliant minds, with whose cerebral resources, he had survived the dialectics and polemics of intellectual interrogations of the contents of his transition programme from the wider community of the nation's anti-military eggheads. IBB had also surmounted the political confrontations by the old guard of barely principled politicians, who piled pressure on him to surrender power to civil authority, as well as the tangible strain of his own military constituency, which was ready to explore the coup option as a last resort to bring his regime to a terminus.

As I wrote before, in the peak of the commotion, the army general who survived a bloody coup masterminded by Major Gideon Orkar, had decided to stop the seeming unending mesmerism of the polity, characterized by continuous shifts of and adjustments in the transition timetable. In the face of obvious loss of popular support and national goodwill, the famed Maradona of Nigeria's political landscape, had thrown in the towel and emplaced an Interim National Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan.

He had retreated to his Hilltop mansion in Minna for power-brokerage communion. Since 1993, the avuncular IBB has continued to minister to the needs of his loyalists as an oracle of sorts, building for himself a seemingly impregnable myth of the ultimate power broker until it was shattered in 2006 when the then president, General Olusegun Obasanjo, unleashed the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on his first son, Mohammed, for his alleged 24 percent shareholding in Globacom under the chair of Otunba Mike Adenuga.

The melodrama of Mohammed's invitation by the EFCC happened about the eve of IBB's 65th birthday in 2006. It was also a prelude to the widespread agitations by IBB's followers to have him join the race for the presidency in 2007. Between hunting down Adenuga, who was believed to be a trusted business ally of IBB and Mohammed, was IBB himself who, although was untouched, got the message that he should not attempt to vie for the presidency on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) or any other party's platform for that matter. Since that incident, which saw IBB withdraw his interest after picking the expression of interest form, he has remained content with his pastime as a perceptive "prophetic" or "oracular" diviner.

His influence in shaping the direction of leadership and governance has not been diminished by the reality of the socio-economic and political conditions that served as an endgame to his regime in 1993. I have always argued that the political ferment that culminated in the anti-climax of his historic egress was an inalienable part of the corpus of knowledge that underpinned the nation's ill-fated Third Republic, over which his regime superintended. Notwithstanding, he chose to be his own prophet, declaring that he was stepping aside.

He did so with the intention of returning to power some day, but his prophecy did not come true. The year 2007 had marked a dramatic retreat by IBB into his shell.

It was a denouement of sorts. Opposition to his presidential aspiration had come from Obasanjo, the man he helped to power in 1999. He had to withdraw from the race because he could not secure Obasanjo's critical support.

In his letter of withdrawal, which he sent to Obasanjo, he had said he was withdrawing because of the moral dilemma occasioned by the entry of General Aliyu Gusau and Alhaji Umar Yar' Adua both of whom he described as a friend and a younger brother respectively into the race. Surprisingly, in 2010, following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua, IBB was listed among the northern presidential aspirants shortlisted by a group of northern leaders chaired by the late Malam Adamu Ciroma for the choice of a consensus candidate that would be supported by the north in the PDP presidential primary.

But Atiku Abubakar had emerged the eventual consensus choice of the northern leaders. IBB had maintained a studied silence subsequently, not acting in any way that would unsettle the polity.

Perhaps, since after the 1993 experience, he considers no sacrifice too much to make for national unity. This must have informed his resolve in 2007, in particular, to quietly ease out of the presidential race without embracing the idea of confronting Obasanjo in a witty and gritty succession battle.

## OPINION: AT 78, IBB MAINTAINS HIS IMPORTANT BEATS, BUT

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Consider some of them: the coup for which his best friend, General Mamman Vatsa, was killed in order to clear some insidious insinuations the June 12, 1993 presidential election annulment to clarify the roles played by all the actors the allegedly misappropriated \$12.5 billion Gulf Oil Windfall despite a court dismissal of the suit against him in 2012 and the assassination of **Dele Giwa** via a parcel bomb under his regime, among others. An autobiography is a veritable medium by which he can declassify his roles and those of the significant others otherwise, he would go with his own sides of the stories to his grave.

But is this the essential legacy, a legacy of unresolved riddles and obfuscated brainteasers, that IBB wants to leave behind as a statesman? He must obligatorily ponder this on his anniversary. This is wishing IBB well on his 78th birthday.

Sufyan Ojeifo, an Abuja-based **journalist**, contributed this piece [viaojwonderngr@yahoo.com](mailto:viaojwonderngr@yahoo.com)

**Load-Date:** August 21, 2019

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At 78, IBB maintains his important beats, but...



## At 78, IBB maintains his important beats, but...

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

August 17, 2019 Saturday

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**Length:** 1459 words

**Byline:** Sufuyan Ojeifo -

### **Body**

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Nothing has changed or can change the fact that the eighth month in the annual calendar holds a great deal of significance for him and intense attraction to his admirers in the contemplation and celebration of the IBB persona, which is wrapped in enigma. The phenomenal individuality that lives on the mythical Hilltop in Minna marks his 78th anniversary on August 17.

Interestingly, at an age shy of 80, IBB continues to maintain his important beats. But, it is about time he confronted his existential conundrums before he takes his deserved place in the pantheon. At 78, IBB can laugh death to scorn. In other words, as a veritable human institution, he has overcome the fear of death- certainly no more points to prove. He can fittingly appropriate the Latin phrase attributed to Julius Caesar, in a letter to the Roman Senate around 47 BC after he had achieved a quick victory in his short war against Pharnaces II of Pontus at the Battle of Zela, "Veni, vidi, vici", meaning I came, I saw and I conquered.

As a *sui generis* statesman, IBB had defined his eon with the magnitude of his character, military discipline and political beliefs. He had compulsorily fought a number of battles; he had also deliberately chosen some battles to fight while in the face of imminent defeats in some other battles, he had beaten tactical retreats; and, perhaps guided on those occasions by the eternal words of Demosthenes, an epic Greek orator, after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC where, according to notes, he deserted, to wit: "For he that fights and runs away, may live to fight another day."

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**Load-Date:** August 17, 2019

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## At 78, IBB Maintains His Essential Beats, But...

Nigerian Tribune

August 17, 2019 Saturday

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Length: 1451 words

### **Body**

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**Load-Date:** August 20, 2019

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## **Blame Obasanjo For Bad Leadership In Nigeria Osoba**

The Will (Nigeria)

August 7, 2018 Tuesday

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**Length:** 282 words

### **Body**

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BEVERLY HILLS, August 07, (THEWILL) A former governor of Ogun State, Chief Olusegun Osoba, has declared that ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo should be held responsible for the bad leadership in the country. Osoba spoke on Monday in Lagos at the 70th Birthday Colloquium of one of the co-founders of Newswatch Magazine, Mr Ray Ekpu, a contemporary of the late Dele Giwa.

Osoba alleged that the Obasanjo manipulated the governors elected on the platform of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) in 1999 out of the Council of State, saying that manipulation by Obasanjo "was the beginning of the downward trend of leadership in this country." The journalist-turned-politician said the crop of state governors elected in 1999 through the open ballot system were still the best, noting that he and others never had any cause to be probed for corruption by anti-graft agencies.

Some of those in attendance were a former governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah the founder of Vanguard Newspaper, Sam Amuka-Pemu Prof Pat Utomi a former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and presidential hopeful, Kingsley Moghalu and the Chairman, Editorial Board, The Nation Newspaper, Sam Omatseye. On the panel of discussants were the Executive Director of Enough is Enough, Ms Yemi Adamolekun and Mr Debo Adesina.

While expressing his hope in the future of the country, Osoba said he believed that the proposed electronic voting in the amendment to the Electoral Act would eliminate election rigging in the country. He blamed the emergence of bad leaders on the nonchalance of the educated citizens who slept in their houses on election day and left the exercise to thugs, "who sell their votes for N5,000."

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2018

Ife prepared me for journalism, even though, I read Psychology -Lanre Arogundade



## **Ife prepared me for journalism, even though, I read Psychology -Lanre Arogundade**

Nigerian Tribune

April 16, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 5061 words

### **Body**

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I would say the inspiration came from two sources: one, it was a product of some of the experiences that I had as a young person that made me detest injustice in whatever way it manifests itself. I recall that in my first year in secondary school, I always emphasised this first year because I repeated Form I. In that very first year, there was a senior that I was serving which was the tradition then; a junior student was attached to a senior that he or she would serve. The person that I served was a very wicked person; he was a brute. Anytime I arrived at school with all my provisions, he would ask me to open my box and pick all that he wanted - milk, sugar and foodstuffs like garri and all of that. And then, he would generally bully you, beat you up, shout at you and so on.

I recall he liked some particular kind of food - eko. On the days that eko was on the menu at the dining hall, it was compulsory for me to help him gather as many wraps as possible. He never once asked about my well-being despite the fact that I used to be sickly. I looked at my other classmates and the seniors they were serving, the experience seemed slightly different. Some of them were humane, took the juniors serving them as their brothers or sons; they were not forcefully taking their food, their provisions. So, I looked at that and felt it should be the model of relationship between juniors and seniors and from that experience, I told myself that whenever I became a senior student, I would behave like those other seniors and not behave like this man and where possible, I would rise against injustice.

The other one was also related. This was the most painful experience I had in that first year. It had to do with some of my classmates who were bullies. There was a day someone alleged that his wristwatch was stolen. We used to have prep in those days. In the evening you had to go to the class compulsorily to read; there was also afternoon prep. That day, I was coming to class, they had just built a technical block in the school and some of the equipment they wanted to put in the building was spread around the premises. So, that day, I was just coming to the class, I didn't even know that somebody had said his wristwatch was missing. As I was coming in, after taking a few steps up, I saw a wristwatch under one of the equipment, something like a small container, I just picked it up. When I entered the classroom, I asked who the owner of the wristwatch was. And the next thing some of them said was that 'Yes, you're the one that stole it.' All efforts to convince my classmates fell on deaf ears. This matter went up to our seniors and I remember that I was mercilessly beaten by the then senior prefect. The essence of the

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punishment was that you're already guilty and you must just confess your sin. The beating was so much that I didn't know when I said 'yes, I was the one that took it' just to escape the punishment. I am talking of real beating and torture. But people said you should have stood your ground and all that. It also made me understand that when one is under pressure, you're threatened, one can confess to an offence not committed just to escape punishment. Of course, that showed me I needed to strengthen myself. I said to myself 'this is an injustice perpetrated by your classmates, some of whom are bullies.' It was an experience that fired the inspiration that as I grew up or advanced in that school, I would be doing things that advance the cause of justice.

Was there any inspiration before the secondary school experiences?

I think another inspiration also came from general childhood experiences one way or the other. I have always been an activist, even from my primary school days. I was very active in the school's dramatic group. I was also involved in the school band, entertaining other students. I liked acting a lot. In those days, it was called entertainment. Anytime they had end-of-year drama or entertainment and I was not chosen to perform, I would be angry; I would fight and I felt it was a kind of inspiration.

Then, back to our secondary school, I remember the kind of literature we were exposed to. Some of them made us think in terms of fighting for justice in society. I did mention this in my students' unionism memoir, by the time we got to Form IV and V, we had read books like Zambia Shall be Free by Kenneth Kaunda, Tell Freedom by Peter Abraham and Mine Boy. All that literature's sort of changed our worldview, that if we say we were enjoying ourselves, things were not rosy for some other people. From Tell Freedom, we got to know there was a place in this world where black and white did not mingle, where as a black, you could not even go to school. Only the white could go to school because they were privileged. We were told that the system in South Africa was called apartheid. This provoked hatred of injustice in our young minds. So, for me, these are what I could call sources of inspiration when we talk of public activism. In any case, before I left secondary school, I was social prefect and unlike those bullying seniors, I tried to relate well and today, my circle of friends goes beyond my classmates and includes my juniors. So, we were able to bring a new orientation that things could be done without necessarily inflicting injuries on your fellow students, particularly the junior ones.

Perhaps I should also add the inspiration from my dad as a principled person who rejected injustice in all its ramifications. My dad spoke his mind no matter whose ox was gored and once he was convinced that his fight was just, nobody could change his mind. He would fight to the last.

How was your experience growing up?

Well, it was quite exciting because it was full of memorable events. Those were the days of street restlessness or if you like, activism of the streets whenever you were not in the classroom or in the church. You had a situation where we engaged in all kinds of moonlight plays or exercises. But I felt that it also helped in the mental development of our generation, talking about growing up on the streets of Osi-Ekiti, doing hide-and-seek, all kinds of games that tested, not only your strength, but intelligence. I recall the one that involved holding a tiny stone and shaking everyone's hand so that you would pass on the stone to somebody unnoticed. It would now be the duty of the person selected for the purpose to guess who had the stone as everybody was meant to be tight fisted irrespective of who had the stone. That person would sometimes look at the body language to guess correctly and some of my childhood friends were experts at detecting the holder of the stone. That game was called mude-mude. We played street football as well up to and including inter-street football competition.

Then, my father was a produce buyer, a cocoa merchant; he was known as 'Akin Onikoko' not only in Osi-Ekiti, but in neighbouring towns like Iropora, Awo, Epe, Ara, Igbole, Ido, Ifishin, among others. He used to travel to those towns for produce collections in the Lorries of Lawrence Omole and Sons, the Ilesa-based bigger cocoa merchant to which my father, Thomas Akinyemi Arogundade, was attached as an agent. My father didn't like it, but aided and abetted by the drivers and loaders, I would often find a way of jumping into the lorries for the village runs. All the collections would be brought to our big shop for proper bagging and grading for movement to Ilesa and from there to the Lagos seaport. The travels also exposed me to people and activities in those other places early in life.

Which of these holds the fondest memory for you?

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The masquerade festivals stood out. I loved the kind of masqueraders that I saw in those other places. My grandfather, Daniel Ogunlana, was based in Awo-Ekiti. In fact, he was a contemporary of the founder of CAC Church, Ayo Babalola, more or less the first generation of that church and he built the first CAC Church in Awo-Ekiti. Anytime I followed my dad to purchase cocoa in that town and I noticed the masquerade festival was on, I would find an excuse to return. I would say I would like to spend the holiday with my grandfather, just because I wanted to feature in those activities.

I recall telling my grandfather's secretary to take me to the masquerades' shrine not far from our house so that I could become one. He said I needed to bring money. How much was the money then? Six pence. I went to my grandmother and convinced her and she gave me the money. I went to the man and said 'come and take me to the bush'. Then he laughed and said 'you want me to lose my job? Don't you know your grandfather is a Christian? He will sack me if he finds out.' In spite of that, I would still run round the streets after the masqueraders. And in the night, the masquerader would be running after me in my dream. I would cry out and the old man would say you must have been following those masqueraders and would flog me. So, that's the kind of exciting experience that we had. It extended to going to the farm and having a good educational foundation.

What about schooling?

I went to St. Paul's Anglican Primary School, Osi-Ekiti. We had fantastic teachers, some of them disciplinarians. If you messed up, they flogged you. In fact, one of them, the one we called Boogie-Ranking, would say if he flogged you and you reported to your mother, he would also flog your mother and if you also brought your father, he would flog him - all this to our murmurs of anger and disapproval.

When it came to the time to go to secondary school, the idea was that you took entrance examinations in different schools and then, you decided the one you preferred. I remember I was offered admission into African Church Grammar School, Ilesa, but my dad said I could not go there because my brother was already there and we would not face our studies, but would be playing football. I also got admission into Ijebu-Jesa Grammar School and Ekiti Parapo College. Invariably, I chose Ekiti Parapo College because a person like the late Professor Olu Ogboja came to our house and said it was EKPACO I should attend because that was his school and it was the best. I went there and I saw a good school.

As I often say, Ekiti Parapo College was like our first university. That was a secondary school that had everything, including well-equipped biology, chemistry and physics laboratories. We didn't lack anything. We were there right in the bush, so to say, but I can't remember anytime we were to write WAEC exams and we would have to go and borrow equipment for experiments from other secondary schools. In the physics lab then, we had many gas cylinders, sometimes we would play with them. There was one we called laughing gas, we would say we want to laugh, let's release laughing gas to make us laugh.

What about your tertiary education?

Before I got admitted to the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), I was at the Federal School of Arts and Science, Ondo (FSASON). I was there for the Advanced Level programme, but I didn't spend the entire two years there. I just did one year; I sat for JME and passed. I wanted to study Economics, but I didn't meet the cut-off mark, by three points or so. In fact, I had started writing my A' Level exams when my uncle, now retired Bishop Kehinde Olowokure, who was an archdeacon at the All Saints Anglican Church, Ogbonkowo, Ondo, at the time kept saying 'you don't need to wait, you're an old person, go and take a course.' That was how I stopped writing the exams and took up the offer of admission to study Psychology at Ife. FSASON was also another experience in terms of the facilities that we had because it was like a buffer then when you could not go directly to the university. At the school then, we had all sorts of clubs, one of which was the press club. Groups or individuals would come together and give themselves a name and they would write stories. The stories then were handwritten on sheets of paper that were pasted on the notice boards. My own press organisation then was called Ken-Picolo Organisation because there were three of us - Kenlast, Picolo and myself. So, the press club was the most popular and most prominent club at FSASON then. We used to contest elections. I ran for the position of secretary against one of our classmates, Jendu, a very popular socialite. Of course, I lost the election, but that was the first time I stepped

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forward to address a large audience to talk about what I could do as secretary of the organisation. I lost, but it was a good experience.

It was from Ondo that I moved to the University of Ife in 1980 to study Psychology. Some of my mates in Ondo were admitted the same year. Some of us found ourselves living in the same room because not everybody was able to get a bed space then. On getting to Ife, there were mates like Tope Ibitoye and others who would later be instrumental to my success when it came to campaigning for offices. But the thing was that in our first year at Ife, it was like we were awe-struck by the campus. If it was raining and you were in the lecture room, you wouldn't know it was raining because of the drainage system. We felt we were in another world entirely. You can even spend a whole day moving around, admiring the lecture theatre, Oduduwa Hall, the amphitheatre and so on. In the classrooms, we had an audiovisual system through which some of the lectures were delivered.

How did you get involved in campus activism?

No matter where you came from, the Ife campus then would change the person in you, and from that we were exposed to student unionism. In fact, shortly after we resumed, campaigns were on. Even as we were arriving on campus, they were going to stage protests in Lagos. So, I had early stages of exposure to activism under the leadership of Wole Olaoye and the rest of them. They now had campaigns for candidates, singing and beating drums. It was a beautiful experience. At Ife then, Part I students could not vote and be voted for, but you can participate, you can be cheerleaders, you can be noise makers. So, we followed the candidates around the campus. Even from that first year, there was something to show one might be interested in students' unionism.

And it didn't take long because by my second year, I had made up my mind that I was going to contest for a position in the Students Representative Council to represent the Faculty of Social Sciences. In those days, we were allocated 35 seats and I was able to clinch one of the seats. And based on my performance in the SRC, in the third year, I ran for the secretary-general of the Students Union. By that time, I had become an ideologue and joined the Alliance of Progressive Students (APS), a student socialist group, and it was a factor. And in my final year, again based on my performance, the presidency of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) was coming to Zone D, our zone. Again we had comrades and friends who felt I was the best to run for that position. We ran around for that and I became NANS president.

And campus journalism?

My exposure to journalism in Ife campus was another dynamism we witnessed. The fact that as you're waking up in your room, someone is knocking on your door, student vendors selling journals - we had Echo, Bang, Petals and others like Cobra which was the chief gossip magazine. They go after lecturers who were chasing girls and others. As of the time we were there, Dapo Thomas was one of the popular editors of Cobra, there was also Niyi Ogun. On one or two occasions, I was one of those Cobra dealt with in their report. Cobra was right wing and they were always interested in APS members. That was a phenomenon at Ife campus to the extent that there was and still there is the Association of Campus Journalists (ACJ). I think for some time, I was president of that association. Some of those who have become lawyers, who are doing well today, were campus journalists. So, journalism itself was an alternate students union, if I can put it that way, at the University of Ife. You had the students union, but you also had the campus press that was playing the oversight role, that was taking the authorities to task, that was raising questions, writing editorials that were probing. A lot of people would talk about Great Ife, talk about Aluta and so on, but I feel enough documentation or enough study has not been done on the phenomenon of journalism at Ife campus. Here is a university that doesn't have a Mass Communication faculty, that does not have any course in journalism, yet had a thriving press. So, when you look at the media in Nigeria today, you cannot dismiss the Ife factor. I can reel out the products of Ife campus journalism who came into the larger society and made their mark as journalists - very long list. I can talk about the likes of Wole Olaoye, Dapo Olorunyomi, Owei Lakemfa, Gbolahan Gbadamosi, Jika Ator, Kunle Ajibade, Femi Ojudu, Uzor Maxim Uzoatu, Edmond Enaibe, Dele Momodu, Seye Kehinde, Kehinde Bamigbetan and former editor in chief of the Punch, Bola Bolawole. And talking about Punch, one can mention the likes of Bolaji Adebiyi and Tunde Aremu. Outside Punch, I can mention Tony Iyare, Edetaen Ojo, Tive Denedo, myself and others.

Ife prepared me for journalism, even though, I read Psychology -Lanre Arogundade

Can you briefly take us through your career history?

Ife prepared me for journalism, even though, I read Psychology. There were a number of options, but I just felt it was the media that could provide the kind of space that I needed. And it was not just because of the Ife activism alone, I also fell in love with the media while going round media houses, distributing press releases as NANS president. On one occasion I was at the Punch newspaper and that day, they were having their chapel election, Tunji Ladner (Jnr), Niran Malaolu, Mr Demola Osinubi, Uncle Eric Teniola were all there; so many of them. I really liked the atmosphere and it's like 'oh, I would like to work in this kind of place'; the likes of Nojeem Jimoh, Feyi Smith, Tokunbo Oloruntola, had all interviewed me as NANS president. Femi Falana (SAN) would also take me round media houses as NANS president so I liked the environment. Though, when I first graduated, I worked briefly at the law chambers of Aka-Bashorun as a solicitor's clerk, he was trying to get me to work in the textile industry. He felt since I had a degree in Psychology, I could work in their industrial relations department. But somehow, it didn't work out. Then, the Republic Newspapers was established and I went there and I was recruited. Before then, I had tried to join the National Concord, but I was not successful. So, the Republic was the beginning of my journalism and union career as a ***journalist***. I was chapel chairman. And when as a result of union activities we went on strike over non-payment of salaries, I was sacked. For me not to sit at home idle, Ladi Lawal, who was chairman of Lagos council of NUJ encouraged me to join the secretariat and work as the organising secretary and editor of Lighthouse News, the then news organ of Lagos NUJ.

How well did that go?

That didn't last long. But then, at the Republic, we had some of the best hands in the industry and that newspaper would really have made it if the publisher had been a little patient. He came from the banking sector, he was expecting quick return. The Republic had good hands, Paxton Olu Idowu was our editor, and we had Kunle Oduduwa in the newsroom as news editor who came from Daily Times background and the like of Tokunbo Oloruntola as head of the newsroom. So, I was at the Lagos NUJ and after a short period of time, I really felt like moving back to mainstream journalism and fortunately, National Concord had a place for me. I joined National Concord as chief correspondent, working with the likes of Niyi Obaremi, Akin Ogunrinde, Kunmi Olayiwola, late Soni Ehi Asuelimen, Kola Ojelabi, Ayo Aluko-Olokun and many others including Goke Olayinka and Waheed Odusile. When I became the features editor, I worked with the likes of Tunde Akanni, Sam Nwanze, Jide Orintunsin and others. National Concord was a better environment compared to the Republic; well established, well funded, facilities were available to do your work - recording gadgets were available when you want to conduct interviews and we had an editor who was highly competent and very professional, Nsikak Essien. We had a robust political desk manned by the likes of Tunji Bello, Victor Ifijeh, Sam Omatseye and upcoming fantastic writers like Louis Odion. National Concord was another arena entirely and for me we really practiced good journalism. Concord had its own house style, for example, a paragraph then was not supposed to be more than 32 words. So, it was a training ground. But as you know, we ran into political storms when Chief MKO Abiola ran for the presidency and Concord was made to pay the price by the military junta. We were not rabidly in support of MKO and we were not running down the other political party. Concord was simply professional and it reflected in the fact that the daily newspaper was doing well. The weekend paper was something else, when it was edited by Mike Awoyinfa, selling over 500,000 copies per day. The Sunday Concord was also doing well coming from the tradition already established by the likes of **Dele Giwa**. For me, the attack on Concord and the forceful closure was one of the greatest setbacks to journalism in Nigeria, because Abiola really had the vision of a newspaper modelled after the best newspapers in the world and I believe Concord was on its way to being that. It rivalled well established newspapers of the time.

After Concord shutdown, what next?

I again moved in the direction of activism by going to Gani Fawehinmi Chambers to work on the stable of The Masses. Gani Fawehinmi had in 1994 formed the National Conscience Party in defiance of the ban on political parties by the military government for which he was jailed. The editor of the Masses was Richard Akinnola and I was the deputy editor. I worked in Gani's chambers for some time, and around the same time too, I was editing Democracy Echo, a journal of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) of which I was a foundational member. Despite these, I still felt the need to go back to mainstream journalism because around the

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time, a group of journalists who came from the same tradition with me felt that we needed to be more involved in the NUJ as we were part of the New Trend Movement. We had been active in the campaign that made Ladi Lawal president of NUJ. Before Ladi Lawal, there was Sani Zoro in 1992 because the movement had been formed by that time. Before New Trend, there was another group by erstwhile campus journalists and activists called Progressive Journalists Association in the media, we used to meet at the secretariat of the Nigeria Labour Congress - Kayode Komolafe, Tunji Lawal, Owei Lakemfa were prominent in that. Towards the end of Ladi Lawal's tenure, some of them were suggesting that well, we see you as someone who could become the chairman of NUJ, but the Masses was not in mainstream journalism and I had to return to mainstream journalism and Vanguard was waiting to take me. So, I became assistant editor and member of the editorial board of the Vanguard Newspapers.

For me, one of the best contributions to journalism has been made by Uncle Sam, just by making the point that you don't have to breathe down the neck of editors and reporters before they can turn out good copies. And the editorial board I worked with one of the best under the chairmanship of late Alhaji Kola Animashaun. He also taught us the value of diversity.

Anytime they were having Islamic festival, Alhaji Animashaun, would ask me to write the editorial. When he first challenged me to do so and I asked him how I would go about the editorial, he said I should read more about Islam. So, anytime we had Islamic festivals, I would be the one to write the editorials. Then, during Christmas or Easter, either himself or another Moslem on the editorial board, Alhaji Femi Abbas, would write the editorial. That was the way we worked at Vanguard. It was from Vanguard in 1995, with the support of the management and staff, that I ran for the chairmanship of Lagos State NUJ, won and served from 1995 to 1999.

How did you meet your wife?

That was the National Concord factor. My wife's dad, late Chief Segun Ogunsanwo, was also in the media; he was a journalist and he worked on the sub-desk. He was chief sub-editor of National Concord. By the time I was joining Concord, he was on his way out to establish an advertising company - SAO Oguns. The children, including my wife and the brothers used to come to Concord to place adverts on his behalf. She was also trying to work on her admission and a friend in the features department was trying to help out. So, anytime she came around to drop advert, she would check the features department to see that my friend, who is an Ijesha brother. It was in that process I set my eyes on her. And there is an Italian saying that when you see a woman and you like her, and you want to fall in love with her, you will say you are struck by the thunderbolt. So, that was what happened and that's where the relationship started around 1992 or thereabout. But it was only in 1996 that it ended in marriage. That was how I met my wife Ogunsola (nee Ogunsanwo).

You must be involved in pranks as a youth.

Well, there is no way you won't be involved in one prank or the other. Okay I remember one time when I was in the primary school. I had a friend whose father was an herbalist or oracle diviner. His name is Dele - very funny character. One day, he told me that we should not go to school; that we should go and swim. There was a big stream called 'Omi Isun' in the town. That morning, I was supposed to go to school, I just gave an excuse to my dad and said I wasn't feeling fine. I stayed back. So, Dele, myself and a female classmate went to the stream while others were in school. We were enjoying the swimming, not knowing that an elderly man who was returning from the farm had seen us. He was shocked that two boys and a girl were swimming when they were supposed to be in the school. The first thing he did was to go grab our clothes and he cleverly hid them. He then made some noise to call attention to himself. We ran out of the stream. The instinct was to go for our clothes and run, but he laughed as he asked which clothes we were looking for. We were downcast! Then, he gave us our clothes, but said we should be marching ahead of him, which enabled the villagers to tongue-lash us. My Dad was shocked and flogged me. My teacher took his turn the following day at school to punish me.

In the secondary school, I had a friend who liked playing pranks, his name is Taye Akerele. We just thought of ways to embarrass our seniors, particularly those that we believe were wicked or not that exposed. I recall that we went to one of them and told him that a lady in our class had fallen in love with him, and that he should write to her. The senior had a very good handwriting; so, he wrote a fantastic love letter. Immediately he gave it to us, we ran to the

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stream to open the letter and we saw all those big expressions like 'you are the golden key to my brain' and so on. We didn't actually deliver the letter to the girl, but we gave him the impression that we had delivered it. However, the tradition then was that if you wrote somebody, the person would have to reply. But in this instance, there was no reply. The guy, perhaps, got worried that the lady might report him to the authorities; his major fear was for the letter not to fall into the hands of the teachers because it could earn him a dismissal. We started playing games. We told him the lady would be in class during prep and that he should come. He would come and ask where is the lady and we would say the lady had gone and all that. So, the guy suspected that something was wrong and said 'okay, return my letter.' We now went to my own senior that I was serving, a more humane person, and told him that we had been deceiving a senior. Then, he screamed that we have destroyed his friend. He was more shocked than annoyed and asked the offence he committed that made us to do what we did.

We played another one on another senior, a very reserved person. He was our next victim. We went to him and said a lady in our class had fallen in love with him and since Valentine was coming, he should buy some things. The man was shocked, but he bought the stuff and gave it to us. But this time, we delivered to the girl. And she was surprised. We told the girl you have to buy your own, to reciprocate. She bought it and of course, we had our own share of the largesse.

How do you unwind?

In terms of my hobbies, I like sports; I watch football and I go dancing. In those days I was fairly regular at Fela's shrine. When Lagbaja had Motherlan, because my wife likes Lagbaja, we were regulars at the Friday shows. Sometimes in the office when I want to unwind, I take to the floor and dance. I also unwind by watching movies; I watch all kind of things. People would say why, but for me, no knowledge is lost. We keep learning one thing or the other. In any case, life continues. So, I am not rigid. Yes, I have my traditional areas of interest like radical and socialist literatures, but I read other things, only that I have become a slow reader now. There was a time I would read up to six books in a year. But now, I struggle to finish two.

I also like reading biographies. I have enjoyed a number of biographies, that of Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton and Oba Sikiru Adetona, the Awujale of Ijebuland. I listen to all kinds of music, Ashake or whatever. The lyrics may not make as much sense, but they keep you on your toes.

Sometimes I sit with friends, chat, and have some drinks. It keeps life going because whether you unwind or not, life itself keeps going. Nobody is going to have a second chance at life, just the fun you give yourself. And when possible, I hang around with people, relate and joke with them.

One of my major hobbies is reading about, studying and owing Aviation technologies. There was a time I could look into the sky, see a plane and correctly tell if it was a Boeing 737, 747, DC10 or the Airbus series. Ditto for planes on the tarmac.

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2023



## **Killing of Journalists Now Game [opinion]**

Leadership (Abuja)

May 4, 2010 Tuesday

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**Byline:** Chika Otuchikere

### **Body**

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How callously bestial can a people suddenly become? One may be forced to ask. The point here is that, everybody must die because death, of course, is a necessary end which must come when it will but why must it be for reason of stopping a just cause or movement? Nigerians have more than enough sources through which death, the cold one, comes to dispatch then men into eternity prematurely.

Accidents take more than a fair share. If it is not in the air with virtually no escape route, it is at sea as our young men and women attempt to smuggle themselves out of the country. This has taken the form of a death-trap from which men only escape when they cease to breathe and float into foreign lands paved with gold and diamonds. The most rampant and prominent is death on our federal and state roads. Apart from the roads being directly and single-handedly responsible for deaths too numerous to count, they also provide a safe haven for robbers and other agents of death who carry out deadly acts.

Talking about robbers, they are fast taking the unenviable position of the most cruel agent death uses to send men to the beyond. What's with the recently popularized picture of robbers ordering innocent passengers to lie flat on the road for a huge truck to run them over, crushing them like some avian flu infected fowls penciled down to be wasted to avoid spread of the disease?

There are many other ways through which Nigerians lose their lives: starvation, minor and major illnesses without any funds to seek medical attention here or abroad and of course, unavailability of genuine medication. We won't forget the unenviable role of police stray bullets and extra judicial killings which is always brazenly denied.

Journalists are not exempt from falling victim of any of the above listed sources of death and many are not listed. What makes the journalist's case more pathetic is that his life is snuffed out simply to shut him up stop the just cause he is running. This, no other group of Nigerians experience.

It was during the military rule of General Ibrahim Babangida that the killing of journalists became a favoured option in settling arguments. Most who are today killing or ordering their deaths borrowed a leaf from the killers of Dele Giwa - a foremost journalist who was in novel style, dispatched to the land of the dead. Up till today, the killers have not been traced and so many became confident that using various methods to kill journalists but ensuring 'like the Dele Giwa case' that it was not traced to them was okay. Babangida was accused of the assassination since, according to the story, still fresh in so many people's minds, the bomb which shattered vital organs of the young

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journalist was wrapped in federal government envelope. Babangida was even sued for the heinous crime by the late fiery lawyer, Gani Fawehinmi but nothing came out of it.

However that incident signaled a new dawn for the Nigerian journalist. They became a major part of the world's endangered species with everybody mindlessly willing to kill them for every flimsy reason. Today, the society which the journalist is to by nature of his calling watch over, now turns round to frighten them out of the profession. There may never be an end to this madness as long as the killers continue to evade justice. One day the country would wake up to find that all the journalists have been terrified out of the profession, God forbid!

**Load-Date:** May 19, 2010

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## Echoes of parcel bomb

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 16, 2013 Saturday

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### Body

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The nation was on edge recently following the discovery of a parcel bomb by the Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) in Abuja, reportedly addressed to the Minister of Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. The contents of the mail believed to be the handiwork of hired assassins, were two substances suspected to be Improvised Explosive Devices(IEDs)which had since been detonated by the anti- bomb squad of the Nigeria Police.

IEDs, it needs to be stated, are essentially home-made bombs, simple to make, easily hidden but very destructive. Had the parcel bomb reached its target, it certainly would have opened a whole new front in terrorism in which key public officials would be prime targets. Although the interception of the suspicious mail saved the nation what would have been a monumental tragedy reminiscent of the assassination of frontline journalist ,Mr Dele Giwa, via a parcel bomb in 1986,it should serve as a rude awakening that the idea of parcel bomb is not over yet, and could indeed, be a new strategy by terrorist groups to silence prominent government officials.

It is instructive that the Finance Minister could just be one out of many other targets on the radar of some terrorists. But they should not be deterred. Rather, they should remain focused and resolute in their assignments. However, the development calls for more diligence on the part of security agencies, and specifically, authorities of (NIPOST) and other companies involved in parcel delivery. As a matter of fact, they should always insist on knowing the contents of every parcel. Because of the apprehension created by insecurity in the land, disclosure and description of what a sender is sending to the receiver must be confirmed by the postal or courier services before they are dispatched.

We commend the efforts of NIPOST in nipping the vicious plan in the bud, as well as the swift response of the personnel from the Explosive ordnance Department, a unit of the anti-bomb squad of the Nigeria Police Force. Again, considering the general security situation across the country, there is need for all agencies handling mails/parcels to be eternally vigilant. Contrary to the statement by the Post-Master General of the Federation,

### Echoes of parcel bomb

Ibrahim Mori Baba, on the incident, both sane and insane persons can be used as "agents of death" by the masterminds of such criminal plot.

The case of late **Dele Giwa** remains a sad reference point of such disguise of the evil intentions of the sponsors. Government should step up its efforts against all manner of terrorist groups that have emerged across the country in recent times. A situation where public officials are afraid of their lives in the performance of their duties makes public service quite unattractive. It ought not to be so.

Public office is a service to the fatherland and those who have offered themselves to serve should not be stampeded out unceremoniously. We urge security agencies to investigate the possible source of the suspicious parcel. But beyond that, the incident+ is a sad reminder that terrorists may be one step ahead, and this is the time for the security agencies to re-strategize on a new offensive against terrorism in the country.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2013

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## Another Roots for IBB

This Day (Lagos)

October 30, 2010 Saturday

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**Length:** 564 words

**Byline:** Ndubuisi Ugah

### **Body**

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Secretary of Awori Youth Vanguard of Nigeria, Dr. Yinka Badmus, has said it is unfair to continue to blame former military president, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, for the woes besetting the nation.

He said after 17 years since he left office with six successive heads of government, such attribution of Nigeria's problems to the presidential aspirant is unrealistic as it is deceptive.

Badmus, who listed what he referred to as the familiar template of Babangida's political 'sins' by his detractors to include the annulment of June 12 election, the murder of Dele Giwa and the \$12.4 billion Gulf War windfall, averred that there is more of politics to the accusations than substance.

His defence of Babangida, which also reflected the former leader's positions on the accusations was contained in a statement issued in Lagos.

On June 12, he said: "At the appropriate time, Nigerians will not only know but would be shocked to discover those who pressurised IBB to annul the election, freest and fairest ever, including the man who said Abiola was not the messiah. Thus we must all reason to appreciate the issue in its true elements vis-à-vis our judgements. Moreover, his interest in democracy and the election can never be in doubt otherwise he could have aborted the election via ABN's injunction but he overruled it.

He has since been remorseful and accepted responsibility as a leader for all that was June 12. Yet we must remind ourselves that those who are claiming to be democrats today were the same people who quickly accepted interim government in place of the new expedited election proposed by IBB then".

Badmus added that the Okigbo panel was set up to examine the restructuring of the CBN not only under Babangida's era but also other governments like that of Shonekan and Abacha, a point, he said, is often conveniently omitted, saying the report never indicted IBB but said some of the projects for which money was spent on were not priority projects.

He noted: "But when we look back today those projects remain the nation's monuments in infrastructure, industrial and socio-economic development of the nation. We have to compare the revenues under IBB with those we have had from 1999 till date and see the level of developments across board and we can then appreciate the fact that IBB deserves some respectable credit and indeed deserving of his quest to rebuild and improve significantly on our

## Another Roots for IBB

national agenda and overall development as a reformer. Yes, IBB's critics should relate his tenure to the squandering of 20 billion dollars excess crude funds in 4 months and depletion of external reserves to 33 billion now in just some months to properly situate his legacy."

The statement similarly regretted the fate of **Dele Giwa**, whom Badmus regarded as a great *journalist* but said the recurring attachment of his death to Babangida in spite of court's avowal to the contrary is a calculated attempt to smear his image and reputation. He said that about 8 other journalists who lost their lives in similar circumstances in this democratic dispensation are also deserving of attention.

"Such deliberate insistence on falsehood and campaign of calumny against IBB by the so-called "democrats" and tenants of democracy and the plan to stop IBB at all cost only point to his popularity. IBB's fate should be allowed to be decided by the people as it obtains in a democracy", he stated.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2010

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## The conscience of a nation

The Nation (Nigeria)

July 10, 2019 Wednesday

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Length: 1705 words

### **Body**

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The cell-phone beeped frantically. With the caller ID withheld, it was easy to surmise that it was either a foreign call or someone preferring anonymity. Pressing the receive button, my hunch was dead right. The baritone voice was unmistakable: it was the literary lion himself roaring from his den on the other side of the Atlantic.

'Hey Louis, what's the trouble at home this time?' he teased in his accustomed patriarchal flourish.

'Good day, Prof,' I responded and, excited that my repeated dials had finally paid off, quickly switched to the sarcastic mode Kongi had set. 'It's Maradona again o. Of all the idle pensioners left in Nigeria, the NLNG people just declared that he's the only one fit to give keynote address at the next Prize ceremony.'

Indeed, heavy dust had been raised earlier on this day in September 2007 following the unveiling of General Ibrahim Babangida as the lead speaker at the exclusive shindig, to which the who's who in Nigeria's literary community get invited annually.

As editor of Sunday Sun then with a robust literary section, this writer was urgently seeking Professor Wole Soyinka's comment, to set the agenda ahead of the presentation ceremony scheduled for the following weekend.

Without mincing words, Kongi released the expected bombshell: 'Abominable!!'

His logic was simple: having been linked to the unnatural deaths of a few literary celebrities as military dictator and having presided over an order that flagrantly stifled free speech, it was simply unacceptable that the microphone be yielded to the former military dictator at a ceremony intended to celebrate the spoken or written word.

To him, that amounted to dancing on the graves of the likes of poet Mamman Vatsa (a military general summarily executed over the alleged 1985 military coup despite passionate pleas from the nation's leading writers including Soyinka) and Dele Giwa (celebrated journalist dispatched by a letter bomb on October 19, 1986).

With such thunderous denunciation by Kongi, yours sincerely was left salivating with some malicious pleasure at a steaming exclusive and did not think twice before making it a front-page story with the headline, 'NLNG Award: Soyinka moves against IBB.'

Predictably, Soyinka's eruption instantly triggered a concatenation of lightning and thunder across the land. Literary icons like Professors Niyi Osundare and Okey Ndibe added to IBB's misery with their barbs. There were a few dissenters, however. At the end, the 2007 edition of the Literature Prize organized by the Nigerian Liquified Natural

## The conscience of a nation

Gas was completely overshadowed by the debate on the propriety or otherwise of inviting a military dictator to a literary feast.

Fleeting as it may seem, the foregoing anecdote nonetheless speaks to one fact: another confirmation of Professor Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka as the conscience of a nation blighted by vanity and amnesia, with a deep moral voice whose resonance not only sends fear into the hearts of men of power but also inspires generations of men and women to stand up and be counted for good.

By and large, what truly makes Soyinka great is not so much for the monumentality of a talent that spews pithy poetry, gripping prose and transcendental drama. His greatness lies more in the courage and character he brings to bear in creativity.

At an age when no territory seems restricted any more, when many yesterday's heroes and heroines have been exposed to be counterfeits, when more and more of the surviving statesmen would rather trade away their honour for temporary gains, Kongi remains an exemplar, distinguished from the multitude by his trademark hoary mane accentuated by an equally immaculate goatee.

My early contact with him was through the channel of the written word. Beginning from secondary school, to the polytechnic and later the university, I read tons and tons of Soyinka's works to find my own feet as a writer. As many students will attest, Soyinka's poems were a source of dread and torture.

But the Kongi I would later encounter as ***journalist*** was a pleasant man. Despite his world celebrity status, his humility is very numbing and, as the good teacher, he never allows any opportunity to mentor the younger ones pass.

As one of the pioneers of THISDAY back page back in mid-90s, this writer was introduced to him by a professional 'egbon' (senior), Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, during a flight to Abuja from Lagos.

'Oh, your face is already familiar,' he said, offering me a handshake. 'You're one of those I read on THISDAY back page.'

Coming from the owner of the word himself, the Nobel laureate, a famous name I grew up worshipping, I felt completely flattered that my own little juvenile jottings made some sense to Soyinka. I took his contact and tried to stay in touch. Thus began a relationship that grew from acquaintanceship to discipleship. He has a natural affinity, instinctive solidarity with anyone in the writing fraternity.

I have seen him deploy his awesome clout to extract better deals for fellow writers. While delivering a keynote address at the inaugural edition of the NLNG Prize for Literature many years ago, Soyinka had tactfully bad-mouthed the organizers for being too 'stingy' by the amount set aside as the Prize money in view of the 'fortune you daily amass from the soil of Niger Delta.'

In clear breach of protocol, he thereafter unilaterally declared that in the exercise of his 'natural powers' as the 'defender of writers' the amount was upped from 10,000 to 30,000 US Dollars. The Kongi's coup elicited a standing ovation from the galaxy of writers gathered in the expansive hall that night. The rapturous applause continued when his speech ended. Reading the mood in the audience correctly, NLNG's MD had little or no choice than announce the approval of Soyinka's proposal.

To the younger ones like yours sincerely, Soyinka's father-figure stature naturally makes him a guardian. But despite the wide age difference, Kongi also relates to you as a friend with incredible sense of humour. During one of his frequent visits to Nigeria, he gladly consented to an interview request I made. The only problem was time, because he had several speaking engagements already lined up.

Finally, he decided to squeeze out time in-between a lecture at the National Arts Theatre, Lagos.

## The conscience of a nation

On the D-Day, we were already more than thirty minutes into the session when I suddenly noticed that the tape-recorder was stuck. My heart skipped with embarrassment. I quickly demobilized the gadget and played back. Lo, not a single word was recorded!

'Haba! Louis, shame on you. You mean a journalist of your standing still carries around a counterfeit recorder,' he teased, without the slightest sign of irritation that his precious time had been wasted on account of an avoidable mechanical malfunction. Graciously, he accepted we begin afresh.

His fiery pen and caustic tongue notwithstanding, Kongi remains tender at heart; one who may disagree with you in principle, but never holds back in the fellowship of humanity or be detained by bitterness over the past. Only that could possibly explain the complicated relationship he has had over the years with his kinsman, ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Feisty OBJ had decided to veer from the political turf as sitting president in 2005 to engage Soyinka in an epistolary joust. In a statement he personally signed, he took a swipe at Kongi for criticizing his policies.

But discerning observers who read the open letter could not but raise their hands in panic immediately, fearful of the approaching literary wrath on the proverbial errant native doctor who carries his ritual offering past a mosque.

While it was easily conceded that OBJ was cantankerous by nature, many had expected that his fabled native intelligence would have served him well by dissuading him from venturing into a square rope against Kongi in a literary duel.

Their worst fears were soon proved right. Soyinka's response was an atomic bomb. By the time the smoke cleared, OBJ's presidential garment was torn beyond recognition. For once, the Ota chicken farmer became tongue-tied. Months later, the animus that open 'roforofo' (dirty fight) had generated would not prevent Kongi from showing up at the funeral of OBJ's spouse, Stella, who died suddenly following complications arising from a medical procedure in Spain.

When OBJ finally met with Kongi face to face on the aisle outside the funeral parlour, the story is told of how the president exploded in a playful rage, 'Wole, iwo! (Wole, You!)', raising an arm in mock threat. Defiant Kongi fired back, 'Segun, Ori e!', thumping his own head in a supreme Yoruba gesture of contempt.

Obviously more embarrassed than amused by such show of audacity, the band of guards around the President cleverly looked away.

Again, when Chief Emeka Ojukwu qualified the victory he achieved in the sham elections arranged by the Abacha junta to select delegates for the 1994 Constitutional Conference as conferring on him a mandate 'superior to June 12', vintage Soyinka gave expression to popular thinking in the country then by simply dismissing the ex-Biafran secessionist as 'an expired warlord'.

That critical riposte would not prevent Kongi from attending Ojukwu's burial in 2012 to pay last respect to a personal friend.

Same generosity of spirit is very much in evidence in his warm relationship today with General Yakubu Gowon. At the presentation of a memoir by Oba Eradiuawa of Benin in 2014, Soyinka continually poked good-natured jokes at Gowon while giving a keynote address, to the admiration of the audience. It was hard to believe that it was same Gowon who had clamped him into the gulag during the Nigerian civil war. In fact, his 20-month solitary confinement birthed the book, 'The Man Died'.

When it was his turn to speak, the former head of state threw the crowd into a fresh bout of laughter by cautioning Kongi to watch his tongue: 'You should remember that it was because of the same sharp tongue of yours that I sent you to prison in the 60s.'

Being the first black man to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Soyinka's life surely sends an enduring message: the infinite possibilities of the black race and the value in character. Here is wishing him happy 85th birthday.

**Load-Date:** July 11, 2019

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## Six Things June 12 Taught Me

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

June 16, 2019 Sunday

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**Length:** 1917 words

**Byline:** Simon Kolawole Simon -

### **Body**

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Where were you on June 12, 1993? I was in Ilorin, Kwara state, enjoying the weekend with my cousins. I could not vote because I registered in Lagos. If I had voted, I would have thumb-printed the space for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) whose presidential flag bearer was Chief MKO Abiola. I had been rooting for Alhaji Bashir Tofa, the candidate of the National Republican Convention (NRC). But after watching the televised presidential debate and having an argument debate with my dear friend, Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu (now APC national publicity secretary), I was finally persuaded to vote for Abiola, although I eventually disenfranchised myself.

I learnt a dozen lessons from the June 12 debacle. First, northerners were unfairly vilified in the political crisis that engulfed the nation after the annulment. The narrative was that they did not want Abiola to become president. There was a conspiracy theory that the north wanted to hold on to power by all means. However, the election results did not support this claim. Abiola won nine out of the 16 states in the north while Tofa won only seven. The romantic part of the story was that Abiola defeated Tofa in his home state, Kano, and even in his ward. I do not want to believe it was the Yoruba or southerners in the north that did the magic. That would be a disingenuous claim.

To be sure, I accepted the conspiracy theory then. The north, I mean the "core north", had so dominated the political landscape that resentment had built up considerably in the south against the "northern oligarchy". So it was easy to read the annulment as a northern agenda. If you ask my opinion today, I would say there was no conspiracy. I would say the military guys just did not want to let go of power. That is the benefit of hindsight. After all, the previously cancelled primaries had three northerners in the lead: Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua having pocketed the SDP ticket and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi and Mallam Adamu Ciroma about to face a run-off for the NRC ticket.

The second lesson is that Igbo and Yoruba are not irreconcilable political enemies. Historically, the two dominant southern ethnic groups had appeared to be political rivals fiercely at war with each other — always going in opposite directions in the struggle for supremacy in the Nigerian power game. However, despite the SDP fielding a Muslim-Muslim ticket that held virtually no attraction to the Igbo, they still voted massively for Abiola, a Yoruba.

## Six Things June 12 Taught Me

There were four Igbo states then. Although Tofa won in Enugu, Imo and Abia and Abiola won only in Anambra, the total scores provided better evidence: 790,371 to Tofa, 739,748 to Abiola. A mere difference of 50,623 votes!

I believe Yoruba still owe Ndigbo one. You would appreciate these figures better if you realised that there was an Igbo on the NRC ticket: Dr Sylvester Ugoh was Tofa's running mate. Abiola getting 48 percent in the south-east was definitely not an ordinary gesture. Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu had angrily left SDP for NRC after the Muslim-Muslim ticket was announced, arguing that SDP had marginalised the Igbo — even though Abiola was always going to pick a northerner as his vice-presidential candidate. Informed that Abiola would appoint an Igbo as secretary to the government of the federation (SGF), Ojukwu famously quipped: "That's a glorified tea boy!"

The third lesson is that the Nigerian political class can be petty. NRC behaved badly after losing the election. Rather than join forces with the SDP to defend our democracy and confront the military which was the mortal enemy, it became a matter of "if I don't have it, then nobody else should". NRC backed out of the fight very easily. To make matters worse, SDP members who had been unhappy that Abiola got the party's presidential ticket in the first place were very eager to negotiate away the mandate. SDP leaders were soon engaged in meetings with the military to set up an interim government to "save Nigeria from the precipice". You won the election, guys!

The fourth lesson is that anyone can become a symbol of resistance no matter their past. Abiola was an establishment person, one who wined and dined with the powers that be, starting with the military government of Gen Murtala Muhammed in 1975. He was a known friend of Gen Ibrahim Babangida. If anyone was expected to accept the annulment of June 12 quietly, enter his car and go back to his house, it was Abiola. I am sure Babangida and his team were dumbfounded that Abiola led the rebellion against what was supposed to be a routine cancellation of elections. I honestly did not expect the resistance from Abiola, much less that he would go to his grave fighting.

What this seems to tell me about Nigeria is that the much-expected turnaround may come from unexpected quarters. I am not saying I saw any vision, but the usual suspects may not lead the ethical and political revolution that will unleash the potential of this country. Nigeria is too blessed to be crawling on its chest. How can we have all these resources — human and material — and be stuck in the cesspool of poverty, disease, unemployment and corruption? But the change leader may turn out to be the least expected person, one whom we despise or treat with suspicion. Abiola was an unlikely symbol of resistance. He did not look the part but he played the part.

The fifth lesson is that Nigerians have short memory. Many of those parading themselves today as heroes of democracy were actually in bed with the miscreants who annulled June 12. They fought vigorously to make sure the annulment was not reversed. They said and did despicable things for political gain and filthy lucre. But nobody remembers again. They now grandstand and lecture us on democracy and the resistance to military rule. If you want to have a list of these villains-turned-heroes, please get a copy of Olusegun Adeniyi's "The Last 100 Days of Abacha". You will marvel at the conduct of the sycophants who have become latter-day saints of the democratic order.

Finally, this may be minor but it is not irrelevant: I also learnt that presidential debate is a good thing. Actually, if Babangida had not annulled the presidential election, he would have bowed out a hero after a lot of missteps in his eight years as president of Nigeria. He had tried to create a new political order after performing many experiments, including banning and unbanning "old breed" politicians and creating, controversially, two parties based on competing ideologies and manifestoes. Watching the two presidential candidates debate was something completely new to me as a Nigerian and it really helped me weigh my options before making up my mind.

Unfortunately, debates have become a joke in Nigeria. Rather than make progress and build on what we experienced in 1993, we have gone terribly backwards on many counts. Studies have shown that if you want to win the presidential election in Nigeria, you must not participate in TV debate. Okay, that is a joke, but all the presidents we have produced since 1999 never participated in debates. In 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo stood Chief Olu Falae up at the Hilton Hotel in Abuja on the night of the debate. Eventually, Falae had to do it alone. I remember him saying "I don't find it funny debating with myself" — or something like that — when the programme started.

## Six Things June 12 Taught Me

In 2003, Obasanjo was absent again, even though Gen Muhammadu Buhari and Prof Pat Utomi were waiting for him. In 2007, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua did not feature. No reasons were given, although we knew Yar'Adua to be articulate and capable of taking on his rivals. He did not prove it. In 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan avoided the company of Buhari, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, and chose to debate with himself. In 2015, he spoiled for a debate with Buhari, but Buhari's handlers advised him to keep clear. This year again, Buhari avoided debating Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. Debate dodgers always win presidential polls in Nigeria.

We need a culture of debate. I would be the first to say that to debate is one thing and to govern is another, but I would add that avoiding debates does not guarantee good governance either. I won't even say debates determine the outcome of elections. I think most people's minds are made up irrespective of the pedigrees and eloquence of the presidential candidates, but my point is: what do we stand to lose if we hear them debate their ideas and policies in a room? It is a feature of democratic culture we need to imbibe. It certainly swung me in Abiola's direction in 1993. Overall, I have some good memories from the June 12 debacle, although the pains were devastating.

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### AND FOUR OTHER THINGS

#### HONORING MKO

I'm quite happy that President Buhari has followed through on his national recognition of Chief MKO Abiola, winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, by making June 12 our Democracy Day and naming the national stadium in Abuja after him. Former President Obasanjo must be livid. For eight years, we begged him to celebrate Abiola but he refused. Yet if Abiola had accepted the annulment of June 12, there would never have been an Obasanjo presidency. He died and Obasanjo became the chief beneficiary. And here is Buhari naming a stadium built by Obasanjo after Abiola! At least, nobody can say Buhari is looking for south-west votes again. Lovely.

#### CORRUPTION AND POVERTY

One interesting debate we have been having in Nigeria since 2015 is: is our problem corruption or the economy? Many think President Buhari has prioritised fighting corruption above the economy; Mr. Peter Obi, PDP vice-presidential candidate, even said anti-corruption is not an economic policy. Others have argued that without fighting corruption, the economy cannot grow and poverty will worsen. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda has weighed in, pointing out to African leaders that it is not enough to fight corruption – they have to create wealth to fight poverty. Let's hope President Buhari got the memo. Shared economic prosperity can actually help the anti-corruption war. Deep.

#### CLEAN SWEEP

Now that the leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has succeeded in installing its preferred candidates as leaders of the national assembly, Nigerians have a right to expect a smoother working relationship between the legislature and the executive — especially for the quick passage of budget. However, a part of me does not believe this is our problem. PDP installed most of its preferred candidates for the 16 years it was in power but that did not make much difference. In fact, the PDP became an opposition to itself. We can only hope that something will change this time around and that Nigerians will indeed see the benefits in form of good governance. Waiting...

#### MYTH BUSTER

I recently got a WhatsApp broadcast that tried to recreate the murder of foremost *journalist*, Mr Dele Giwa, via a parcel bomb in 1986. It said the bomb was delivered to Giwa's son, Billy, by Major Buba Marwa, accompanied by Major Tunde Ogbeha. It said they came in a Peugeot car which they burnt thereafter, and Gen Babangida made Marwa governor of Lagos and "pumped" money into the state. All credible accounts said the bomb carrier used a motorcycle. And why has Billy Giwa not identified Marwa as the courier in 33 years? Meanwhile, Babangida left

## Six Things June 12 Taught Me

power in 1993 and Marwa became military administrator in 1996. How did Babangida pump money into Lagos? Phoney.

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/632/1802/78/156067583018.jpeg>

Simon Kolawole

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2019

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## THE UNFORGETTABLE MEE 20 YEARS GONE

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 1, 2016 Friday

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**Length:** 1387 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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IN memory of my friend, the celebrated journalist MEE Mofe-Damijo who died 20 years ago in March 1996, I bring you my 'Press Clips' tribute to her published on Saturday, March 30, of the Weekend Concord. I also bring you a front page story I did sequel to her death. It's all like yesterday. How time flies! MEE was such a sweet unforgettable friend who was as close to me as the late Dimgba Igwe. We all grew professionally under the editorship of the late Dele Giwa, at the Sunday Concord. Here is my tribute:

\*\*\*

BLACK is the colour of MEE's car, the black-ness of sadness, the blackness of darkness, an opaque black without sun or moon. The blackness of her first Volkswagen Beetle car which she gave me while going to the U.S. to read for her first degree in journalism. The blackness of her Santana which she sold to buy her latest, a black Honda Civic she drove until her death.

How do you start writing the elegy of a beloved sister of the pen? How do you find the strength and the courage to string the words of sorrow together? How do you write about someone who writes the way you write, someone who writes with the heart of a poet? Someone who, like you, was born in Ghana and groomed professionally by the great Dele Giwa. Someone who is the chief priestess of the Dele Giwa cult and who died at the very age Dele Giwa died: 39!

May Ellen may not have died of a letter bomb like her master, but her death has exploded in our hearts, shattering us all into smithereens. Why must a woman work so hard to reach the top, to define her-self into our national consciousness, only to fade out in sunshine, in the afternoon of her life? An owl has hooted from the edge of a dark song. The winds of death again have blown, blowing away the girl with the "windsong." Things have suddenly fallen apart, and the dreamer can no longer dream, even though her eyes are closed in death's dreamland.

## THE UNFORGETTABLE MEE 20 YEARS GONE

Her life had been a life of many goodbyes, but ironically she never had the chance to say the last goodbye. I remember when she first said goodbye to Ghana, the land of her birth. I remember how she used to lament the goodbye of her first marriage that didn't last. The coming to Sunday Concord. Saying goodbye to Sunday Concord and leaving for America to bag a degree in journalism. The joining of Newswatch. The goodbye to Newswatch and Quality magazine which she stamped her personality on. The coming on board to Weekend Concord to write the "MEE ON SATURDAY" column. The goodbye from Weekend Concord with a farewell column titled: "Never Can Say Goodbye." Classique magazine and the fairy tale marriage to Richard Mofe-Damijo. Now, it's goodbye to everything and everybody.

The last time I saw her, she was at the backseat of her Honda Civic. I overtook her, horned to greet her and she waved frantically.

"Mike, how now? Long time no see," she said.

Prophetic! We would not see for a very long time. We wouldn't even see again.

She stormed the Sunday Concord in 1982 as the party girl, the girl who would be reporting titbits about people in the limelight. From her accent and the tribal mark, I knew she must have been in Ghana. We struck an instant rapport, assisting her to graduate from a writer of titbits to the more challenging assignments of writing for the Sunday Concord magazine page which was the ultimate test then. MEE was ever ready to learn. She had the gift of a naturally talented writer and she never stopped reading fat novels. Robert Ludlum and all that stuff.

Her dream was to be a great journalist, a great novelist, and a great woman. To some extent, she attained some of the greatness. She carved her own niche. She created her own world and her own people. The "MEE People." She brought the "MEE People" to Weekend Concord. She was part of the success story of Weekend Concord. Part of the family. She walked on the bridge of Weekend Concord on her journey to give birth to her baby, Classique. We put her on the cover of Weekend Concord and prophesied that the millions would roll in for her. And the millions rolled. But Classique died, dying with the mother.

It is a big tragedy she has to be on our cover again today. Black is the colour of MEE. Black is the colour of death.

She died vomiting blood –How I reported MEE's death

ONE of the doctors who operated the late journalists, Mrs. MEE Mofe-Damijo, has spoken about how she died "vomiting blood from her intestines."

According to the doctor, it was a strange and "un-usual" occurrence that baffled the six doctors who thought they were handling a routine surgery to remove the fibroid from her.

"That episode was unusual for that type of surgery. Somebody you operated in the pelvis now passing blood from the mouth," the doctor said. He continued: "Why should blood come from the stomach when we did not operate the stomach? The site of the operation healed very well. Remember we did not operate the intestines. The fibroid is not in the intestine."

Since the death of Mrs. Mofe-Damijo, newsmen have been storming the hitherto obscure Providence Hospital in Surulere in search of clues to her shocking death. The chief medical officer, Dr. John Esangbe-do, said he was busy, but directed me to the hospital's Director of Clinical Services who agreed to be interviewed on condition of anonymity.

Asked if the "unusual" vomiting of blood has a spiritual or supernatural implication, the doctor said: "I am not talking of spiritual explanation. This is certainly unexpected. Bleeding from the stomach is unexpected."

On what was done to staunch the vomiting of blood, the doctor said: "we passed something to drain what was collected there (in the stomach). What was coming out was bloody. We were shocked. We wondered: Why is this woman doing like this? But we were giving her adequate blood transfusion that was well-screened. There was no blood transfusion reaction. It is not everybody who has blood transfusion that can be saved."

## THE UNFORGETTABLE MEE 20 YEARS GONE

The doctor said another strange occurrence was that when MEE's stomach was touched, "it was soft instead of being hard." According to the doctor, the blood vomiting precipitated a second surgery. Said he: "The first surgery had been done and everything was fine. She was even reading novels, joking, playing with us. Then we noticed things changed gradually. We felt we had to scan her. We invited some doctors. When things are getting to this stage, we need to re-explore. It is not because of poor technique. Anything can happen that can make you go back to the theatre. Not because of poor technique or poor facility. We brought experts from other hospitals. What happened was unusual. It is not pertinent with the surgery we did. Let us not discuss the unusual."

The doctor said prior to coming for operation, MEE "had had two previous surgeries outside this country. What we did was a repeat of the same fibroid. Let us just take it that we did our best. Providence is one of the best hospitals in Lagos. We parade a lot of equipment, highly skilled medical facilities. If this procedure was carried out in Britain, the same thing would have happened. It was not due to negligence nor poor monitoring. Can you imagine what we went through?"

In the middle of the interview, an old female doctor who was part of the team of surgeons that battled to save MEE's life was questioned but she declined to answer. She would not even give her name. "I don't know my name," she said. "For 27 years I have been practising, nobody came to ask my name. The day that everything goes well, nobody talks. Doctors are not gods. Please, stop harassing us!"

With that she bolted the door and left angrily, muttering.

Back to the first doctor, she said MEE being a public figure, all precautions were taken, to ensure nothing went wrong. "We gave her the best ward, the one very next to the nursing section such that they were all at her beck and call. She was properly monitored."

On whether MEE died on account of bad luck, the doctor replied: "I don't believe in luck. It is an occultic language. Anybody who does surgery has some risk, which is why we make people sign consent form, so that when anything happens, you can't hold the doctor. It is that little risk that makes us ask you to sign a consent form. We never expected death. Death is a callous entity."

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## **Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape And Murder So Gruesome!**

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

June 7, 2020 Sunday

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**Length:** 1825 words

**Byline:** Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye -

### **Body**

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"One life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom."—**Dele Giwa** (Nigerian **Journalist** assassinated in 1986)

After five whole years of seeking admission into the institution of higher learning, Miss Vera Uwaila Omozuwa was eventually admitted to read Microbiology at the University of Benin.

Obviously a very serious student, she was in no mood to joke with her studies, probably, after considering how long it took her to secure the admission. So, she would always go to the serene environment of her Church when worshippers were not around to read her books. The Church environment should be both safe and devoid of distractions.

But on this particular day, May 27, 2020, some wicked, callous and barbarous assailants gained access to the Church auditorium where she was immersed in her books, brutally raped her and ended her life by hitting her on the head with a fire extinguisher which gave her a very deep cut. They then fled leaving her in the pool of her own blood. She was only 22 and in her first year at the university.

No one knew how long she lay there bleeding until the security man arrived and saw her. She was already unconscious, probably due to the effect of the brutal violation she had experienced, the cruel blow she had received, and the amount of blood she had lost. At the hospital where she was rushed to, the doctors tried their best but were unable to revive her. She eventually died without being able to utter a single word to anyone about what had happened to her or whether she was able to recognize her savage rapists and murderers.

The gory picture of her body is the most horrible image I have tried to look at in recent times. I had to remove my eyes immediately! A once beautiful girl had suddenly been turned into a horrific and scary image because of the primaevial exploits of some brutish creatures.

Now, what exactly could so badly provoke human beings to descend so low to the level of wild beasts to give free rein to their basest instincts to unleash such a barbaric violence on another human being?

## Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape And Murder So Gruesome!

Lust, anger, hatred, envy, sadism, desire to conquer and dominate, revenge, or what? Are more and more people losing their humanity? Has the world gone irrecoverably berserk?

Daily, dizzying reports of grown men raping grandmothers, mothers, single women and even underage girls are roughly slapped on our faces. I have even read bloodcurdling accounts of ten or even eight-month-old babies raped, not by confirmed mentally challenged people, but by otherwise sane human beings! What exactly is happening? I think this should be a very rich research subject for our scholars in the fields of psychology and behavioural studies. We need to urgently understand what has gone wrong with our world.

The parents of Uwaila are badly heartbroken as outrage engulfs the country over their daughter's barbaric murder. In a video that surfaced on twitter early this week, Uwaila's father lamented:

"It was not a mistake; it was not a fault; it was not stubbornness for her to go to the church to study. She had been going there for several years. She struggled for five years before she gained admission into UNIBEN. I was waiting to celebrate her admission before she died."

When has it become an offence for a serious and focused student to find a conducive place to read, more so, a worship centre which should be considered sacred and inviolable? Who could be so godless, wanton and profane as to trail a girl to a church building to unleash this kind of cruel and deadly violence on her? Such a person or persons should have no place within the bounds of civilized society.

Narrating the horrific incident, Uwaila's mother mournfully recounted:

"I saw a friend, who came to visit me, off and before I came back, someone had called my telephone thrice. When I got back, my children told me that a church member, Mummy Osunla, had called me and when I called her back, she asked where I was and told me that I should come and that she did not know what had happened to my daughter.

"I ran to the place but before I got there, they [had] already [taken] her to a private hospital and when I saw my daughter, I cried. They raped her; the dress she was wearing that morning was white, but it had turned to red; all her body was full of blood. Her mouth and eyes were tied; the hoodlums used a fire extinguisher to hit her head, which left a deep cut.

"We were asked to take her for an X-ray on her head; I did not have money but my church members tried and money was raised and we bought all the drugs that we were asked to buy, but Uwa could not make it. She was unable to say anything till she died; it was just tears that were coming out from her eyes."

The national outrage this grisly incident has provoked is quite reassuring, but the security agencies need to be more creative and proactive about how to ensure that people that commit these hideous crimes are apprehended and punished. It should now be made compulsory that CCTVs must be installed in all public buildings including worship centres. This will go a long way to deter potential rapists and other criminals who will be tormented by the awareness that their criminal activities are being observed and recorded by some sharp, hidden eyes.

The installation of these cameras should equally be extended to the streets and even highways. No amount of money spent to enhance the security of lives and property should be considered too much. The police must equally be empowered to acquire more, modern crime-unravelling equipment, to be able to track criminals no matter how they try to evade justice

It is however encouraging that the Edo State Police Command has announced the arrest of one of the suspected killers of Uwaila. Its spokesperson, Chidi Nwabuzor, said that fingerprints on the fire extinguisher used in killing the hapless girl has led to the arrest of the suspect. We can only hope that the fingerprints reading is accurate and that this first arrest will lead to the arrest of the remaining criminals who are now on the run. We don't want to hear tomorrow that the suspect was wrongly arrested due to a malfunctioning machine. When perpetrators of crimes are punished, prospective criminals are dissuaded and society is made safer for everyone.

### Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape And Murder So Gruesome!

When the news of Uwaila's murder broke, Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki tweeted: "I have ordered the Nigeria Police Force (@PoliceNG) to thoroughly investigate the circumstances that led to the death of Miss Vera Uwaila Omozuwa, a 100-level student of the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

Later, on Tuesday, June 2, President Muhammadu Buhari added his voice to the high profile orders handed down to the police to their job. "I expect the Nigeria Police Force to speedily and diligently investigate this case and ensure that all the culprits responsible for this barbaric act are brought to justice," the president reportedly said.

Good! Heartwarming response! But I would always cherish a country where the police and other security agencies can always do their jobs without being ordered to do so by the governor or president. Each time there is an attack by terrorists or bandits in which the casualty figures are high enough to attract national outrage, we will be served with the news that President Buhari has ordered the security agents to apprehend the perpetrators. I always recoil with shame each time I stumble on such strange reports.

It has even been reported in this country that the president had ordered the Air Force to bomb terrorist strongholds! This one is even more sickening and preposterous because it is like informing the terrorists to relocate. After all, bombs will soon start raining on their locations. Who does that in any other country except our badly run and chaotic Nigeria?

I would like to see Nigerian security institutions grow and be truly independent. They should be able to do their jobs conscientiously whether the crime attracted widespread uproar or not, whether they got instructions from the president, governor or nobody. Unravelling crimes and arresting the people behind them should be normal, routine work for them. They do not need to be prodded or ordered to go after criminals to apprehend and bring them to justice.

There is also this little but very injurious matter that deserves mention here since it keeps reoccurring. When crimes like rape or any kind of violence are committed against women, there are usually some outspoken ladies who are quick to not just condemn the crime and call for justice for the victim but readily turn the incident into an opportunity to initiate an anti-men campaign. They would stretch their power of oratory and emotional outbursts to brand ALL men rapists and women-killers to widen the valley of animosity between the male and the female and swell the tribe of men-hating amazons.

This might earn them the very lucrative identity they are craving but would not make our world any better. When the records of rape cases are thoroughly examined, it might even be discovered that male rapists may not even constitute up to one per cent of the male population.

Both genders are needed in the fight against this hideous crime – which is even committed against both women and men. Demonizing all men each time gender-based crimes occur may help those who insist on doing so to achieve some self-serving credentials, but it will eventually inject a serious setback in the larger campaign by depleting the support from men which is highly required to lend the war some beneficial balance and eventually win it.

All men are not rapists or supporters of rape, that should be very clear. Since the Uwaila incident, many men have gone all out condemning the crime and calling for justice for the victim. It will NOT help to seek to discourage them by going into overdrive with a fallacious generalization that aims to tar all men with the egregious brush of women-haters and violators.

As I tried to tidy up this piece, another ugly news broke that an 18-year old female student of the Institute of Agriculture, Research and Training, Ibadan, Miss Barakat Bello, has been raped and stabbed to death in her own father's house in Ibadan. Narrating the incident, the obviously shattered father said: "Somebody called me on the phone that I should come home but he refused to tell me what happened. When I got home, I saw that my daughter had been raped and stabbed to death."

I hope the Oyo State Police Command will not wait for any "orders" from the governor or a national outcry to thoroughly investigate this heinous crime and bring the perpetrators to book. Rape is ugly and ungodly and leaves a

## Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape And Murder So Gruesome!

lasting injury on the victim. Let's all help to discourage it by ensuring that its perpetrators are always smoked out and punished according to the law.

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Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye

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I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi



## **I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi**

The Punch

May 23, 2022 Monday

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### **Body**

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Olaleye Aluko Published 25 August 2019

A former Minister of Youths and Social Development as well as Minister of Sports, Bolaji Abdullahi, speaks on his journalism and political career, family, and other issues with OLALEYE ALUKO

You recently announced that you would launch a N50m endowment fund to provide opportunities for young people. What influenced that decision?

You will recall I said that on my 50th birthday. Getting to 50 and coupled with my personal experiences, I think more about legacies than any other thing. I think that there cannot be a greater legacy for me than that which would impart positively on the lives of people.

I like to say that I am the 12th wonder of the world- in the sense that there was nothing in my background that would have predicted that I would get to the level I've got to in my life and career. So, my good fortunes have surpassed my individual ambitions. I have benefitted from so many people's goodwill over the years. And I believe that the little way I can pay back is to provide opportunities for other people who are currently in the kind of position that I was in 20 or 30 years ago.

Which set of people qualify to benefit from the fund?

I get a lot of messages from young people requesting financial support. They either want to pay school fees, buy examination forms, or attend one training or the other, and I have been giving this support over the years from my purse. But I think it is about time we structured it in an organised manner. We are going to set up a team that will work out the details of how to manage the fund. Like I said in the announcement, I don't have any N50m anywhere. But I believe that the social capital and relationships I have built over the years have put me in a position to raise such funds and assist young people. This will be from people who share the same vision with me on youth development and youth empowerment. In addition to that, we are also looking at creating a youth centre in my state.

I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi

At the moment, we have a huge challenge; not only about young people who have not gone to school at all, but also about young people who have gone to school but have nothing doing. They have no opportunity to advance their careers.

All over the country, youths have a problem with drugs. Kwara State is not an exception and it is a problem we all have to tackle. I believe that we need a facility that can create opportunities for young people to play, work and learn. It is going to be an integrated resource centre for young people and it will have an indoor sports hall. That hall reflects my bias for sports. It will also have an electronic library and training facilities for conferences as well as office spaces.

For me, I tried to be a governor, but I don't want to be remembered for how many times I tried to be governor. I don't want to wait until I become a governor, as only God can determine that. But in my private capacity, I have to do what I can.

What were some of your most notable achievements as a Minister of Youth Development?

For youth development, I did not spend as much time as I would have loved to. But I am glad that some of the initiatives that we started actually survived. One of them is the reform of the National Youth Service Corps. The NYSC is the biggest parastatal under the ministry. And it was clear to me that we could do more for the NYSC because we already have a high population of youths in tertiary institutions. These reforms encompassed not what the country got from them while they served, but what they could also get from the country.

Don't forget that 2011, when I became the Minister of Youth Development, was a very difficult year for the NYSC. That year was the first time that young people who went on election missions were killed. So, many people were asking questions- why the NYSC? Of what use is it? Why do we even need the scheme? People were questioning the rationale of the scheme because of the national grief.

I remember telling former President Goodluck Jonathan at the time that apart from Gen. Yakubu Gowon who created the NYSC, I want him to be the president who actually reformed and retooled the scheme for the 21st century.

The first thing we did was to retool the scheme in terms of the functionality. At that time, most businesses had stopped employing people because they were guaranteed a steady supply of corps members every year. So, we made a policy that private businesses would no longer be given corps members, unless they guaranteed that they would employ them at the end of the service year. That was seen as a harsh policy and I was roundly criticised. However, I believe that I did the right thing. We also insisted that corps members would serve in the four key development priorities- agriculture, education, healthcare and infrastructure.

Also, we made the orientation camps more engaging for corps members and a place where they could learn skills that would enable them become financially self-sufficient. In fact, the idea at that time was that one could earn a Master of Business Administration within the service year. That way, one wouldn't only be giving to the country, one would also be getting something tangible in return.

Unfortunately, we were about to launch the youths' employment scheme when I was moved to the ministry of sports.

What were some of the challenges you faced in that particular office?

For youths' development, I don't think the Nigerian government really understood what to do with that ministry. The ministry was created in response to some pan-African agenda. I think the African Union directed member states to recognise youths' development as a major sector and not as an integral of any other sector, because youth issues were big then. That was why the late President Umar Yar'adua established youths' development as a separate ministry.

Most of the times I got summoned to the Presidency was for me to mobilise young people for one political activity or the other, or when there was some idea or benefits to be shared to young people.

I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi

Though we had a national youth policy, there was no clarity as to what should be done. So, it was difficult for the minister's voice to penetrate through the policy wilderness. Ideally, there must be a youth component to every sector of governance, if we are really serious. There should be youth components to agriculture, environment, infrastructure and even women affairs.

Are you happy with the level of youth involvement in governance in Nigeria?

It is a great development and very important too. But I must say that is the easiest part. Passing legislation to say that young people could contest was the easiest thing that could have been done. For me, the parallel should be gender participation. There is no law that a woman cannot contest any political office in Nigeria as long as she meets the constitutional and age requirements. Yet, why do we have very few women in public office? So, there is no legal barrier against youths or women participation in governance.

What were your legacies as the Minister of Sports in Nigeria?

People would like to say that the highpoint of my achievements as the sports minister was winning the African Cup of Nations trophy in 2013 for the first time after 19 years. Yes, it is an achievement that I am proud of, together with all the people I worked with at that time. But I don't consider that as the zenith. For me, the most important achievement was the reform of the Nigerian Professional Football League.

When I resumed office, the NPFL was already comatose. Nobody was willing to associate with the league. Those who were managing the league at that time always came, cap in hand, begging for money to execute a match. In fact, they were making the clubs to pay indemnity of referees. So, when clubs were paying the indemnity of match referees, you could predict what would happen in the matches. In fact, every club was winning their own matches. That was the state of the league at the time I got into office.

But by establishing the League Management Committee, which later became the League Management Company, we turned the fortunes of the Nigerian league around. Within six months, we were able to sign agreements with Super Sports. We were able to get the title sponsors, Globacom, to come back. And that was why, within one year of launching the reforms and establishing the LMC, the club that won the league that year (I think Lobi Stars) got paid about N14m.

The second area is the launch of the National Youth Games, and I am so glad that we have continued that until today. The idea of the youth games is to create opportunities for young people to play sports. Don't forget that the National Youths Sports Festival used to be that event for young people not playing at the elite level. But we then decided that it should be called the National Open Sports Festival, which would be the Nigerian equivalent of the Olympics. It would not just be a gathering of talents, but a celebration of Nigeria's sporting strength.

What do you think are some of the major problems impeding sports development in Nigeria?

As a sports minister, I led the country to the Olympics in 2012 and we didn't win anything. If I knew what I know now, I would have told Nigerians not to expect us to win anything at the Olympics. This is because we had not done anything. Another Olympics is coming up in 2020, and we will be deceiving ourselves to expect Nigeria to win anything; unless it happens by chance. This is because there is nothing on the ground to think otherwise.

Countries that go to the Olympics and win medals spend a lot of money and years preparing for it. It is not something you just wake up few months to the event and say we are going to the Olympics. It is just jamboree.

I found that sports had become a science. This is at a point where micro-metres and micro-seconds were making the difference between the winner and the runners-up. Years of planned training must go into sports. That's why I was trying to set up the High Performance Index Centre and source for money from the government. President Jonathan bought the idea, gave us some money and we got some equipment.

However, it saddens me to note that most of the equipment we got at that time under Jonathan's government are still in the containers till today, unless something changes last week.

I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi

Another area is the encouragement of our athletes, and this is lacking in Nigeria. We look down on our athletes, and expect to reap where we did not sow. We should celebrate our athletes. For me, those were the key challenges.

What do you consider your achievements as the National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress?

I became the publicity secretary at the most difficult period for the party, which was a time when the president had so many health challenges and he had to leave the country for some time.

All kinds of agitations were going on in the media and it was my responsibility to manage the party through that difficult period. I am very proud that we were able to navigate that time so well.

Secondly, as a ***journalist*** and party spokesman, my ethical principle is that the language of political communication must not be corrupt. In Nigeria, we have substituted verbal thuggery for communication, and the more abusive you are, the more people consider you to be effective as a public political communicator. That is really shameful. But at the time I was the spokesman; that was one resolve I made. I wanted to 'de-odourise' the language of political communication and bring in some finesse. People would abuse you and you must resist the temptation to abuse back.

How easy was it for you to take the decision to resign as the Publicity Secretary of the APC, and as Chairman, Nigeria Sugar Development Council?

It is a bit complicated and the full story will be told one day in my book. But at that point, it was really difficult for me; and not even in the way people would think. Many people would imagine that the difficulty I mean is that the political family I belong to, led by Dr Bukola Saraki, left the APC and so, I was caught between the parties. No, that was not the difficulty. The difficulty for me was that someone I had a lot of respect for, who was the chairman of the party, had diametrical opposite ideas of what I had of how the party should be run.

His tactics, strategies and understanding of how things should be done, were really different from the way I know to function and operate. So, it was becoming difficult for me then. As a result of the activities of my political constituency run by Dr Bukola Saraki, I was being victimised and seen as an enemy within, although I did not do anything. I was being second-guessed to the extent that people went behind to my deputy to issue statements. If Dr Saraki left and I did not have any reason to leave, I would still remain in the party. But there were so many other issues that will be disclosed in the course of time.

Would it be right to say that Bukola Saraki gave you your first opportunity in politics?

Yes, to the extent that I was working in Lagos State as a ***journalist*** with ThisDay newspaper, when he (Saraki) invited me to work with him at a time I had just returned from the United Kingdom. It was at that time he was elected governor in Kwara State, and he invited me to work with him. So, I became his special assistant.

Why did you decide to write the book- 'On a platter of gold-How Jonathan won and lost Nigeria'?

I think it is the dream of every ***journalist*** to write a book, though most of us never get to do that. I just think that it is important for us to chronicle historical moments. If you read that book, you will find that it was not just an exposé, it was about pitching together fabrics from our recent history to construct an articulate narrative in a way that so many things would then make sense. I wrote that book because I saw it as an opportunity to display my skills as a writer and ***journalist***, and most importantly, as someone who worked in that government. I believe that put me in a unique position to document that moment for posterity.

How did President Goodluck Jonathan react to the book?

I don't know. I have not spoken with him. I think to the best of my ability, I tried to be objective. I am not saying it is faultless but I tried to be objective.

Some people believe you were being disloyal to the president by writing that book. What's your reaction to such people?

I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi

Did he win an election in Nigeria? Yes. Did he lose an election in Nigeria? Yes. So, what is the disloyalty there? There is no equivalent in the manner that President Jonathan emerged. Against all odds, he became the president. At that time, he was the most popular president we had had. People actually marched on the streets, protesting for him to be made a substantive president. But how do we explain a situation where someone who came in with so much goodwill became the most hated president in the (history of) the country within a few years? As a journalist, that should arouse some curiosity. So, it was the question of what happened that I tried to answer in the book.

What inspired your book, Sweet Sixteen?

Sweet Sixteen was inspired by my children- my girls. They were growing up very fast and I was worried about the kind of values they were growing up with in the midst of so much that was happening all over the country. My eldest daughter was 14 at the time and I decided to write her a persona letter, sharing my core values and interests. I found that so many of her friends got interested when she shared the letter with them. She was doing her Advanced Levels then; so some of her friends even called and were willing to discuss with me about some of the issues I touched in the letter to my daughter.

So, that was where the idea came from. I felt that if so many young people, especially females, were asking these questions, I needed to do some kind of literature to address them. It was not just about sexuality; it was about career and living together in a multi-cultural society like Nigeria.

Can you recall how you met your first wife?

I met my first wife when I had just left secondary school. I was 19 and she was 18. It was secondary school love. I used to study and discuss literature with her. Then, literature turned something else and we ended up dating through our university years.

How often do you spend time with your family?

I have a lot of time now. Even when I was a minister and was so busy, the principal of my children's school used me as an example for other parents when we attended the Parent-Teachers Association meetings. He would say, "Look, this is one of the busiest parents we have here, but he has never missed the visiting days, inter-house sports and other activities; why don't you be like him?" I used to be very proud of that compliment because for me, my family is my priority.

In your opinion, what makes a good marriage?

I think there is no recipe for a good marriage; but respect is very important. The couple must have respect for each other. Love is important, but it does not solve everything. Most young people will find that out after some years. You have to marry someone who will continue to respect you. It is respect that will make you to listen to him or her even when he or she is wrong or angry.

Was your family in support of your political career from the onset?

Absolutely. They always have been in support of me. Whether I got appointments or resigned appointments, they always support me.

Do you engage in household chores?

I love to. This is because it's the only way I can encourage my boys. I don't feel comfortable sitting down and being served, then people come to pack the plates. Of course, they don't allow me to do chores. Everybody wants to collect it, but I try to show an example that household chores are not exclusive to females.

Who are your role models?

I have a lot of people- some of them I have never met but I just read about them. In terms of writing and journalism, I admire Paul Okoelo, Calib Jubrian, Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed and Dele Giwa.

I like doing house chores to encourage my sons –Bolaji Abdullahi

Politically, I admire Obafemi Awolowo. Actually, he is one of the most incredible human beings I grew up to know in this country in terms of visioning. But not just him, the first generation of this country's political leaders, such as Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello; Tafawa Balewa; and Ladoke Akintola, loved this country.

What are your other interests?

My family knows that they cannot separate me from my books. And my children all read books. In my family, that is what we do. We read and discuss books. Also, we don't joke with prayers as we are devout Muslims.

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Only idiots make cases for terrorist-herdsmen -General Togun



## **Only idiots make cases for terrorist-herdsmen -General Togun**

Nigerian Tribune

June 18, 2017 Sunday

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### **Body**

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General Ajibola Kunle Togun, a former Director of Military Intelligence and former Deputy Director of States Security Service and now an evangelist, served at the Awka Sector of the Nigerian Army during the 1967-70 civil war. He speaks with MOSES ALAO on the recent threats and counter-threats among the major ethnic groups, why Nigeria is not making progress, the herdsmen menace and the politics of his home state, Oyo. Excerpts:

YOU were in the military during the civil war between 1967 and 1970; where did you serve and what was the experience like? This question becomes imperative in view of the threats and counter-threats of war now coming from youths of Northern and Southern extractions.

You are correct. I took part in the civil war; I was in the Awka Sector. That time, it was the hottest sector. Initially, when the war started, I didn't participate, but I joined in 1968 when I joined the Army after leaving the University of Ife. I got to the war front and the man who recruited me that time was retired General Daramola; he was a colonel then. Anyone who witnessed that civil war would not pray for another war. But the thing is that, when some of these young people began to shout and issue threats, one would expect that those who witnessed the war, those in the military would shut them up. But, unfortunately, people are pushing the military to the background in the politics of the country and this should not be so. Maybe that is why the retired military men have been watching. But I expect people to have spoken against all these threats from young men, who were probably not born or matured enough to understand what went down during the civil war. You see, in advanced countries such as Israel, United States and most of Europe, ex-military men play a lot of roles in politics, because the best brains anywhere in the world are in the military. But what we practise in Nigeria is not politics; people just join politics to make money. That is why we can never tell one another the truth and politicians will never address the issues causing these troubles squarely.

On January 13, 2017, I was at the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State(BCOS) with retired General Alabi Isama and I remembered him talking about the relationships among the three major tribes, that the North don't like Yoruba because the Hausa/Fulani saw the civil war as an effort to conquer the East to the ocean, but a Yoruba man, General Benjamin Adekunle, the commander of the 3 Marine Commando, prevented that from happening. Eighty-five per cent of the troops that fought in 3 Marine Commando were Yoruba. Isama also said that the Igbo people do not like the Yoruba and they will never like Yoruba, because a Yoruba man stopped their dream of Biafra. You can now imagine that between January and May, the issue he addressed about the unity of the country is now coming out.

The issue is that those agitating that Igbo should leave the North and so on, do not understand the implications of their actions. We studied military history and what it entails is not just about what happened in 1963; it is about the

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lessons of history. The battles that were fought, we learn from the lessons. If these people making threats know history, they will not be talking rubbish. I expected the older people from those areas to have spoken, including retired military officers. They should not just say that it is politics, because no nation survives two civil wars. So, if these people threatening know the implications, they will not be talking rubbish. Some of us sacrificed our lives to make Nigeria one. General Gowon's slogan then was 'To keep Nigeria one, a task that must be done,' but some people are now talking rubbish and their elders are not talking. The Northern Youth leader who issued the first threat didn't just say it; I saw a video of where he sat down and was reading, which means that he is not an unknown person. So, what were the leaders in the North looking at?

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) spoke against the threat...

How many hours after the boy made the declaration? Some of us are experts in military intelligence. There is a department in military intelligence called psychological operations. Nigeria is supposed to have such. Under this department, there is what you call attitude and attitude change. If someone says something of that magnitude, one would expect immediate reaction in 24 or maximum of 48 hours. As I said, those people don't know the implications of what they are saying. They want to set this country on fire for a second time and people are keeping quiet. But when the thing starts, they will not be able to control it and it will break this country into pieces.

Some people are advocating Nigeria's break-up while others are recommending restructuring and true federalism as solutions to the country's challenges. What do you think can be done to achieve a united Nigeria?

We opted for a presidential system of government, but we are not practising it the way it should be practised. This is a challenge. You said people are agitating for restructuring, why won't they? We have not been operating true federalism and if Nigeria will forge ahead, we have to operate a truly federal system. There should be no part of the constitution that favours any section, religion or group. There must be equality all the way. If we can do this, then Nigeria will have no problem. But with what we operate now, there can't be unity.

And you think true federalism can bring about unity?

Of course yes. Let key people who have ideas about how government should be run come together to proffer solutions. And we cannot leave this in the hands of politicians, because they are only there to make money. I say this without fear of immodesty and I want any politician to come and meet me and tell me I am wrong. On that BCOS programme, I gave a challenge that everyone who has led Nigeria either as president or in any other capacity should come out to tell me that when he was Head of State or president, this was the national goal or national objective he pursued for Nigeria.

Does that challenge extend to President Muhammadu Buhari?

Of course yes. I want him to tell me that these are the national goals that he is pursuing. None. A colleague of mine phoned me after General Buhari won the election that I should write a paper for him on security and I wrote three papers. One was on security; the second was on national goal for the forward movement of Nigeria and the third was what I thought Buhari should do in the first 100 days in office.

Did the papers get to the president?

I sent them by DHL.

Where did you send them to?

He was staying at the Defence House, Abuja then. And since the papers were not brought back to me, then he got them.

How can you be sure? Did he acknowledge receipt?

He did not.

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And you have not seen anyone close to him who could confirm whether he got the papers?

[General Abdulrahman] Dambazzau was following him about that time. I thought he would be the National Security Adviser, so I sent copies of those papers to him too. But he never acknowledged. When Monguno was appointed NSA [National Security Adviser], I sent copies to him and he acknowledged. To them, they would say Kunle Togun is looking for appointment or he is looking for work. But that is not true.

Haven't you seen any of the things you wrote about in the actions of the government?

What I am saying is that Nigeria has no national interest and that is the focus for any country to move forward. I wrote a paper on this in 1990. In 1983, as a Major, I was in TRADOC in Minna, in the Doctrine Department as a research officer. I was given an assignment to go and work out what Nigeria's defence policy should be as of 1983 and so I headed for Lagos. I met General [Ibrahim] Babangida; I served under him at the headquarters. He was the Director SD Plans and I was G2 SD, so I served under him at Army Headquarters. So, when I got to Lagos, he saw me and said, Kunle what are you doing in Lagos and I told him I was given the assignment to work out Nigeria's defence policy. He asked how I would go about it and I told him that I would go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Institute of International Affairs and find out what Nigeria's national interest was. I said that I would then analyse the threats to that interest, after which I would be able to identify the countries, organisations and bodies that would be hostile to that interest because it would not be in their interest. I said I would identify those who would be neutral and those who would be friendly because they were likely going to gain from that interest. I told him that I would do further analyses on all these groups and then would be able to establish what Nigeria's foreign policy should be, which would be our national interest and that, normally, defence policy backs foreign policy. General Babangida clapped for me and then said that Nigeria had no national interest. That was in 1983.

In 1960 when we gained independence, did those leading Nigeria then sit down to discuss what should be the national interest of Nigeria?

No one identified or established any such thing and without a national interest, Nigeria cannot move one millimetre forward. The reason that advanced countries move forward and Nigeria has never moved forward is because there are no goals and objectives that Nigeria is pursuing. For instance, we have the Federal Government, the state government and the local government. Everyone should have something to do with the pursuit of the national interest. What we have now is that anyone gets into office as president, governor or local government chairman and comes up with what he thinks the people need; what he feels he should do and that is why there is no continuity. Let me give you an example from what I said in 1990 when I was at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies. Because we didn't have a national goal, even our foreign missions are not tasked. If you send an ambassador or high commissioner to a country, what assignment are they going to carry out? That is why they call them missions. What mission do we give our ambassadors? If Nigeria has a national goal of self-sufficiency in food production, we have a fertiliser plant in Onne, though I don't know how functional it is now, all Nigeria has to do is to tell the ambassador to Togo to make sure that the president sends certain tons of phosphate to Nigeria annually for us to produce the amount of fertiliser we need. You have given an assignment to that ambassador. For the states, you can now task them and tell them that each state must produce so and so metric tons of farm produce common with their locality. That is how there can be continuity, because anyone who comes in as the next leader will know what he already has to do. The state government can also tell the local government to produce a certain amount of farm produce; that is how all the tiers of government will contribute to the national goal. But we have been talking; we have been writing but no one listens. They would say what are these soldiers saying again? What they do not know is that the best brains are in the military anywhere in the world, but Nigerians do not listen to the military.

Some of your colleagues saw that their voices would be ignored as ex-military men and quickly joined politics. Why did you stay aloof?

When soldiers started joining politics, you saw the opposition they had. Nigerians didn't want them. The issues involved do not need someone joining politics before he or she can speak out. I play politics, but I am not interested in elections or appointments. In politics, democracy says power belongs to the people, but the moment you vote in some people, they become bosses over those who elected them. So, I joined politics to ensure that power remains

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with those who voted and those who were voted for. Not all of us have to join politics; we can write papers, but they need to be acted upon. The military does psychological operations for the government in the United States.

From the damning verdict you returned on politicians that they are all after money, it will be interesting to know your view on 18 years of democracy in the country.

As far as I am concerned, since I cannot see the forward movement of Nigeria, I do not think the country has gained anything from the 18 years of democracy. That is my opinion. Nigeria is not moving forward. From Shonekan to Abacha to Abdulsalami and then the civilian government of Obasanjo, Yar'Adua and Jonathan, was there any concrete action plans on how to move forward? Nothing like that. In those days of effective politics, I was already mature during the days of Awolowo, so I knew how politics was played that time. Political parties had manifestos; [they knew] what they were going to pursue. Since 1999, can you tell me the manifesto of any of the political parties? Some of us are here to advise, to write papers but then, they are not acted upon. I know the role I played in Oke Ogun and Ibarapa and even Ibadan for Buhari to be voted in as president.

Did you do that because you were sure he would be different from the others?

No. Someone came to Saki and told me that Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo said he should hand over campaign posters for Oke Ogun to me and I said I didn't know Osinbajo. But I suspected it would be Buhari that sent them. Immediately, I set to work. They should check the votes. When the president got voted in, a classmate of mine with whom I did HSC in 1962, said 'we heard all your efforts for Buhari, please make sure that [Abiola] Ajimobi also gets voted for as governor in Oyo State for a second term.' I wrote a report of my activities on the 10 local governments in Oke Ogun, Ibarapa and Ibadan. I have about 2,000 of my supporters in Ibadan and in that report, I said I was not asking for money, but that I wanted to know what will be committed to the people, that Buhari and then Ajimobi would do. I sent a copy to Ajimobi and I have written to him three times that I wanted to discuss the issue of security with him; he has not answered me till date.

You said you were going to discuss security with him...

What I wanted to discuss with him is the issue of these herdsmen, who have been harassing Oke Ogun for the last 25 years. Now, the thing is getting out of hand now. In April 2015, I said I wanted to discuss security with him, but till date, I have not been able to.

Are you sure he got the letters?

He cannot tell me he didn't get them. But I do not want to appear as someone who is looking for appointments or something. So I am just watching. As I said earlier, we all do not have to join politics, but Nigerians should recognise the brains they have and listen to their advice.

The issue of herdsmen you mentioned has become very serious; what do you think is the solution?

I retired in April 1996; my farm in Saki that time was about 150 hectares of land. I had another farm in Ago Are. In October 1996, my younger brother died and I had to sort out the burial arrangements so I could not visit my farm in Ago Are. After the burial, I went to the farm and my almost 100 hectares of maize had been grazed on. I reported and they introduced politics into it. They said they investigated, that Abacha sent someone to investigate, but no one came to me. That was the time they said I was harassing people. General Buhari came to Ibadan during former Governor Lam Adesina's time to meet him that Oke Ogun people were killing Fulani herdsmen, whereas, it was the herdsmen that were killing people anyhow. They would enter your farm, graze on your farm and you cannot talk.

Do they still do that now?

Just last week, they macheted a man in Oje Owode here. The boy got to his farm and saw that cows had trampled on his maize farm and grazed on it. He traced the footsteps of the cows and saw the herdsmen and challenged them; they stripped him naked and macheted him mercilessly. Many of these herdsmen carry AK 47 about.

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Around here in OkeOgun? One would think tales of AK 47-wielding herdsmen could only be told in Southern Kaduna.

The Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) commission invited me to Lagos three years ago for a lecture and I told them this thing. I was also in Abuja last June; all of us who were former directors of military intelligence were invited to Abuja by the current director of military intelligence. He tabled the security challenges of the country and we all had to make contributions. When it came to the issue of Fulani herdsmen, people said different things. When it came to my turn, I said these Fulani herdsmen, who the Northerners see as part of them, are foreigners. They are foreigners; they are from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger Republic and Chad; that is why they are so merciless. They are of no fixed address. I told them that Fulani people should call these herdsmen and ask where they come from in Northern Nigeria and ask them who their district heads are. The herdsmen are not Nigerians. I am a security man and I know my level of security status in the world. Some of these herdsmen were Al-Qaeda terrorists who took over Northern Mali and France had to send troops while ECOWAS and African Union added troops to expel them from Northern Mali and hand over the territory back to Mali. That was where they came about their assault rifles. Why are security agents not investigating how Fulani herdsmen are going about with AK 47? I told them in Abuja that you call them Fulani, but we call them Bororo in Oke Ogun and they have been harassing us for the past 25 years; it is not a joke. I said at DAWN three years ago that the 10 local governments of Oke Ogun and three local governments of Ibarapa were under the siege of herdsmen, but nobody listened and I see the invasion of these people as if someone is trying to expand their territory to Yorubaland.

Do you think the problem can be solved through the provision of grazing routes across the country?

How can anyone legislate on grazing routes? How? How much grazing routes have these people been given in the North? They are now saying we should give grazing routes.

There is a claim that there are grazing routes across the country.

Who made the grazing routes?

Is there no grazing route in Saki?

Let me tell you, from a very long time ago, they used to take cows from the North to Lagos on foot. That was when they used to pass through here and that is what they are now saying that there used to be grazing routes. Who created the grazing routes? The Fulani herdsmen we grew up to know around here do not graze on anyone's farm; we lived with them for decades. But these foreign invaders come and start grazing on people's farms. They go to people's farms to graze and tell you do you want their cows to die and once you challenge them, they shoot and kill. You see, things are happening and some idiots are sitting down somewhere making case for non-Nigerians. And do they know that if we give grazing grounds to these clowns, tomorrow they will say they own the place. That was what started the problem in Jos till date. That was what started the problem in Agatu. And someone expects that to happen in the South-West? Nobody should give grazing grounds in the South-West.

Sometimes, when the death of Dele Giwa comes up, your name mysteriously enters the fray. What do you have to do with Dele Giwa's death?

Well, I will blame you journalists. When an issue comes up, you need to explore all angles and be unbiased. But because Dele Giwa died a journalist, therefore, you do not want to hear the other sides of the story. I wrote a book entitled Dele Giwa: The Unanswered Questions, but the press didn't allow that book to fly. I will give you a copy for Tribune. In that book, you will find out who killed Dele Giwa. I pointed out who should be grabbed and made to tell those he collaborated with.

But how did you come into the mix?

I worked with Akilu in the State Security Service during the incident and some people are saying that Akilu called Dele Giwa before his death. The only thing I know was that he was invited to SSS following an article he wrote on SFEM, a policy Babangida started on foreign exchange, that if SFEM failed, Babangida and his officials would be

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stoned on the streets. So, he was invited to SSS and the woman who was in charge of the development, a Northerner, I think she was Mrs Aliyu or something, she was of the Assistant Superintendent of Police status and she was chatting with **Dele Giwa** on the write-up, that it was inciting and that he should retract it but he blasted the woman, that who was she to instruct him on what to write. At a stage, the woman came to report to me and I said security and the mass media should work together. So I went to the woman's office and I met **Dele Giwa** and Ray Ekpu there and began to explain that they should understand that he was only invited and not arrested. I said I was not in Nigeria when NET Building in Marina caught fire, but that I understood that a **journalist** wrote about three days before the fire, asking how prepared the Fire Service was to fight fire outbreak in many of the high-rise buildings springing up in Lagos and that the **journalist** was arrested. The two of them laughed and they said it was Ray Ekpu that wrote the article. So I said 'Dele, if someone attempts a coup and fails and somebody now says **Dele** wrote that Babangida would be stoned on the street and they arrest you, what will you do?' I said that was what the woman was trying to tell him and he realised the import of what was said. A second time, the woman came to me that **Dele Giwa** was trying to write an article about the other side of Ebitu Ukiwe, who was then sacked as Babangida's second in command and then there was a police officer who said something about soldiers not knowing anything beyond women and drinking beer and the police authorities were dealing with him. I was told that **Dele Giwa** wanted to write on that too and so I followed the woman to her office and we chatted. In fact, that day, by the time I got to the woman's office, I met him saying all sort of things that he was close to so and so persons and I asked him which article he was going to write on Ukiwe and the police officer. I asked why he could not go to meet the police authorities to intervene rather than just writing articles, because the police are bound by laws and it could not be said that the police were victimising the boy, because he knew there were laws that forbade his conduct. And then, I asked him where he talked about arms and ammunition and he said where did I get that information; and I told him you are a **journalist**, do you reveal your source of information? Are you now telling the military to reveal its source? He said he knew people were after him and I said 'Dele, I met you telling this woman the names of high-profile people you know; are you sure some of your colleagues are not jealous of you and trying to cause trouble for you?' And we joked that if he wanted me to investigate for him, he should pay me in foreign exchange and we all laughed. That was how people came about saying that I interviewed him prior to his death. In that book, you will find out who killed **Dele Giwa**. I pointed out who should be grabbed and made to tell those he collaborated with.

You revealed the role you played in Oke Ogun and Oyo State during the last election and for years, the people of Oke Ogun have been alleging that they are marginalised in power sharing and angling for one of their own to be governor. Where do you stand on the clamour for an Oke Ogun indigene to be governor in 2019?

That idea is mine.

The idea about an Oke Ogun man being governor? Why is it you never contested?

I am not interested in contesting or being appointed. During the time of UNCP, they sent for me and I went to Ibadan. They said they wanted me as the senator for Oyo North and I said I was not interested. So, let us address the 2019 issue. After the 2015 elections, I met APC members in Saki and I asked them who are the other key APC leaders in Oke Ogun; they asked me why and I told them that since Ajimobi had come to Saki and Oke Ogun to appreciate them for voting for him to win a second term, then we should also pay him a visit and also thank him for appreciating us. We would then tell him that we want an Oke Ogun indigene to be governor of Oyo State in 2019 and that we have told you, tell us who we should go and meet again in the APC. But the people started dilly-dallying; it was later that I learnt that if that was done, they were afraid that I would emerge the leader of the APC in Oke Ogun.

But the idea of having an Oke Ogun man as the next governor is a good one that all zones in Oyo State must give consideration to. It is in line with the principles of equity and fairness. Oke Ogun is the second largest zone in Oyo State after Ibadan, but only Ibadan and Ogbomoso have produced governors for over 20 years. So, I believe Oke Ogun should be given a chance.

Have you met the governor on that?

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The meeting never came up. But a young man came to me that they were working for an Oke Ogun agenda ahead of 2019 and I told him that the same thing had been on my mind. They had the first meeting in Otu and I was present there. I advised them that they would have opposition from politicians, traditional rulers and so on; I analysed everything and warned them against being hijacked. I have not heard much from them now.

About four or five aspirants from Oke Ogun have shown interest. As someone passionate about Oke Ogun, have you made up your mind on whom to support?

No. But I met the engineer, Remi Olaniyan, at a meeting of Oke Ogun traditional rulers held in Ago Are and he told me he would come and see me. Also, one day, a young man was here with Mrs Busari and he said he was Debo Adesina and that he has interest in being governor of Oyo State and I asked him which party he was going to use and he said he had not made up his mind yet. I asked him a few questions and he has phoned me a few times. No other person has told me he is contesting. So, for now, I cannot say I have made up my mind about anyone.

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## **Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape, Murder So Gruesome!**

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**Length:** 1765 words

**Byline:** Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye

### **Body**

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UGOCHUKWU E J INKEONYE

"One life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom."—**Dele Giwa** (Late Nigerian **Journalist**)

After five whole years of seeking admission into the institution of higher learning, Miss Vera Uwaila Omozuwa was eventually admitted to read Microbiology at the University of Benin. Obviously a very serious student, she was in no mood to joke with her studies, probably, after considering how long it took her to secure the admission. So, she would always go to the serene environment of her Church when worshippers were not around to read her books. The Church environment should be both safe and devoid of distractions.

But on this particular day, May 27, 2020, some wicked, callous and barbarous assailants gained access to the Church auditorium where she was immersed in her books, brutally raped her and ended her life by hitting her on the head with a fire extinguisher which gave her a very deep cut. They then fled leaving her in the pool of her own blood. She was only 22 and in her first year at the university.

No one knew how long she lay there bleeding until the security man arrived and saw her. She was already unconscious, probably due to the effect of the brutal violation she had experienced and the cruel blow she had received, from whose wound she must have lost so much blood. At the hospital where she was rushed to, the doctors tried their best but were unable to revive her. She eventually died without being able to utter a single word to anyone about what had happened to her or whether she was able to recognize her savage rapists and murderers.

The gory picture of her body is the most horrible image I have tried to look at in recent times. I had to remove my eyes immediately! A once beautiful girl had suddenly turned into a horrific and scary image because of the primeval exploits of some brutish creatures.

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### Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape, Murder So Gruesome!

Now, what exactly could so badly provoke human beings to descend so low to the level of wild beasts to give free rein to their basest instincts to unleash such a barbaric violence on another human being? Lust, anger, hatred, sadism, desire to conquer and dominate, revenge, or what? Are more and more people losing their humanity? Has the world gone irrecoverably berserk? Daily, dizzying reports of grown men raping grandmothers, mothers, single women and even underage girls are rough-ly slapped on our faces. I have even read bloodcurdling accounts of ten or even eight month-old babies raped, not by confirmed mentally challenged people, but by other-wise sane human beings! What exactly is happening? I think this should be a very rich research subject for our scholars in the fields of psychology and behavioural studies. We need to urgently understand what has gone wrong with our world.

The parents of Uwaila are badly heart-broken as outrage engulfs the country over their daughter's barbaric murder. In a video that surfaced on twitter early this week, Uwaila's father lamented:

"It was not a mistake; it was not a fault; it was not stubbornness for her to go to the church to study. She had been going there for several years. She struggled for five years before she gained admission into UNIBEN. I was waiting to celebrate her admission before she died."

When has it become an offence for a serious and focused student to find a conducive place to read, more so, a worship centre which should be considered sacred and in-violable? Who could be so godless, wanton and profane as to trail a girl to a church building to unleash this kind of harrowing and deadly violence on her? Such a person should have no place within the bounds of civilised society.

Narrating the horrific incident, Uwaila's mother mournfully recounted:

"I saw a friend, who came to visit me, off and before I came back, someone had called my telephone thrice. When I got back, my children told me that a church member, Mummy Osunla, had called me and when I called her back, she asked where I was and told me that I should come and that she did not know what had happened to my daughter.

"I ran to the place but before I got there, they [had] already [taken] her to a private hospital and when I saw my daughter, I cried. They raped her; the dress she was wearing that morning was white, but it had turned to red; all her body was full of blood. Her mouth and eyes were tied; the hoodlums used a fire extinguisher to hit her head, which left a deep cut.

"We were asked to take her for an X-ray on her head; I did not have money but my church members tried and money was raised and we bought all the drugs that we were asked to buy, but Uwa could not make it. She was unable to say anything till she died; it was just tears that were coming out from her eyes."

The national outrage this grisly incident has provoked is quite reassuring, but the security agencies should be more creative and proactive about how to ensure that people that commit these hideous crimes are apprehended and punished. It should now be made compulsory that CCTVs must be installed in all public buildings including worship centres. This will go a long way deter potential rapists and other criminals who will know that their criminal activities are not hidden. The installation of these cameras should be extended to the streets and even highways. No amount spent on enhancing the security of lives and property should be considered too much. The police must equally be empowered to acquire more, modern crime-unravelling equipment, so as to be able to track criminals no matter how they try to evade justice

It is however encouraging that the Edo Police Command has announced the arrest of one of the suspected killers of Uwaila. Its spokesperson, Chidi Nwabuzor, said that fingerprints the fire extinguisher used in killing the hapless girl has led to the arrest of the suspect. We can only hope that the fingerprint readings are accurate and that this first arrest will lead to the arrest of the remaining criminals who are now on the run. When perpetrators of crimes are punished, prospective criminals are dissuaded and society is made safer for everyone.

When the news of Uwaila's murder broke, Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki tweeted: "I have ordered the Nigeria Police Force (@PoliceNG) to thoroughly investigate the circumstances that led to the death of Miss Vera Uwaila Omozuwa, a 100-level student of the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

### Uwaila Omozuwa: Rape, Murder So Gruesome!

Later, on Tuesday, June 2, President Mu-hammadu Buhari added his voice to the high profile orders handed down to the police to their job. "I expect the Nigeria Police Force to speedily and diligently investigate this case and ensure that all the culprits responsible for this barbaric act are brought to justice," the president reportedly said.

Good! Heartwarming response! But I would always cherish a country where the police and other security agencies can always do their jobs without being ordered to do so by the governor or president. Each time there is an attack by terrorists or bandits in which the casualty figures are high enough to attract national outrage, we will be served with the news that President Buhari has ordered the security agents to apprehend the perpetrators. I always recoil with shame each time I stumble on such strange reports. It has even been reported in this country that the president had ordered the Air Force to bomb terrorist strongholds! This one is even more sickening because it is like informing the terrorists to relocate because bombs will soon start raining on their locations. Who does that anywhere?

I would like to see Nigerian security institutions grow and be truly independent. They should be able to do their jobs conscientiously whether the crime attracted widespread uproar or not, whether they got instructions from the president, governor or nobody. Unraveling crimes and arresting the people behind them should be normal, routine work for them. They do not need to be prodded or ordered to go after criminals, apprehend and bring them to justice.

There is also this little but very injurious matter that deserves mention here since it keeps reoccurring. When crimes like rape or any kind violence are committed against women, there are usually some outspoken ladies who are quick to not just condemn the crime and call for justice for the victim, but readily turn the incident into an opportunity to initiate an anti-men campaign. They would stretch their power of their oratory and emotions to brand ALL men rapists and women-killers in order to widen the valley of animosity between the male and the female. This might earn them the very lucrative identity they are craving but would not make our world any better. When the records of rape cases are thoroughly examined, it might even be discovered that male rapists may not even constitute up to one percent of the male population.

Both genders are needed in the fight against this hideous crime – which is even committed against both women and men. Demonizing all men each time gender-based crimes occur may help those who insist on doing it to achieve some self-serving credentials, but it will inject a serious setback in the larger campaign by depleting the support from men which is highly required to lend the war some beneficial balance and eventually win it. All men are not rapists or supporters of rape, that should be very clear. Since the Uwaila incident, many men have gone all out condemning the crime and calling for justice for the victim. It would help to seek NOT to discourage them by unleashing a fallacy of generalization that seeks to tar all of them with the egregious brush of women haters and violators.

As I tried to tidy up this piece yesterday afternoon, a newsflash came in that a 19-year old female student was raped and stabbed to death in her own father's house in Ibadan. Narrating the incident, the obviously shattered father of the victim said: "Somebody called me on the phone that I should come home but he refused to tell me what happened. When I got home, I saw that my daughter had been raped and stabbed to death."

I hope the Oyo State Police Command will not wait for any "orders" from the governor or a national outcry to thoroughly investigate the matter and bring the perpetrators to book. Rape is ugly. Let's all help to discourage it by ensuring that its perpetrators are always punished.

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/74/159133335292.jpeg>

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/633/1803/37/159133335295.jpeg>

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**Load-Date:** June 5, 2020

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## **NIGERIA: INTERNATIONAL JURY TO PROBE INTO MURDER CASE**

IPS-Inter Press Service

October 6, 1993, Wednesday

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**Length:** 240 words

**Dateline:** ABEOKUTA, NIGERIA, Oct. 6

### **Body**

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An international jury is to investigate into the death of a Nigerian journalist killed by a parcel bomb in 1986, a leading Nigerian author announced yesterday.

Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, who is the chair of the Lagos-based African Democratic League said "it is time to unravel the seven-year-old riddle" surrounding the death of Dele Giwa.

"It is also time all facts are brought out before an international jury, because facts are being deliberately mingled with lies in some underground publications so as to make the water very murky," he said.

Soyinka, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986, said "living witnesses to the plot and murder" of Giwa are ready to testify if immunity and security are provided them by the jury. Some of the witnesses, he said, live in exile abroad.

"The exercise is a perfectly legitimate one. But whoever tries to block the unravelling of the brutal murder, will have to tell the world why," he warned.

Giwa, editor-in-chief of the independent "Newswatch" magazine was killed when a parcel, believed to contain a bomb, exploded in his hands in Lagos in October 1986.

Many Nigerians believe that the parcel was sent by the Nigerian secret police.

But the military government, led by former President Ibrahim Babangida, denied any state involvement in the murder. But it also refused to investigate the incident.

Soyinka, 59, has yet to disclose the members of the jury who would probe into the Giwa incident.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 1993



## The myth of cars in a holy well

Weekly Trust

October 13, 2018 Saturday

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Length: 824 words

### **Body**

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It depends on who you ask - what's a general's life worth, serving or retired? Probably worth much more than that of a bloody civilian or one hundred bloody civilians. When Boko Haram attacked Chibok, efforts were made by the government of the day to make light of it. Then they attacked Buni Yadi, slaughtered and roasted nearly 50 school children. Again there was no dynamic quest to avenge those deaths. In February this year, they visited Dapchi and snatched Leah Sharibu and others. Government rescued the others and left poor Leah in captivity. Every other week, our gallant soldiers are ambushed, killed and buried in hush solemn ceremonies.

When Major General Idris Alkali disappeared between Bauchi and Abuja, his phone records were tracked to the Plateau. The Plateau has swallowed many innocent people in the past decade. But thanks to the dynamism of our security forces, at least we know that General Alkali is missing. His disappearance did not escape the notice of his colleagues even though he had recently retired.

The former chief of army administration must have been a very simple person. In a country where bloody civilians are dispensable, army generals are a privileged breed.

They retire with their orderlies and uniformed driver. Their homes are under armed guard 24/7 for life. General Alkali chose to ignore all his privileges and travel like a bloody civilian. He even chose to drive himself, an unusual thing for a unique general with access to exemplary privileges of life. Where the majority is left to their own security, it is a crime for those with privileges to forgo them. General Alkali did not get to Abuja his destination. But for the loud noises of politicians, his disappearance is capable of causing an ethno-religious civil war.

Dura Du, the part where his phone records was last tracked was not necessarily on the volatile map of Plateau. It is therefore shocking that a 'holy well' that was once a mining pit is now at the centre of the silent war of General Alkali's disappearance. In other climes, mining pits are quickly landfilled to avoid disaster but in Dura Du and other parts of the Plateau, they have metamorphosed into wells of living water.

As anyone who has lived in a Naija village would testify, water sources generate deep myths. The inhabitants of Dura Du believe that any attempt at tampering with the well would unleash untold calamities on the community. You would pardon them because they are right. Wells can survive without humans but humans cannot survive without water. It is a law of nature and in villages; nature is synonymous with the gods.

So, after an initial confrontation with protesters, the military task force drained the well and discovered General Alkali's Toyota Corona, a few personal belongings and later, other vehicles on the missing list of security agencies.

### The myth of cars in a holy well

This has prompted social media influencers from his part of the country to decry alleged media silence and lack of a campaign hashtag for the general.

A cursory look at mainstream media coverage of the tragedy would reveal otherwise but people see more colours of the rainbow in between black and white. For now General

Alkali is still declared as 'missing'. His former colleagues have not given up on finding him, hopefully alive, neither should we.

As a sad and unfolding crisis, it has been well managed. Protesters who confronted guns and bayonets have escaped either being shot or unlawfully detained. This is commendable. Those bent on turning it into an inter-ethnic or religious inferno are perhaps disappointed.

One could only hope that all the sides to this unfortunate saga would continue to have faith in the capacity of established agencies to unravel the mystery behind this general's disappearance without upturning the apple cart. Our nation is used to handling the incomprehensible. It has witnessed the inconclusive investigation into the murder of foremost investigative journalist, Dele Giwa, Timothy Bonnet and Godwin Agbroko. It has witnessed the murder of Harry Marshall and failed to conclusively find the killers of Suliat Adedeji, Kudirat Abiola and Olaitan Oyerinde. It has failed to unravel the mystery behind the death of former justice minister, Bola Ige. The death of MKO Abiola is still a source of mystery.

We all hope that whoever snatched General Alkali from his car would produce the General alive rather than dead or at least lead investigators to what happened to him. That would be assurance that our jungle is liveable. It is not just because General Alkali is a retired general, it is because no nation thrives that cannot guarantee the safety, security and free movement of its citizens and guests alike.

It's October and Dele Giwa's immortal words are as important today as they were when they were first written - one life taken in cold blood is as gruesome as a thousand others that may go down in a pogrom, so, let's stop talking about numbers and talk about life.

**Load-Date:** October 15, 2018

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## The Myth of Cars in a Holy Well

Daily Trust (Abuja)

October 10, 2018

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**Length:** 824 words

**Byline:** Tunde Asaju

### **Body**

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**Load-Date:** October 10, 2018

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## **#EndSARS: My father would be proud of Nigerian youths - Dele Giwa's daughter**

PM News

October 20, 2020 Tuesday

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**Length:** 56 words

### **Body**

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Ayodele **Dele Giwa**, the daughter of slain Nigerian **journalist**, editor and founder of Newswatch magazine, **Dele Giwa** has said her father would be proud of the #EndSARS protests being staged by Nigerian youths.

In a tweet thread on Twitter, Ayodele wrote that she was sure her father would have come out to protest if he were alive on this day.

**Load-Date:** October 24, 2020

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## June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

The Nation (Nigeria)

June 15, 2019 Saturday

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Length: 1651 words

### **Body**

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FOR 25 agonising years, the June 12 imbroglio was a never-ending soap opera until President Muhammadu Buhari decided to bring it to a deserving conclusion on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. At least, we all got the chance to exhale, regardless of how we may feel about the politics of the well-deserved presidential recognition bestowed on the real symbol of the undying narrative of an abducted hope on June 12, 1993-the late Bashorun Moshood Kasimawo Olawale Abiola. Even in these times, not many people would stand up to be counted like he did when it mattered most. Of course, in matters like this, it is difficult to rule out the usual devious sellouts who, after dancing on the grave of Abiola, also became beneficiaries of that supreme sacrifice. Pitifully, that is part of the story. But, when the chips are down, we do know those who truly stood up to be counted either dead or alive. And let's not get it wrong like the warped illogic spewed by a serving senator on the floor of the Senate some days back. These exceptional men and women were Nigerians-the true heroes of the democracy that many now enjoy with spasms of arrogance tailored to their padded shoulders.

For those who witnessed the tragic impulses that unfolded before them in those days, there couldn't have been a better way of celebrating Abiola's triumph than the significant olive branch President Muhammadu Buhari waved to all parties on the 25th anniversary of Nigeria's freest and fairest election which was annulled by the military junta under the leadership of now-retired General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The Babangida years would be remembered for three things-his Structural Adjustment Programme which impoverished the middle class; the gruesome letter bomb murder of that iconic *journalist, Dele Giwa*; and, the shameful role he played in the abortion of the June 12 mandate freely given to his bosom friend and arguably Africa's richest man at that time, Abiola. No one is keen to remember MAMSER, DFRRI, Option A4 and numerous great initiatives of the IBB era that the anti-people annulment eclipsed so firmly. Those who lived through that period couldn't have forgotten the deadly games and murderous proclivities of the military boys from the moment Babangida announced his decision to annul the election to the short-lived Interim National Government of Ernest Shonekan/General Sani Abacha to when the dark-goggled one completely seized the rein of power, tossing off Shonekan and his band of pretenders so casually with less effort than someone swatting a fly.

Ask Babangida today what pushed him into that betrayal of trust and he would mumble some mumbo-jumbo incoherent statement that makes no sense other than blaming it on the military hierarchy which, he said that he, as Commander in Chief, was powerless to control - the same tendentious excuse that he has tendered over the years to dribble everybody. Well, he ended up dribbling himself to infamy with that rude joke. And so, it was not surprising that he didn't turn up that Tuesday in Aso Rock when Abiola, Gani Fawehinmi and others had their day in the sun. How could he? Aside the ghosts of all the martyrs of the June 12, 1993 mandate haunting him, we cannot easily forget the many lives that were lost in the protests, including those who met their untimely deaths whilst running

## June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

from the crisis-ridden South-West when the Abacha goons used protesters to perfect their shooting capacity. At the height of the June 12 struggle, notable voices were killed in their homes including Pa Rewane and Mrs. Kudirat Abiola who was mauled down on the streets of Lagos for daring to insist on the release of her husband. Till today, Abiola's death in the hand of the state is still shrouded in official secrecy. He was silenced, betrayed by those he thought he knew too well to distrust.

If not for Buhari, 'Hope 93' could have been deferred in perpetuity. Some of those who sat at the ceremonial acclamation of that mandate last Tuesday at the State House Banquet Hall knew what they did to frustrate the somewhat 'heady' Abiola. Here, we speak of those who went behind his back to strike a deal with Abacha and worked to ensure that June 12 was finally dealt a fatal blow. Perhaps, one should ask: how did they feel when they heard Hafsat Abiola-Costello speak glowingly of the true love the father they never allowed her to enjoy had for the people of this country? Did they know that it was the same young graduate, Hafsat, who braved the odds many years back, asking the authorities to explain why her parents should come to such a tragic pass for daring to demand justice, fair play and equity for the people of this country? That same girl is now a full grown woman living with the 25-year anguish of being kept in the dark on why and how the state reached the agreement that her parents had to go for Nigeria to move on.

If it were that simple, Nigeria would have moved on since that cruel elimination of Abiola and every other person that opposed the perpetuation of military oligarchs in power. They just didn't want Abiola dead; they also wanted his memories wiped off like he never happened. But he did happen. Growing up in the suburb of Itire/Ijesha then, I remember vividly what Abiola Bookshop meant to us in different parts of the country. There was also Abiola Bakery, Concord Press and many other companies. Like Hafsat noted in her speech, MKO was one man who would rather die than allow anyone to shave his head in his absence. Even in those tortuous moments, he never forgot to lace his speeches with wisecracks that left many laughing through their pain. It was the Abiola personae that made June 12 a watershed. That election broke all barriers as Nigerians unanimously returned a Muslim/Muslim ticket to the consternation of the treacherous few who now gloat in the dark. And no one can ever forget the patriotism and strong sense of duty displayed by Prof. Humphrey Nwosu who stood firm in spite of intimidation from the military. He could have buckled under pressure. But he never did. That is why he is really an unsung hero of that once dark part of our history.

To understand what Abiola stood for, you would have to listen to Hafsat's testimonial at the event. Hear her: 'In many ways, the events that transpired later revealed to Nigerians the eloquence in his heart; the fidelity of his commitment and even his own deep abiding wish that, if there was anyway his own actions would in any way compromise the people of Nigeria, MKO preferred to die. He preferred to leave the earth rather than compromise on you, on your integrity as a people and your sovereignty as a nation.' And didn't Abiola live those eternal words of his daughter to the last? Wasn't he the reason why, when Nigeria began yet another journey of democratic experiment, the entire nation agreed that the South West must solely field presidential candidates? Did the winner of that election, his kinsman, recognise Abiola's sacrifices throughout his eight year on that seat? Did he even acknowledge the significance of June 12 in our national history?

When Prof. Wole Soyinka harped on the need to establish a hall of shame for those who betrayed the mandate, I assume quite a number of people in that hall would shift uncomfortably in their chairs. When Hafsat said it was quite ironic that a Buhari would be the one to posthumously honour her father, the import of that couldn't have been lost to those who understood that Abiola, like every one of us, had his shortcomings. One of these was the fact that he sponsored the palace coup that ousted Buhari and foisted Babangida on the nation-the same Babangida that looked the other way when a simple sip of tea killed the dream of a nation and threw us into turmoil. How would we have been able to heal the wounds if Buhari had not summoned the courage to right the wrongs?

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### June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

Though a soothing balm was rubbed on the festering wounds of many years from both sides of the divide, those who spoke were not shy of telling truth to power no matter how unpalatable. That was why Soyinka tasked Buhari on the limits of his somewhat fecund loyalty to Abacha, the tormentor-in-chief of Abiola and all loyalists of his mandate. That was why Hafsat reminded him that the best way to truly honour the memory of her father is to make Nigeria a place where the over 200 million population are in full control of the levers of governance instead of the current situation where few landlords oppress the majority and dare them to go take a dive into a fiery furnace. That was why Iyorchia Ayu demanded for his full understanding of how democracy works, asking him to develop an almost inelastic tolerance for the opposition. And, if we must rub it in, that was why those who couldn't take the knocks for their treacherous past excused themselves from the occasion when June 12 became a reality-the day MKO's inimitable message that 'the hand of the giver is always on top' toppled the evil machinations of his 'friend' and bruised the ego of a 'kinsman' who never saw MKO as the true symbol of the democracy that heralded him into power from the prison!

Well, June 12 is now Democracy Day. We can only hope that those that connived to kill the dream would come up, one day, to answer the hanging question: who killed Abiola? Without this, we can't have a closure. We just can't.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2019

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## June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

The Nation (Nigeria)

June 15, 2019 Saturday

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Length: 1648 words

### **Body**

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Politics or not, Buhari made a huge difference in saying the five-letter word-sorry. But for sheer ego, that apology could have been made many years back. We cheapen the conversation when we criticize Buhari for trying to make huge political capital out of that gesture. Who wouldn't anyway? Yet, we do know that June 12 is more than that. Knowing the mindset of the living heroes of that particular event, it was ennobling some of them exploited the occasion to lecture Buhari on the fine ethos of democracy and why he must address the imbalance in the land.

### June 12: Flashbacks and current realities

Though a soothing balm was rubbed on the festering wounds of many years from both sides of the divide, those who spoke were not shy of telling truth to power no matter how unpalatable. That was why Soyinka tasked Buhari on the limits of his somewhat fecund loyalty to Abacha, the tormentor-in-chief of Abiola and all loyalists of his mandate. That was why Hafsat reminded him that the best way to truly honour the memory of her father is to make Nigeria a place where the over 200 million population are in full control of the levers of governance instead of the current situation where few landlords oppress the majority and dare them to go take a dive into a fiery furnace. That was why IyorchiaAyu demanded for his full understanding of how democracy works, asking him to develop an almost inelastic tolerance for the opposition. And, if we must rub it in, that was why those who couldn't take the knocks for their treacherous past excused themselves from the occasion when June 12 became a reality-the day MKO's inimitable message that 'the hand of the giver is always on top' toppled the evil machinations of his 'friend' and bruised the ego of a 'kinsman' who never saw MKO as the true symbol of the democracy that heralded him into power from the prison!

Well, June 12 is now Democracy Day. We can only hope that those that connived to kill the dream would come up, one day, to answer the hanging question: who killed Abiola? Without this, we can't have a closure. We just can't.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2019

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## I Was a Security Guard Before I Became a Lawyer, SAN

This Day (Lagos)

May 17, 2014

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Length: 1882 words

### **Body**

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Sent out of the hostel for a term with a 30-day suspension from school, he cut the figure of a troublemaker. But, rather than making troubles, he seemed to be bullied by life; he failed to meet the cut-off mark to be able to read Mass Communication. For seven months, he worked as a security man at Archbishop Vining Memorial Church in Ikeja. For each month, he earned a measly N195 for a seven-day a week job. But, the security post offered him solace. From there he gained admission to read Law. From a budding journalist, he became a brilliant lawyer and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN. "Don't just get mad; get a lawyer!" says a sticker: Daniel Omotilewa might just be your best bet. In this down-memory-lane interview with Adedayo Adejobi, Omotilewa shares his melodramatic episode as a fired up school journalist, his sudden decision to study Law and his second thoughts about marriage and hard work

Everything seemed to be working out perfectly for him as a budding journalist. It was his passion; nothing and no one could convince him otherwise. Almost, this enthusiastic fan of Newswatch -particularly its editor-in-chief back then -felt his career was fixed with the fourth estate. So, why isn't he a journalist today? He looked at me with somewhat satisfying look, adjusted on his chair and cleared his throat before responding.

"Becoming a Lawyer was an eleventh-hour decision. All I wanted to be initially was a journalist. I must say the Newswatch of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed influenced me a lot. Even as a student, I was always doing everything possible to read Newswatch. Just like Dr. Tai Solarin wrote, after the death of Dele Giwa by parcel bomb, that it is the deed of courage that gives birth to men of courage. It was the death of Dele Giwa that more than anything fired my determination to become a journalist in those formative years of my life. You cannot interact with me for two weeks without knowing my passion for Newswatch and journalism. In fact, months after the death of Dele Giwa, a lot of my old school mates were still consoling me as if Dele Giwa was my biological brother.

"It was not a surprise when I got to Federal School of Art and Science Ondo, in 1986, I embraced the only press society in the school. It was called News and Current Affairs Society (NECAS), and towards the end of my first year in the school, I became the Editor of the society. Otunba Olapeju (Malam), the present Principal of Kings College, who was one of my literature teachers was the patron of the society. Kayode Akinmade (Yellow man) the present Commissioner for Information in Ondo, handed over the mantle of editorship to me. However, when Yellow man was handing over to me, I never knew he was handing over to me trouble. I mean real trouble. In our small school community then at Federal School of Art and Science, Ondo, I was introduced to the glamour and also the hazards of being a journalist. Few weeks after I became the editor, there was a serious demonstration in the school -an act the school authority believed was instigated by some inciting articles we published. The buck stopped on my table

## I Was a Security Guard Before I Became a Lawyer, SAN

and I was sent out of the hostel with some of my colleagues for a term and also penalised through a 30-working day suspension from the school. My brother who trained me will possibly know about this information for the first time, if he should read the interview." Having missed his dream career, he did not give up. Well-groomed and clean-shaven, Daniel narrated how he transcended the low points of his life before becoming a Lawyer. "In 1988, I passed out of Federal School of Arts and Science with 9 points which was not enough to secure direct entry admission for me at Mass Communication Department of University of Lagos. I think the cut-off mark for direct entry that year was 11 points. Therefore, while waiting for the next academic /admission period, I picked up the only job available for me then which was to work as a day security man at Archbishop Vining Memorial Church, GRA, Ikeja.

The only difference in our type of security then was that we were not wearing uniforms. As a day security/gateman, I worked from 6am to 6pm because the night guards must hand over to me in the morning while I have to hand over to them in the evening. This was in 1989 and I did that for seven months on a monthly salary of N195." Adjusting his glasses, he explained how he coped with a N195-salary. "People like us blend easily to situations around us. I am a great admirer of Dr. Tai Solarin. In fact, I have read his autobiography cover to cover more than six times. I have read in that book titled "To Mother With Love, An Experiment in Autobiography" how he picked up a job as a cleaner in a hospital in London after completing his Master's Degree. In fact, Dr. Tai Solarin was doing this work until an invitation came from Nigeria that he should come and assume the headship as Principal of Molusi College in Ijebu Igbo." With the Dr. Tai Solarin kind of influence on his life, surprisingly the lawyer doesn't seem to fully follow through the acts, practices and observances of the late teacher and atheist. He described himself in this light: "I am not an atheist. I am a Christian, but I must confess that his thoughts have greatly influenced the way I practiced my religion. Humanity is one, irrespective of our religious persuasions. Jawaharlal Nehru; the first Prime Minister of India was also a man I greatly admired. These two great souls are humanist par excellence. Therefore, I am a Christian, but with a heavy dose of humanism. My belief is that, the way you relate with that man beside your house, in your office, in the bus with you, in your village may just be a way of interfacing with God. Or even that young girl or boy working as a house-help in your home may just be the interface you need with God".

Why did he choose to pursue Law? "I never pursued law but law pursued me. As stated earlier, when I was working in that church as a security man, I was able to reflect greatly. It was a job that confined me to an environment for an average of 12 hours daily, 7 days of the week. So there was much time to reflect and even read. At this period I sat for an External GCE A/L and I had an A in Government which boosted my chance of direct entry admission for any of the high-flying courses such as Mass communication and Law. Therefore, it was at the eleventh hour of completing my admission form and after a deep reflection that the idea of Law dropped into my mind. The whole idea then was that 'why don't you do something that can make you self-employed?' And to the glory of God, I have only worked as a salary earner for six months since I was called to bar in December 15, 1993. It might interest you that I formed my company Daniel Omotilewa & Co., since my National Youth Service days. This 100% U-turn from Journalism to Law is the reason why I said it was law that pursued me. Today, virtually everything about me is law. My wife is a lawyer, my father-in-law is a lawyer, my first child is in Ife reading law and some of my best friends today are lawyers.". For the law profession to have caught up with and overtaken him for over twenty-one years he shared the jabs of his role models in the profession. "First and foremost, I admire late Chief Gani Fawehinmi. I did my law school chamber attachment with him. He was indeed a great soul, a humanist and a dogged fighter, a highly principled and hard-working individual. I redeployed from Enugu to Lagos during my National Youth Service with high hope that I will have a space in his chamber which never materialized." Omotilewa added that "Chief Afe Babalola is another individual who has made a great impression in my heart". What did he learn from the legal luminary? "He taught me civil litigation when I returned to University of Ibadan in 2002 for a Master's degree in Law. Here is a man who will be in classroom by 7am on a Saturday morning waiting for us students. He is a workaholic and a giver. I was further humbled when I read his autobiography where I saw a man with such a low background rising to become a big force in law profession and in this country as a whole." The third individual under his focus is Chief Wole Olanipekun. "I have been inspired by every bit of information I have picked on him. I think his industry, advocacy and tenacity of purpose should be studied by every young individual aspiring for the top."

It's not all about Law with this expressive man. You can ask him a question like "how did he meet his wife?" without being sued. Hear him: "What a question! Well, my nephew's wife visited me in my office one day in company of my wife-to-be. She was already a lawyer practising in a chamber on Lagos Island. Being a lawyer naturally elicited

## I Was a Security Guard Before I Became a Lawyer, SAN

discussion between us and before you could say Jack Robinson, she became my wife. She has been a blessing unto my life and I could not have wished for a better one." With a friendly, warm and jovial disposition, it's all too easy to pigeon-hole Daniel Omotilewa as gregarious. "I will not consider myself a social person. I do not belong to any club. I do not go to parties neither do I drink alcohol. I might qualify as a teetotaller. I enjoy watching animal channels with my family and also having a solitary walk." For a man with a humble but impressive background he shared the secrets behind what has sustained him this far: "determination to succeed and the power of relationship. I cherish every relationship and I always endeavour not to abuse any. It is a decimal point in all my prayer every morning, to be a blessing unto others. This has worked for me in return as various people have been a blessing unto me. Do unto others what you expect them to do unto you. A good chunk of my clients today were at one time or the other at the other side of the table facing me." Looking back at his life from a position of knowledge gathered, experience and resolve to be a better man till death, the lawyer would like to do certain things differently. "Possibly marry earlier and secondly, to work a little harder. You will never know the level of your capacity until you are really challenged. Having the opportunity to start afresh, I will possibly want to be a total litigation lawyer or become a Professor of law," Omotilewa revealed.

Well, he never became a professor of law. But, he does have a perspective on law practice. "Law is a science that is evolving by the day. Therefore, a practitioner must be dynamic too. I have been involved in the acquisition of a ship in the past. When the brief came, I had never done anything involving shipping or maritime law. I picked up books on it and I spoke to experienced colleagues on it and to the glory of God, the deal was successful." And his word for those going into law practice? "Be focused; have integrity. Believe in yourself; embrace great souls to mentor you. And above all, work, work and work. The onion, pepper, tomatoes, etc., you have in your house will never become soup no matter how hard you pray. You have to work on them before you can start having the aroma of a soup in your house. Jesus said my father work and I work. Therefore, for anyone to climb the ladder of real success, he must be ready to work."

**Load-Date:** May 19, 2014

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## NGE Mourns Slain Journalist

Vanguard (Lagos)

April 29, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 300 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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The Nigerian Guild of Editors, NGE, grieves over the unconscionable murder of another *journalist*, Mr. Edo Ugbagwu, a Judicial reporter of The Nation newspapers. The NGE commiserates with his family and colleagues at The Nation newspapers as he is buried this weekend in Oturkpo in Benue State.

A statement by the President of NGE, Mr Gbenga Adefaye said: "NGE sees this murder as one too many, coming after the unresolved murder of Godwin Agbroko of ThisDay newspapers, Bayo Ohu of The Guardian newspapers, Abayomi Ogundei of ThisDay newspapers and others in recent times. The catalogue is frightening and the NGE wails: who benefits from the murder of journalists?

"It is a pathetic commentary on our regard for the sanctity of human lives that since the October 19, 2006 letter-bomb killing of Mr. *Dele Giwa*, the first Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, many journalists like Bagauda Kalto, Omololu Falobi, formerly of The Punch, Tunde Oladepo of The Guardian have had their lives wasted while the security agencies have proved incapable of resolving the killings.

"Every time a citizen, particularly a *journalist* is murdered and the security agencies act helplessly, the faith in the ability of the Nigerian state to protect its own is undermined.

"Whenever a *journalist* is killed, debate is muffled, free speech is trampled on the ground and the nation dives into the cavé, into a state of fear and dances away from decency and civilisation.

"The death of Mr Edo Ugagwu, however, calls for a review of strategy by the press: to go beyond expression of outrage. We must share valuable information and collaborate in our own peculiar ways to fish out murderers of pressmen who are obviously out to intimidate all of us away from the path of freedom. It is a campaign that the media must undertake."

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2010



## **Understanding Hazards of The Country's Journalism [analysis]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

May 3, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1054 words

**Byline:** Ekene Okoro

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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If there is any profession in Nigeria that has witnessed incidence of murder cases in the last 25 years, Journalism would stand out. In recent times, men of the pen profession have had to contend with hazards associated with the job especially in beats involving investigative reporting.

However, more worrisome is the spate of rising cases of high profile killings of journalists in the country with not less than nine killed in the last 25 years. The profession has lost notable journalists including Dele Giwa, founding Editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine Bagauda Kaltho of The News Magazine, Bayo Olu of The Guardian, Godwin Agboroko, Abayomi Ogundeleji, both of THISDAY Newspapers and most recently Edo Ugbagwu, of The Nation Newspapers, Nathan Dabak and Gyang Bwede both in Jos Plateau State.

No doubt, the spate of killing of their members has sent dangerous signals to journalists across the country. This was one of the reasons the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) chose to use this year's World Press Freedom Day on Monday to stage a peaceful protest rally in Lagos to convey their feelings on the spate of killing of their members. Taking off at exactly 10am, hundreds of obviously aggrieved journalists all dressed in black outfits chanting solidarity songs and carrying placards some of which read 'IG, Please Save our Soul, "Stop the Killing of Journalists', Who killed these Journalists: Bagauda Kaltho, Dele Giwa, Bayo Olu, Edo Ugbagwu, Agboroko Godwin, Abayomi Ogundeleji', Justice Delayed is Justice Denied', amongst others marched from the Ladi Lawal Press Centre Alausa Ikeja to Newswatch Magazine, Oregun then moved to the Lagos State Headquarters of the Nigeria Police, Ikeja and then ended the rally at the Marina residence of the State Governor, Babatunde Fashola.

National President of the Union, Mohammed Garba who led top executives of National Association of Women Journalist(NAWOJ) and news editors of national dailies in the rally across the Lagos Metropolis told Daily Independent that the rally was mainly to show their condemnation and register their displeasure on the killings of their members and also present a 'Protest letter over murder of Journalists' to the Inspector General of Police, Ogonna Onovo as well as send a 'Save Our Soul' message to the Acting President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to immediate beef up the security in the country to forestall further killings of journalists in the country. According to Garba, despite the killings, no culprits have been brought to book, noting that the dastardly act not only dents the image of Nigeria, but also puts Nigeria on the top of the list of nations in the cases of abuse of press freedom in West Africa. "We embarked on this protest rally today being the World Press Freedom Day because we are disturbed, unhappy and worried about the situation of media killings in Nigeria. Going by the history of killings of

## Understanding Hazards of The Country's Journalism [analysis]

journalists' right from **Dele Giwa**, we are worried because our security agencies are yet to unravel the brains behind this dastardly act several years after the sad occurrences and we chose Lagos because majority of the cases occurred here. Journalists in Nigeria are no longer safe and we want to use this medium to day to send our message to Governor Fashola, Commissioner of Police Marvel Akpoyibo because we know that these killings are a deliberate ploy to prevent us from performing our duties", he said. Adding his voice, News Editor of the Daily Independent Newspapers, Habib Aruna lamented the hostile manner journalists have been subjected to in the country adding that the government has not helped the situation.

"We are in a society that does not like what we are doing; a society in is darkness and we represent the civilized world. We are the light and unfortunately, they do not want light", he said, adding "the government is not responsive. We are here to show our commitment and demand to know who killed our colleagues. Killing them would not stop us, we would continue the struggle". Aruna also called on the federal government to ensure security of lives of journalists and the freedom to perform their function as the watchdog of the society, adding "Thomas Jefferson once said, if the press is free, everything would be free". Former Lagos chairman of the union, **Dele Odeyemi** who also spoke added his voice to the protest, saying that the killings would only spur journalists to continue to expose corruption and negative vices in the polity and in the Nigerian system. Former National Secretary of the Union, Jola Ogunlusi in his speech called for the establishment of state police, expressing optimism that it would help in unraveling the killers.

"This is a call to the Acting President to strengthen the police and make them proactive. If these killings were to be in America or Britain, an effective investigation would have been called to unravel the killers", he said. Deputy Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Solomon Aranse who spoke on behalf of Akpoyibo expressed concern over the spate of killings of journalists, stressing that already, the police have commenced full scale investigations into the assassinations of Edo Ugbagwu. Aranse who also received the two-page letter to Onovo said "We would do everything humanly possible, we are out to ensure that these spate of killings stop", adding that the police are currently working with some journalists to fish out the killers of some of the slain journalists. Fashola on his part condemned the rising killing of journalists in the country saying it portends grave danger to the nation's democracy. He said "there is urgent need to regulate telephone Serial Identification Module (SIM) cards procured for proper identification".He added that government at all levels should be prepared to spend resources in building forensic labs as a way of getting evidence against the perpetrators of heinous crimes. Fashola while promising to hand over the letter to the Acting President said, "Every time the life of a person is lost in the state, it diminishes me as a governor. We need to increase the capacity of our security agencies in protecting lives and property as well as bursting crimes. "No amount of money is too much to invest in security. I sincerely empathise with you on the loss of your colleagues and families", he said.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2010

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## **Makinde, Adeolu Akande, Ogunwuyi, Fatia Buhari, Others Make 2021 Oyo 100 Most Influential List**

Daily Independent (Nigeria)

February 5, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 819 words

**Byline:** Raji Adebayo

### **Body**

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IBADAN – Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde and 99 others were the recipients of the 2021 Oyo State 100 Most Influential Personalities and Brands.

Some of the other prominent persons on the list are Chairman Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), Professor Adeolu Akande, Senator Representing Oyo North Senatorial District, Senator Fatai Buhari, Oyo State Chief of Staff, Honourable Segun Ogunwuyi, CEO Valencia School, Morakinyo Goodness, CEO Stone Café, Asiawaju Segun Olalere.

This was revealed during a grand event held by the popular online medium platform, IbadanMedia.com, where Crème de la crème in and outside the State were hosted to the 5th edition of the annual Most Influential Personalities & Brands in Oyo State.

The event, which was a 3-in-1 was held at Manhattan Hall, Cruzer lounge place, Jericho, Ibadan, where Shakiru Adebayo, CEO Apex Fabric International was enthroned as the "2021 Oyo State Man of the Year", after winning the keen contest competition with 13,143 votes, defeating Chief Omoniyi Obiyinka, CEO Extention Publication, who emerged as the 1st runner-up with 11,715 votes, and Prof. Adeolu Akande, Chairman Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), ended up as the 2nd runner-up with just 22votes.

Also, in the youth category, Olamide Ojo-Philips, CEO Saphyr Events was also crowned as the "King of Boys" after winning the "Youth of the Year" contest with 38,211 votes, defeating Tolu Oluwo, CEO Trogworld, who emerged as the 1st runner-up with 31,149 votes, and Ademola Ajibola, the CEO of MAYA Awards, who gotten 16,432 votes as the 2nd runner-up.

The Oyo State Commissioner for Youth & Sports, Asiawaju Seun Fakorede, while delivering a goodwill message he congratulated the convener, Mr. Olalekan Olanrewaju Ola, the CEO of Ibadan Media Ltd.

Makinde, Adeolu Akande, Ogunwuyi, Fatia Buhari, Others Make 2021 Oyo 100 Most Influential List

In his message, the commissioner who was represented by a director at the event wished the convener a successful outing.

According to him, "brother, I don't know how I managed to miss your messages here. Our darling Club, Shooting Stars (3SC) has her match against MFM FC today in Lagos. I hope to be back in town early so I could make your event. Well done, and I wish you a great outing, Sir!" Seun Fakorede noted.

The Chief Press Secretary to the State Governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa also sent his goodwill message and reasons why he was absent at the event, saying "as much as I would have loved to be with you, I'm away on a state's assignment, hoping to finish on time so I could join, but nevertheless, I wish Ibadanmedia a successful event".

The Osun State Commissioner for Youth & Sports, Hon. Yemi Lawal in his address lauded the initiative and counted it a privilege to be invited to grace the prestigious event.

"I was also listed as one of most influential personalities in the year 2018 edition of this award, and I think this was due to my company's (GQ Lounge) positive impact in Oyo State", Lawal noted.

While delivering a welcome speech, the convener and CEO of Ibadan Media Ltd, Mr. Olalekan Olanrewaju OLA, appreciated the state government who sees value in the event that started in the year 2017 and key into the vision by endorsing it in year 2021.

According to him, "I want to appreciate the Oyo State government who sees value in our event and endorsed it. This has been a true motivation and encouragement to keep the fire burning. The event is meant to appreciate & celebrate the change agents behind the new Oyo State, those who are adding values to the community, human life, the developmental project, by contributing to the IGR and growth of our darling State.

"There are 10 categories in total, ranging from Politics & Governance, Entrepreneur, Innovators, Tech, Journalist/Broadcasters, Entertainment, NGO/Orphanage Homes, New Media, Sports, and Brands, which are also divided into Education, Finance, Media, Fashion, Food & Restaurants, and Others."

Speaking at the event, the project coordinator, Amb. Ayo George, said he counted it a privilege to be appointed by Ibadan Media CEO to work together on this project.

According to him, he has always believed in the project, as Olanrewaju is supposed to have had the Man & Youth of the Year since the early year 2021.

"Ola is my good brother, I believe so much in his vision, especially the Man & Youth of the Year project, and I keep encouraging him that the project has good prospects. Thank God I am also on the project and we can all see what this young guy has been able to put together". Ayo George noted.

The event had in attendance top personalities in Oyo State, Top comedians like Ayo Ajewole, popularly known as Woli Agba and Dele Omo Woli, Dr. Smile Comedian, Media personalities like Mayor Isaac Brown from Fresh105.9FM, Dare Adekanmbi from Nigerian Tribune, Tunde Olawuwo and Ronke Giwa-Onafuwa, from Splash105.5, Mrs. Ishola from AIT Television & crew, BCOS Director of Current Affairs, Mr. Goke Adelakun, & the crew members, Impact Africa Television crew, and others.

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2022



## War against everybody

Business Day

June 9, 2021 Wednesday

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**Length:** 3019 words

### **Body**

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The Buhari regime like NEPA, had no friends. They came to power proclaiming themselves friends of the people.

They had come, so they assured an unsuspecting populace to save them from the suffocating embrace of the politicians. But a few weeks after the duo of Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon marched triumphantly into Dodan Barracks, the seat of government, Nigerians were already asking themselves; "With friends like these, who needs enemies?" The self-styled off-shoot government of the decisive Muhammed/Obasanjo regime did not move fast to make it appear as if it deliberately wanted to estrange itself from the society.

This its top men did with an unparalleled arrogance and unnecessary combativeness, a mindless witch-hunting and needless antagonism against all sections of the populace. It was like a death wish.

The government's hostile attitude was so suffocating that it was commonplace for Idiagbon to appear on the television network and in his usual aggressive manner pronounce: You are warned to abide by ." When he was not warning people, he was threatening to "deal ruthlessly" with anyone who dared disagree.

On one occasion when Idiagbon smiled, it made headline news. It was that bad.

There had not been any government in the history of Nigeria that had so blatantly disregarded public opinion as did the Buhari regime. The ousted head of state's standard reply whenever a slight pressure built up on any particular issue was we cannot be rushed.

" The country was run as a personal fiefdom, an apparatus to use in settling personal scores.The first indication of this came when he granted his first interview to the local press.

When Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Mohammed, then with the Concord asked what his government's attitude to the press would be. Buhari went into a fit of anger.

"I will surely tamper with press freedom." he said, almost shouting.

## War against everybody

His reason was that he was embarrassed with the allegedly missing N2.8 billion oil money reports which broke after he left the government of Obasanjo as Commissioner for Petroleum in 1979. And that was how the infamous decree number four which stipulated a jail term for a journalist who published an embarrassing report about a public Official, even if it was true, came into being. Read Also: What a Netflix Documentary Taught me About Buhari's War on Everybody Even in anticipation of the official promulgation of the decree, it was already being put into use when four months into its tenure, the government ordered the arrest and detention of Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, both reporters of The Guardian.

The government was piqued because of a minor report concerning ambassadorial postings. Shortly after, the decree was published and a special tribunal chaired by Olalere Ayinde was set up to try the two reporters.

Despite a massive outpouring of public demonstrations, including pleas from traditional rulers and some of Buhari's former bosses, both journalists were tried and convicted, they were arrested on April 4 and jailed on June 4 under Decree 4, the alienation of the press and the public had set in. Harassment of journalist did not stop there.

Almost every month in their first year, one newspaper editor or another was detained for the slightest excuse. Duro Onabule, editor of National Concord was arrested and detained at least thrice.

Once for two weeks; Haroun Adamu editorial adviser of The Punch, a man Buhari had personal animosity against was detained until the government was toppled last week. also kept in jail till the end came for Buhari government was Rufai Ibrahim ex-editor of The Guardian (Sunday) for writing an open letter to Balarabe Musa, the former radical governor of Kaduna state who was impeached by a conservative opposition in 1980. In the same boat were Hamza, editor Of Amana, the Hausa language newspaper of the Concord group, Leke Salawu of the Triumph, and only one month ago, Bukar Zarma, editor of New Nigerian and Aliyu Babatunde Ahmed, editor of Sunday New Nigerian.

The deposed government tried other means to cripple the press as well. There are deliberate policy to starve newspapers of raw materials, especially newsprint.

This was done through ridiculously low import license allocation and extremely high import duties. It was so bad at one point that many newspapers retrenched staff and cut their print run and reduced pagination to eight.

The government also imported newsprint through the Nigerian Newsprint manufacturing company at Oku Iboku, Itu, for sale to newspapers. The government was still not satisfied.

It unearthed a dormant directive restricting federal government advertisement placement to the Daily Times and the New Nigerian. Buhari's press secretary, who has also now lost his job later explained in the government's usual bland manner that the "revenue-saving measure" was temporary.

" Till the dying days of his government. Buhari continued to threaten the press, especially the privately owned ones, with closure if the press went through its worst period ever, including the sentencing to jail of journalists for the first time, labour had a worse experience.

The leadership of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) was completely emasculated so much that the NLC president Ali Chiroma became redundant and irrelevant. There was a sustained effort at embarrassing the union leaders.

Only recently, when he visited Allison Madueke, Anambra state governor until last week, Chiroma was subjected to an undignifying body search. The impotence of the labour leadership led to the disgraceful booing of NLC officials and then labour, Minister, Solomon Omojokun on May Day, workers day of celebration.

This year Omojokun represented Buhari who considered it below his dignity to attend the celebration, if only as a token of concern following the most massive retrenchment of workers in Nigeria's history. As Chiroma got up to read his address, a pall fell over the gathering of several thousand workers who responded to the speech with a rumbling boo.

## War against everybody

Omojokun received the same treatment. In a touching side action, a little boy of about six displayed a placard that read; "please give my daddy a job.

"The Buhari government, which had promised to clear a backlog of unpaid salaries on coming to power, did not fulfil this promise, instead, the situation became worse leading some states to engage in rationing salaries. A notable example was the "Imo formula," which the Imo state government devised to pay workers "whatever money we have in hand.

" Niger state copied the "formula" in the final months. Any kind of organised labour or pressure group was treated with high-handedness.

The Airline Pilots and Flight Engineers Association (APFEAN) fell early in 1984. The association was banned when pilots of Nigerian Airways, the national carrier, embarked on a strike over conditions of service and lack of safety facilities, including radars and instruments landing system (ILS) at the nation's airports. The pilots were fired.

After a new employment screening was carried out, 14 of the pilots were dismissed. The government did its best to discourage other employers from giving them jobs.

The doctors were to follow the pilots later. In September 1984, after months of warning, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) decided to hold the Buhari regime to its promise.

When Brigadier Sanni Abacha announced the change of government in December 1983 he gave the deplorable state of medicare as one of the major reasons for the take-over. After waiting nine months and nothing was forthcoming, the NMA called its members out on strike reminding the government of Abacha's statement on the coup date that the nation's hospital had become mere consulting clinics.

Out of character, the government called a truce and a stop-gap quickly ferried in N4 million worth of drugs and medicaments through the UNICEF, the crisis came to a temporary end. Five months later in February this year, the health sector continued to suffer terribly from government inactions.

Virtually everything was in short supply, from dressings to potable water for hospitals. So the doctors went on strike again, after putting the government on notice.

But this time Buhari replied with a big stick. The NMA was banned, and its leaders, including the president Edmundson Thompson-Akpabio and the first vice-president, Beko Ransome-Kuti, were packed off into detention.

Before some of them were picked up, their families were harassed, and Akpabio's children were detained for a few days. Other leaders of the doctors' association, like Boniface Oyo-Adeniran, Wole Atoyebe, and Ayo Falope fled through bush paths to Britain and the United States to escape the terror of what was becoming a fascist regime.

Last week, President Babangida maintained in a broadcast that hospitals still remained "mere consulting clinics." The country's intelligentsia, like other sections of the society, was hounded into submission.

University lecturers were barred from talking to foreign media. Facilities in higher institutions were also stopped from being used for "subversive activities", a catch-phrase of Idiagbon meaning lectures, symposia, and student rallies and meetings.

The opposition to academia was so much that Idiagbon identified campus "subversive elements", including a college rag at the University of Ife called Cobra, The newsletter was actually a gossip periodical that published materials similar to those found in Lagos Weekend. Many lecturers especially officials of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), were randomly picked up and detained.

Among those dumped behind bars were Tunde Fatunde, then secretary of ASUU in the University of Benin, and an activist at the University of Ibadan, Ola Oni. To further cow the academic community, the government directed that lecturers should be retrenched, and the process was in full gear at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Ibadan, Lagos, and Nsukka Universities.

## War against everybody

University students had an especially raw deal. Following the introduction of higher feeding and accommodation fees in early 1984, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) entered into negotiations with Yerima Abdullahi, then Minister of Education.

When the talks appeared bogged down, the government, true to type, promptly declared that it no longer recognised the association it had been negotiating with and warned students to behave or face its usual punishment and detention. The students soon embarked on a nationwide boycott of lectures, which was broken when the universities were closed down and the students sent home.

On many occasions, student leaders were arrested and detained, including the president of the "unrecognised" NANS, Lanre Arogundade. Two months ago, when some student leaders from the universities met in Port Harcourt in the night, police were waiting for them.

They broke up the meeting and arrested some who were later released when the students threatened to go on demonstrations. The Ife University student leader, in a classical Gestapo style, was lured to a post office where he was arrested.

The Buhari government managed to stir up some trouble on religion as well. It cut a traditional two-day Christian Easter holiday to one, but back-pedalled after protests from the Christian Council of Churches.

When it decided to import rams for the Muslim Id-el-Kabir festival, Christians were quick to remind the government to import turkey for Christians. Meanwhile, the fundamentalist Maitasine Islamic sect continued to kill people mindlessly, and the government seemed incapable, despite assurances to the contrary, of controlling the riots.

Even traditional rulers, who were described by Buhari as "highways to national unity", felt the regime's iron fist. Two of the foremost traditional rulers, the Ooni of Ife and Emir of Kano were punished for paying a private visit to Israel "without official permission".

The two "highways of national unity" were stripped of official functions and restricted to their respective domains for six months. Another aspect of Buhari's war against everybody was one which wrought disaster in virtually every home in the land.

The first was the mass retrenchment of workers, for which the government declared that it would not make amends even if someone were unjustly sent into the throes of unemployment. In addition, nobody could challenge his retrenchment in court, by force of the decree.

Last May, the NLC said unemployed people had passed the one million mark. Simultaneous with the retrenchments, all the state governments embarked on an orgy of demolition of market stalls and homes in the name of environmental sanitation.

Millions of petty businesses were ruined, and millions of people left heartbroken. There were many families in which every member was unemployed: the husband retrenched, the wife's stall demolished, and the school leaver kid unable to get a job.

For the houses bulldozed, especially in Lagos, the government later found that many of them might have been wrongly wiped out. Solution: a government promised to set up a probe panel to look into grievances and that was the end of the matter.

And then there were the levies slapped on the poverty-stricken from just about every direction. There were levies in most states of the federation for development, education, radio set, television set, and involuntary donations.

Two weeks ago in Bendel State, the governor, Jerry Useni not reputed for finesse in handling state matters, ordered that "environmental sanitation levies" be collected from travellers passing through Bendel during the Muslim Id-el-Kabir festival. Those who could not pay had to pass through another state to their destinations.

## War against everybody

The indiscriminate levies elicited a bitter sarcasm from Stanley Macebuh, Executive Editor of The Guardian. "Call Me Levy", he admonished in an article.

The environmental sanitation programme was sometimes carried to unreasonable extents. Many of the states closed offices at noon or shortly after so that all civil servants could spend three or four hours extra to clear refuse dumps and clean the road and drains.

Motorist in Oyo state for instance were usually forced to cart away the rubbish in their car booths. The target of all the effort; a N1 million prize promised by the sacked federal government for the cleanest state in Nigeria.

School fees were reintroduced in certain parts of the country which hitherto enjoyed free education, much to the chagrin but helplessness of the people. It was worst in Oyo state, where primary school fees were introduced for the first time in 30 years.

While the government floundered, it engaged in frivolities, Ondo state found time to erase Obafemi Awolowo's name from the signboard of the state university. Detention without trials was not restricted to politicians and journalists alone.

Schoolteacher Tai Solarin was detained for more than a year before his release last month. So also was Sule Katagum, former chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), their offences were that they made pronouncements that were not sweet to Buhari's or Idiagbon's ears.

The execution of drug pushers against the overwhelming objection of the society was a clear instance of the government's refusal to listen to the populace. It was a regime that refused to change its mind even if it made mistakes so that it would appear tough.

The stubbornness provoked an exasperated Wole Soyinka, the Buhari government's most persistent critic into a kind of discomfiting resignation. "I don't talk to deaf people", he said.

It was a surprise to many people that he was not detained until the regime fell. Perceived double standards in the handling of issues were also a major source of disillusionment.

There was the case of Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji, former permanent secretary in the federal ministry of finance. He lost thousands of pounds of his personal money to Austrian-thieves while on an official trip abroad.

He could not explain how he came about such money since civil servants are not allowed by law to keep foreign accounts. The uproar did not move the Buhari administration, which merely reposted Abubakar to the ministry of national planning, with a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) board membership to the bargain.

Both Melford Okilo and Sam Mbakwe, former governors of Rivers and Imo States respectively were jailed for the same offence, Abubakar Alhaji is still in government. The 53 suitcases issue also generated heated debate.

During the currency exchange exercise in April and May last year, tight controls were clamped on the airports and other inlets. Anybody found carrying the old currency was arrested and detained.

But a retired ambassador and an emir brought in 53 suitcases during the period, and the luggage was forcibly cleared without being checked in full view of everyone at the Murtala Muhammed Airway in Lagos. The soldier who threw his weight around was Major Jokolo, Buhari's aide-de-camp.

The government has not been able to explain it away satisfactorily. And it haunted the government forever.

These and other blunders drove wedges between different sections of the community, and the divisions inevitably led to impassioned calls for confederation, occasioned, perhaps, by a sense of alienation felt by certain sections of the country. The government was getting jittery, and its ad-hoc solution, true to character, was to ban all debates on the political future of Nigeria, any newspaper which published such debates, warned by the Buhari regime, would be closed down.

## War against everybody

And so the stalemate continued. You can force the horse to the pond, but you cannot force it to drink.

The society drifted farther and farther away from the rulership, and the government inevitably could not get anything done. Instead of a war against poverty, corruption, and illiteracy, the Buhari administration waged a war against the people of Nigeria, and discredited the armed forces in the process, making President Babangida's first task that of putting an end to the war on everybody.

This article, culled from Newswatch, was first published on 9 September 1985

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2021

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## **The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa (II) [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 18, 2011 Tuesday

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**Length:** 844 words

### **Body**

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THE news spread in our cell and beyond. We wept and mourned, and pointed accusing fingers at the blood-thirsty dictator Abacha for killing Ake. November is not good for me. Fare thee well, November.

November, the month I hate, is here again. I am just reminded. It was a Nigerian, Lagos-based journalist and friend who I had courted during those days of military gangsterism in the country, who drew my attention to a report in The Daily Trust, an Abuja-based national newspaper of October 5, 2011, which was written by Hope Abah, the Bayelsa State reporter of the paper.

The newspaper ran the story conspiratorially: "Why Saro-Wiwa was Hanged-Bayelsa SSS Boss". According to the report: "The late Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged because he had concluded plans to cede the Niger Delta region from the rest of the federation and to create a separate country of his own, Bayelsa State Director of State Security Services, SSS, Andrew Iyayi, has said.

"The SSS director made the revelation yesterday (October 4, 2011) while delivering a lecture at this year's Bayelsa Nigerian Union Journalists, NUJ's, press week held at the council hall in Yenogoa.

Iyayi disclosed that the late Saro-Wiwa and eight others had acquired a standing army, designed a national flag, a national anthem and other security items that were to be handed over to the United Kingdom for a declaration of a federal state".

Other online news outfit like The Bayelsa State News Online, The Nigerian Mail Online, Naija News and Events Online reproduced The Daily Trust report.

November is here again, and we should expect more of such fabrication and untruth. I am not related to the late Saro-Wiwa in any way. What I do for him (defending) I also do for others who don't have a voice like him. I don't do it for a fee. I do it because I have a good conscience. We are in a world where twist, treachery and fraud hold sway. In my several articles I have dealt with those allegations against Ken Saro-Wiwa such as killing his elder brothers (Ogoni Four), raising army to breakaway and other lies against him.

Read "Saro-Wiwa: In Memoriam", The Guardian on Sunday, November 14, 1999; "That Agaba Dance on Saro-Wiwa's Grave", The Guardian Sunday, November 30, 2003, page 17; "A Saro-Wiwian Nightmare?" The Guardian Sunday, February 8, 2004, page 51; "Ken Saro-Wiwa's Mother: A Tribute", Ogoni Star, February 14-27, 2003, Page 10; "Anatomy of Terrorism in the Delta", The Niger Delta Channel magazine June, 2001 issue, page 39;

## The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa (II) [opinion]

"The Silence of The Irish Farmers", The Midweek Telegraph, August 31-September 6, 2005; "The Come Back of Professor Ibrahim Gambari", The Midweek Telegraph June 11-17, 2008; "Kogbara and The Anti-Saro-Wiwa Scheme", The Guardian on Sunday, July 12, 2009; "Fawehimi: End of An Essential Episode", The Guardian, Wednesday, September 9, 2009, page 51; "Foreword To Okuntimo's Book on Saro-Wiwa's Ogoni", Sahara Reporters, New York, USA, February 4, 2010; "Keen for Journalist Chris Ikunze", The Midweek Telegraph, February, 2009; and "Saro-Wiwa and Daminabo' Book", The National Network, January 30, -February 5, 2006, page 7.

I have read that thrilling espionage novel, The Spy Who Came In From The Cold (1963) written by John Le Carre. The name, John Le Carre is a pseudonym name of David John Moore Corewell, a former senior spy for M15 and M16, both British intelligence networks. I read that classic novel not because of its subject matter, its characters and style charmed me. Andrew Iyayi is not John Le Carre's spy who came in from the cold, but the spy who came in from the sea. I pity this country. This is how top undercover agents and security chiefs cook up stories and reports, to mislead us.

The SSS which was founded on June 5, 1986 by the Babangida's dictatorship following it's reformation of the National Security Organisation, NSO, its thematic responsibility should have been domestic policing, peace and security, the SSS operates like Frederick Forsyth's The Dogs of War (1974).

The Dogs of War is another espionage fiction that interests me a lot. SSS chief and operatives are enmeshed completely in the seemingly unending corruption, endemic to the Nigerian systems and state. The SSS is an apparatus of political repression, blackmail and instability. Poor Dele Giwa, one of those who inspired me to be a journalist, that son of very impoverished parents of Edo State origin, who rose to prominence through hard work, commitment and passion for his heavy barrel of pen would have been alive today.

Then deputy Director of SSS, Colonel A.K. Togun and Colonel Halilu Akilu, director of military Intelligence had lied like the Bayelsa spy master that the harmless, handsome and brilliant Dele Giwa, was planning a revolution and was smuggling into Nigeria arms, to prosecute it. On October 19, 1986, Giwa was bombed.

Iyayi should support his accusations with facts, and not to flutter his tongue hysterically on Saro-Wiwa. I was a round character in that Saro-Wiwa/Ogoni tragedy. I was not a spectator.

PATRICK NAAGBANTON , a journalist, wrote from Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2011



## Gani: Ten Years On, Still The Finest

PM News

September 5, 2019 Thursday

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Length: 2298 words

### **Body**

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By Akeem Soboyede Ten painful years after his demise from a very unexpected source (lung cancer, for a man who never smoked a day in his life) Chief Abdul-Ganiyu Oyesola Fawehinmi continues to stride the Nigerian political, legal and humanitarian landscape like a colossus. The Shakespearean analogy is certainly not misplaced.

No one else comes to mind when the phrase "Senior Advocate of the Masses" is uttered, mostly in tones of admiration and gratitude. The latter sentiments were clearly earned.

Gani, on his part, proudly wore that unofficial honorific for countless deeds of selflessness that endeared him to the masses of Nigerians, but which equally brought him isolation and shunning from the powers-that-be, whose arrogant feathers he relentlessly and justifiably ruffled, even trampled upon. Even 10 years after his death, no other Nigerian, living or dead, can fittingly lay claim to the title "The People's Lawyer", even though that epithet or title was not originally invested on the great Gani when he was alive.

Till his very mourned demise a decade ago, on September 5, 2009, Gani Fawehinmi proved to be more than an enigma wrapped in a riddle to the succession of governments in Nigeria, civilian and military, that laid waste (and continues to do so) to her common wealth, under the guise of serving its perpetually-impoorer masses. Many years after Gani commenced his admirable and courageous campaign against the scourge, and ten years after his own passing, the tragedy that is public governance in Nigeria continues to traverse its vast landscape.

It is still the case that appointments or elections into public office in Nigeria is largely a call to "come and chop" at the public till and which often provides an opportunity for the just-appointed "soon-to-be-chopper" to pen an effusive piece recognizing the efforts of his /her "mentors" actual and chimeric in making the "auspicious occasion" possible. Not to mention the sprinkling of such words as "integrity" into such pieces, which only elicit smirks of derision in readers who know better.

The man who literally fought a succession of corrupt and blood-thirsty military governments in Nigeria to a standstill will certainly not accept the notion that the different civilian governments that have been produced in Nigeria since May 1999, as a direct result of his titanic struggles (anyone still remember how Gani, without the guns, tanks and even aircraft that Babangida controlled, literally brought the latter to his knees using the "mere" instrumentality of the courts, of course over the issue of the state-sponsored murder of **journalist Dele Giwa**) have been a commendable outgrowth of his vision of a Nigeria governed by "leaders" dedicated less to their own pocket-books and pleasurable pursuits and more to actually lifting the overwhelming masses of Nigerians out of grinding poverty, mass

## Gani: Ten Years On, Still The Finest

unemployment and continuing infrastructural decay at all levels, to mention only a few. Against this backdrop, and ten years after Gani's painful death, one chooses to dwell at this time on what can be considered certain "legacy" issues that arose and still subsist after Gani's demise, including events precipitated by the firebrand Senior Advocate of the Masses (SAM) himself.

Everyone already knows that while he was alive, Gani was that very rare member of Nigeria's elite class who used the law and courts to fight the excesses of the same members of that class (military and civilian), many of whom bled the country dry while claiming to serve her best interests. Former military heads of state Ibrahim Babangida and the late Sani Abacha were in the highest (or governing) echelons of that elite class when they unleashed a total of 13 years of mis-governance on Nigerians during that time, Gani Fawehinmi was about the only consistent voice within the elite, privileged class (and a "bloody civilian" to boot) who offered consistent criticism of and took concrete action against the actions and activities of the respective juntas.

Most others were latter-day converts to Gani's noble cause, only choosing to rise against the excesses of that particular military dictator after Babangida unleashed his eternal injustice of the June 12 annulment on Nigerians. In fact, a great number of the civilian elite like Gani (especially the politicians who fervently participated in the various "political transition programmes" the likes of Babangida and Abacha foisted with cunning glee on Nigerians) derided the prescient lawyer's consistent and wise counsel that Babangida, especially, was unveiling and forcing through a hidden agenda that would only lead the country to doom.

Almost none of the journeyman-politicians then listened (including those from that era still active in the present Nigerian Fourth Republic and have since transformed themselves to "kingmakers" and "soon-to-be-kings", especially in Gani's home region of Nigeria's southwest), until Babangida unleashed his "nuclear option" of the June 12 annulment, which then transformed those same politicians into latter-day "pro-democracy activists", most without the "integrity" to which they now scrupulously and laughingly lay claim. Many of these same "pro-democracy" politicians have since assumed plum positions in successive governments (beginning with Olusegun Obasanjo's in 2001) that have characterized Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Most disheartening, of course, have been the "any-dogma-goes" politicians (some of whom I personally know) that had no use for Gani's crusading against Sani Abacha's transition programme between 1993 and 1998, and who participated lustily in the dictator's "political transition programme" during that time. These politicians with no known dogma (not to mention "integrity") have held or hold plum positions at the state and federal levels in Nigeria, courtesy of certain emergency and latter-day "kingmakers" and "soon-to-be-kings", who also only became "pro-democracy" activists after events and circumstances exposed them as minions who lacked Gani's vision and commendable prescience.

These same characters, failing to ride certain military dictators' "political transition programmes" to the great personal power and wealth that constitute their only objective as politicians, later invested themselves with the toga of "pro-democracy activists" to achieve those same goals, benefitting, of course, from the onerous struggle distinguished and selfless personalities like Gani Fawehinmi started and sustained. Everyone knows that Gani Fawehinmi warned for many years about the chicanery of Babangida's programmed-to-be-unending "political transition programme".

Many of those who only jumped on the ensuing "June 12" train to become "pro-democracy activists", including a substantial number of the prominent politicians in Nigeria's present political dispensation especially in the Southwest clearly evince a certain animosity against the superior political and philosophical legacy that is Gani Fawehinmi's (remember, Gani also founded and ran a political party that went nowhere fast in the cesspool of Nigeria's political space). That animosity is (and should) be as evident as ever, more than a decade after Gani's passing.

Those this writer chooses to call the "Babangida and Abacha politicians" who now rule the roost among Nigeria's present political class (as "kingmakers", "soon-to-be-kings", Commissioners, Ministers, etc.) obviously rue the fact that they were not smart enough to see nor predict the political train-wrecks those democracy projects midwifed by

## Gani: Ten Years On, Still The Finest

military dictators were destined to become especially Babangida's -but are now the bloated beneficiaries (as supposed "pro-democracy activists") sucking the polity dry.

It is this writer's belief that far from honouring Gani for this reason, those who benefitted from his struggle of constant opposition to dictators with absolute power that sought to rule in perpetuity, have consciously downplayed what should be a much-celebrated Gani Fawehinmi legacy within the Nigerian political space and polity, especially in the southwest. Certain reasons have, of course, been advanced for this, the primary one being that Gani, with the imperative to appear consistent in his beliefs (which he always was, thank God) "needlessly rubbished" a certain "pro-democracy activist" of a past clime (now "kingmaker" and also a supposed "soon-to-be-king") who had, well, a certain certificate problem in his chaotic past.

That, of course, hardly explains the conduct of spineless men (many of whom I once viewed as professional media colleagues superiors in Nigeria, unfortunately) who kept their pens dry when duty called on them to pen profuse eulogies in Gani's honour in the immediate aftermath of the latter's passing in September 2009. I watched then, with mouth agape, as supposed professional journalists who have since dipped larcenous fingers in the public jar of public administration in Nigeria (especially in the southwest and specifically in Lagos state) chose to "honor" Gani's passing with improbable silence, even though reporting on Gani's various battles on behalf of the oppressed had probably helped much to keep many of their media houses profitable and in business while that lasted many years earlier! This pitiful legacy of deliberate inaction or failure to celebrate a much-deserved legacy, spurred by supposed "political loyalty" to a present and continuing source of political largesse and favours (otherwise known as "eye service") is certainly not one Gani's life of struggle on behalf of others deserved. While alive, as the verifiable stories go, Gani awarded scholarships to indigent students, most of whom he never knew.

He also sponsored others on holy pilgrimages, even though it is said he never made the trip to the Muslim Holy Lands himself while he was alive. All these, too, while Gani tried to make a living as a lawyer in an environment dominated by murderous military dictators who never succeeded in intimidating the fire-brand lawyer that the dictators "rewarded" with numerous and prolonged stints in jails and detention centers, for standing consistently on the side of the masses.

All these also while Gani somehow managed to make enormous contributions to the development of Nigeria's legal jurisprudence, including single-handedly developing and sustaining its Law Reports segment. Gani did make a good living as a Nigerian lawyer who practiced in the most unfriendly landscape available during his most productive years, dominated as it were by various military dictators.

That, to this writer, should be considered one of Gani's momentous achievements none of the "eye-popping" assets mentioned in the lawyer's publicized will was tainted by any spell Gani spent in any public office or similar capacity, at any level of government in Nigeria. Even more impressive, Gani made it his unflinching duty to serve as an unofficial watchdog that policed the excesses of the corrupt military governments that ruled Nigeria while he was alive, including those who served in such governments.

This self-chosen essentially foreclosed any chance of Gani securing "contracts" or similar "largesse of the state while those governments lasted. In fact, while Gani was still alive, one of his perpetual nemeses, the dictator Ibrahim Babangida, revealed during an interview that Gani was the only known and very public critic of his government that he was aware of that did not criticize him during the day then sought favours from him or members of his government at night! That, to this writer, is the greatest compliment anyone ever paid to Gani, especially since it came from a most unexpected source.

It should also serve as a lesson to certain, er, persons in the Nigerian polity who apparently believe the impressive real estate and liquid assets Gani attained in his lifetime (as evidenced by his Will that was made public) can only be acquired through serving perpetually and corruptly in successive official capacities in Nigeria as Commissioner, head of a parastatal, Secretary to the State government and then again as Commissioner (never mind the apparent downgrade, especially if the new posting as Commissioner is a "plum" Ministry the person once headed, with the go-around appointment being made after publicly throwing under the bus the person one served as SSG!), etc. "Oga"! (specifically, the Yoruba exclamation for "incredible").

### Gani: Ten Years On, Still The Finest

The above scenario, one out of many, certainly explains why certain misguided and rapacious individuals (including so-called media professionals tainted by covert exposure to political actors while they served in that former role) who ought to celebrate Gani's impressive and ground-breaking legacies in the arenas of civil and personal rights and jurisprudence in Nigeria, choose instead to turn their backs on such. They clearly do this in order to protect their supposed good graces in the eyes of "king-makers" orand "soon-to-be-kings" who ensure their perpetual access to public office in Nigeria, and the riches and privileges that apparently flow from such.

These privileges, nowadays, also apparently include revolving and musical-chair access to plum government positions for father and son, mother and daughter, uncle and nephewniece, and other such generational and perpetual combinations! The present crop of political actors in Nigeria (especially those with backgrounds in the irrepressible Nigerian media) have certainly not been worthy successorsor plauditsof Gani Fawehinmi's legacies. But the latter will clearly endure.

Certainly, more than 10 years after his regrettable departure, Gani remains the finest among us all. -Soboyede, a former Editor with Nigeria's THISDAY Newspapers, is an attorney in the United States.

**Load-Date:** September 5, 2019

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## **ANA commend Buhari on June 12, Abiola**

The Nation (Nigeria)

June 12, 2018 Tuesday

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Length: 434 words

### **Body**

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The Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Lagos Chapter has commended the posthumously national honours conferred Chief Moshood Kashimawo Abiola (MKO), that late human rights activist, Chief Ganiu Okikiola Fawehinmi (SAN) and Babagana Kingibe.

While noting that the annulment of the June 12 Presidential election, won by Chief Moshood Kashimawo Abiola (MKO) under the then Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1993, which was adjudged the freest in the history of Nigeria, was of great impediment to national unity and peace within the polity, it described the move of President Muhammed Buhari in resuscitating of the issues of June 12 and efforts to right the wrongs of the era as a step in the right direction.

'The announcement of June 12 as the new democracy day as against May 29 is courageous and symbolic of empathy with an average Nigerian who have lost faith in the nation's leadership particularly, at the centre, as well as in our electoral system since the annulment of the June 12 election in 1993 by IBB and the eventual murder of the symbol of the epoch-making electoral exercise.

'We recall, with nostalgia, the philanthropic gestures and display of love for education and the arts, and we regret the absence of Chief Abiola, especially as the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Lagos Chapter, prepares to host an international convention, after over 30 years, in October.

'We can imagine the kind of support ANA, Lagos, could have received from the late chief, Concord Group of Newspaper and Concord Airline, among his inheritances which were scuttled and destroyed by the military government of General Sanni Abacha, apart from the dear Kudirat Abiola which was equally wasted in the struggle to recover the mandate from the military.

The group, in a statement in a release signed by the Chairman, Publicity Sub-Committee, ANA 2018 International Convention, Feyi-Abiodun Samson Oyeniyi, also called for the Investigation of the mysterious murder of late **Dele Giwa**, a renowned **journalist** and Funsho Williams, while recalling the courage displayed by Prof Humphrey Nwosu and Prof Atairu Jega during the 1993 and 2015 elections.

'Furthermore, we urge the federal government to remember to honour, in whichever befitting ways, several others, who though, were part of the fights to install this presently evolving democracy, who may not be as prominent as Chief M.K.O Abiola, Gani Fawehinmi, Prof Wole Soyinka, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, Femi Falana, among others, but whose efforts cannot be discarded as they were ingredients for the realisation of a done dream for a democratic nation,' it stated.

ANA commend Buhari on June 12, Abiola

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2018

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## **Babangida: The Prince At 78**

Nigerian Tribune

August 18, 2019 Sunday

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**Length:** 2193 words

### **Body**

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ONE of Nigeria's arguably most impactful rulers, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, was 87 years old yesterday. Combatant Officer of the Nigerian Army who joined the force in 1962, IBB, the acronym he became known by while he was Nigerian military Head of State, will go down in history as about Nigeria's most audacious user of governmental power. Lethal to those who stood in his way, one of the qualities he possessed at the highest cusp of his rule which even his adversaries acknowledged was his ambivalent disposition. He had the ability to stand at both ends of the hill and emit fire from his nostrils like a dragon. His off-the-cuff execution of his childhood friend, Mamman Vatsa, in spite of global supplications to him, mirrors this.

Babangida participated actively in virtually all the military coups that Nigeria has ever had. In 1966, while a lieutenant colonel with the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, he was said to have sided with the dissident army corps that forcefully retrieved power from the hands of General Aguiyi Ironsi and sent the huge-statured officer to his untimely grave. In 1975, young Ibrahim was a key participant in the coup that ousted General Yakubu Gowon and, six months later in 1976, after the assassination of Murtala Muhammed, Babangida audaciously walked into the premises of soldier marksmen-strewn Radio Nigeria to test the potency of that persuasive power of his with the ring leader of the coup and one of his best friends, Lt. Colonel Buka Suka Dimka. Babangida had walked into the Radio station to persuade Dimka to abandon his moribund venture of seizing power. He had been sent by General Theophilus Danjuma with the charge to level the premises of the radio station if Dimka failed to bulge. Rather than deploy force however, Babangida chose persuasion.

'The coup has failed,' he reportedly told Dimka. 'You have to surrender.' Miffed by IBB's audacity, Dimka was said to have threatened to shoot him. Flashing that seemingly harmless gap-tooth smile of his, Babangida allegedly told Dimka that he was all right with being killed by his best friend, the sybaritic Dimka. 'At least, my wife and children will not suffer under your watch,' he had reportedly told Dimka who in turn melted and asked for amnesty from the new government wherein Babangida would ostensibly play a key role.

With permission to go and discuss the amnesty request from Dimka, IBB reportedly got back to Danjuma who, angered by his audacious request, had thundered, 'I didn't ask you to negotiate!' By the time IBB got back to Radio Nigeria, Dimka was said to have escaped. He was only caught in Abakaliki, current Ebonyi State, while escaping out of Nigeria. Though the coup failed, Babangida earned laurels of gallantry in the hearts of chroniclers of Nigeria's military history. The coup was to be the graveyard of several fine officers of the army like civil war hero, General Iliya Bisalla who, till today, has a major road named after him in Enugu's GRA, in appreciation of his efforts.

## Babangida: The Prince At 78

From his enrolment at the Nigerian Military Training College (NMTC) in Kaduna on December 10, 1962, monitors of his meteoric manifestations knew that young Ibrahim would have a consequential alliance with power. Enrolled with officers like Muhammed Magoro, Garba Duba and Ibrahim Sauda, Babangida's imperishable footsteps are more in the annals of the history of his romance with power than they were with his military chosen career. Towering high among the core of officers who seized power from President Shehu Shagari in 1983, IBB was said to have suggested Buhari, among the coup plotter triumvirate, as one to rule the country. He was subsequently displeased that Buhari, just three months his senior in the army, would allow his deputy, Brigadier General Tunde Idiagbon, a junior officer to the coup triumvirate, ride roughshod over those of them who sacrificed their lives to get Buhari to be Head of State. IBB was said to have been slated for retirement over his impudence at having walked up to the C-in-C one day to remind the Head of State that the man he recently retired from service was a beneficiary of the triumvirate. IBB struck months after to save own neck and rescue the said beneficiary from the vice grips of the C-in-C. Upon IBB's ascendancy as military president, his hijack of power evoked smiles on the faces of Nigerians, even though they were later to regret his rule.

Babangida had a very lethal hold on power that sent shivers down the spines of those who attempted to test his resolve. His walked the path of Niccolo Machiavelli. Machiavellianism, a political treatise of Niccolo, 16th-century Italian diplomat and political theorist, has gained scholarly examination as a cruel, blood-cuddling method of power usage where the triad weapons of persuasion, manipulation and deception, rather than raw, crude brunt, are deployed as the weaponry of power. Psychologists claim that Machiavellianism also possesses personality traits of narcissism and psychopathy.

Babangida heavily deployed these tropes in his usage of power. In his *The Prince*, Machiavelli propounded a cruel path for his faithful in power to tread. This is epitomized in one of his teachings, to wit, 'If an injury is to be done to a man, it should be so severe that the prince is not in fear of revenge.' In abidance with this code, Babangida traded many irrecoverable tackles against his adversaries from which they never recovered until they sank into their graves.

At the height of office in the 1990s, he had told interviewers who marveled at his eclectic disposition to power that he was fascinated by the rulership traits of Zulu war hero, Chaka and Hannibal. The latter was a war General and statesman from Ancient Carthage widely held to be one of the greatest military commanders in history. A common thread that runs through both Generals is their maniacal and deadly power calculus, as well as their uncommon tactics and strategies in mowing down adversaries. Like Chaka and Hannibal, Babangida deployed hegemonic weapons of vinegar and juice in his dealings with friends and foes of his government. The juice resulted in the debasement of values that permeates Nigeria today.

But Babangida was not all brunt and bruises. With a disarming smile and an effeminate gap-tooth that masks the monster of power in his grips, it is doubtful if there was or is any Head of the Nigerian State in recent history who possesses IBB's kind of suavity, brilliance and even imperishable imprints in office. He was Janus reincarnate. While those who interfaced with him saw a very compassionate, humane and passionate character, Nigerians saw a very deadly and brutal leader who could sacrifice a city to rescue an armoury akin to the teaching of Machiavelli. He had a midas-touch which ensured that those who came across him didn't forget him in a hurry, either for good or bad.

Unlike what we have today, Babangida dialogued with the people consistently. He never took them for granted. As if acting out the script of *The Prince*, he ran a government that made the people vicariously take ownership of the most crucial but painful sacrifices they had to make. He pioneered a romance with theoreticians of socio-politics, a romance which produced brilliant policies of government like DIFFRI, MAMSER, Code of Conduct Bureau, People's Bank, mortgage bank, primary healthcare centers across the country. He created many agencies which today straddle our economic life. They are the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) which he created in 1985 and the Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission, construction of the Third Mainland Bridge, construction of the Federal Capital Territory and universities of agriculture and technology across the country. He appointed world-class scholars and technocrats as his ministers like Olikoye Ransome-Kuti and created many states and local governments which, for good or bad, constitute the architecture of governance today. No leader in Nigeria's history has Babangida's reputation for deploying palliatives as a weapon for stemming the tides of dissent.

## Babangida: The Prince At 78

For instance, he ran a government by referendum, even while implementing polices said to have been imposed by Bretton Woods. Before the austerity measure policy, for instance, IBB laid the policy by the table of Nigerians to discuss, making its ultimate implementation a fait accompli.

His Structural Adjustment Programme, (SAP) implemented in 1986, brought an unprecedented deregulation of the agricultural sector, abolition of marketing boards, massive privatization of public enterprises and devaluation of Naira. It brought unprecedeted pains to the people as well. IBB hired the best of Nigeria's brains resident in the academy and used them to surf a template of governance for Nigeria. In most of those experiences, theory failed governance and academics gathered a renowned notoriety as hollow propounders whose political economy remedies for redemption of the polity were at best Utopian. In spite of the high-fallutin policies, Nigerians were not better off economically and the ascendancy of bribery, corruption, cronyism and a rent-seeking economy which he instituted became the hub of Nigeria's socio-political malady. The country still battles it till today.

During his eight-year reign, Babangida's government left traces of blood which though are coagulated now, still stain his cocaine-white apparel. Prominent among this is the blood of journalist, Dele Giwa, parcel-bombed in a novelty murder unknown in the history of the macabre of government in Nigeria. The widely-circulated tale of Gloria Okon, said to be a drug courier and alleged to be acquainted with him, is yet unresolved. IBB was intolerant of dissent and had a dual response to it: cooption or evisceration.

It is a shame that, 26 years after he left government, no Nigerian leader has manifested IBB's brilliance, grasp of governance and the democratic credentials he possessed, even as a military despot. For instance, while we today battle to be told what ails our president, Babangida advertised his sickness before Nigerians almost 30 years ago and subsequently travelled to Germany for surgery. Radiculopathy, he claimed, was the surname of the infirmity. He also said he still had pellets lodged in his leg since the civil war. Nigerians collectively prayed for his quick recovery. After him, so-called leaders in a democracy have disdained disclosure, shawling their existential lot of infirmity from their constituents, as if by being president, they had automatically become German philosopher, Fredrich Nietzsche's Superman. While he took ill and was being ferreted to Saudi Arabia for treatment in 2009, I wrote a piece against President Umaru Yar'Adua which some people felt was callous. It was entitled Why we should neither fast nor pray for Yar'Adua. My argument was that, since he didn't disclose that he was sick, it would be foolhardy for Nigerians to pray for his recovery.

Babangida however further ruined what was left of his credentials by his failure to abide by democratic norm when he reneged on his promise to hand over power in 1993 and annulled the June 12, 1993 election. By the way they show us that, comparatively, Babangida was a hero, the crop of leaders after him has shown that his creed of benevolent dictatorship is what is needed in a democratic experiment of this sort. Not effeminate or pacifists.

One unique thing about Babangida is that he still has his 'boys' in all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria today, retired Generals themselves, who are ready to die for him. I doubt if the current C-in-C has such. It is sincerely hoped that IBB, apart from all that have been written about him, will personally document all the missing links in his eight-year government and almost three decades, post-office. Like the Awujale of Ijebuland said last week at the Ojude Oba festival, death doesn't haggle its day of strike. I digress: Since I read the biography of this great king - Awujale, I have come to reserve a space for him in my admiration. His standing up to Olusegun Obasanjo when he attempted to destroy Mike Adenuga caught my fascination. Nigeria cannot afford not to have IBB's personal recollections undocumented for posterity. By the way, there was this doctoral thesis, presented in 1997 to the department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, which dissected what it called IBB's neo-patrimonial rule, which we must encourage its author, Adeolu Akande, Professor of Political Science at Igbinedion University, Okada to get published. It theoretically documented IBB's rule.

About a year ago, pictures of Babangida's frail and apparently sickly frame appeared on the social media and some ostensibly naïve characters took their time to mock the Prince of the Niger. They should be told that sicknesses and death, Siamese twins of providence's sting of man, are analogous to a fitful downpour that is yet to subside which no one can claim to be immune from its anger. IBB is battling his own existential portion. We are or will all battle ours too. I raise a wine glass up to celebrate Nigeria's most controversial leader.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2019

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## **NUJ Wants IG to Revisit Alleged Journalists' Killings in Lagos**

Vanguard (Lagos)

March 9, 2012 Friday

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**Length:** 306 words

**Byline:** Laja Thomas

### **Body**

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Lagos council of Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, has called on the Acting Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, to revisit the cases of journalists killed in the state in the last few years.

Chairman of the council, Mr. Deji Elumoye , who made the plea in Lagos, at the public presentation of a book, *The Journalist's Wife* authored by Mrs.Ochuko Ohu, the widow of slain Assistant News Editor of The Guardian, Bayo Ohu, said apart from the killing of Mr. **Dele Giwa**, the pioneer Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine through parcel bomb in Lagos on October 19, 1986, several other journalists had been killed in the course of carrying out their official duties

The slain journalists, according to him, include Godwin Agbroko, late Chairman , Editorial Board of ThisDay newspaper; Mr Sule Edo, Judicial Correspondent of The Nation; Abayomi Ogundeleji , member of the Editorial Board of ThisDay and Bayo Ohu.

Elumoye said since the assassination of the aforementioned journalists nothing positive had been done to unravel the killers of "these crops of seasoned journalists."

He called on the new IG to as a matter of urgency, re-open the cases of all these slain journalists, so that the cases will not be swept under the carpet

He said: "The new IG being a crack and seasoned police officer should prove his worth by calling for the files of all the slain journalists. Thank God at a particular time, he was Commissioner of Police in Lagos, so we believe with his recent elevation, he is now more in a position to ensure that justice was done in the case of these our late colleagues."

"It is our hope that the Police IG will assign these cases to tested detectives, who we also believe will get to the root of the murders, so that those who perpetrated the dastardly act would be brought to book no matter how late," he added.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2012

NUJ Wants IG to Revisit Alleged Journalists' Killings in Lagos

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## **Akinnola Doles Out N.25 Million to Wives of Dead Journalists**

Daily Champion (Lagos)

April 29, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 317 words

**Byline:** Mansur Oladunjoye

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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A journalist cum lawyer, Richard Akinnola Tuesday gave N250, 000 to the wives of five slain journalists.

The beneficiaries included: wife of the former photo editor of Vanguard Newspaper, Mrs. Grace Oyeleru; Mrs. Lydia Efenji whose husband died on April 14, 2009; Mrs. Tonia Ike Ekeje, also of AIT; Mrs. Adeyinka Dehinsilu of the Daily Times and Mrs. Ojenike Ohu whose, hubby The Guardian staff killed by unknown assassins .

Presenting N50, 000 to each of the beneficiaries on behalf of the Richard Akinnola Foundation at the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Lagos State Council, Akinnola said the foundation initiated the widows' scheme after a thorough realisation that Nigeria Journalists have always been neglected to their own plight.

He said, "Last year, I started thinking about the conditions of our people; I felt something had to be done, especially to affect the lives of widows and children of slain Journalists positively," adding that the scheme shall soon be registered with Board of Trustees in place to attract the involvement of corporate bodies and public spirited individuals.

Akinnola regreted that the nation's Police have never unraveled the circumstance surrounding the killing of any journalist, from Dele Giwa, Godwin Agbroko, Bayo Ohu, Edo Sule-Ugbagwu, Abayomi Ogundehi to Efenji Efenji.

He urged journalists to prepare their will in expectation of the worst so that their loved ones will not be left to suffer, adding that it won't be out of place for NUJ to have insurance scheme.

"Allow your wives to know your investments and bank accounts so that if anything happens, those investments and accounts are not claimed by a non-family member; also ensure that your wives are made your next-kin in any transaction," he urged.

The Corporate Affairs manager, Daar Communication, Johnson Onime described Akinola's gesture as a worthy cause that deserved to be emulated by all and sundry.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2010

Akinnola Doles Out N.25 Million to Wives of Dead Journalists

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## **PARCEL BOMB KILLS NIGERIAN JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF PLOTTING**

The New York Times

October 20, 1986, Monday, Late City Final Edition

Copyright 1986 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section B; Page 16, Column 4; Foreign Desk

**Length:** 362 words

**Byline:** Reuters

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Nigeria, Oct. 19

### **Body**

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A Nigerian journalist was killed today when a parcel bomb delivered to his home exploded.

The journalist, Dele Giwa, editor in chief of Newswatch magazine, died in a Lagos hospital shortly after the explosion.

Two other people in the room were slightly wounded, according to a Newswatch statement and Nigerian television.

Mr. Giwa, 39 years old, was summoned to the headquarters of Nigeria's State Security Service on Friday, according to a statement issued by his colleagues. They said he had been interrogated by a senior officer and accused of plotting a socialist revolution and of importing arms into Nigeria.

He denied the allegations and was allowed to go home.

#### Messenger Delivered Parcel

His colleagues at Newswatch, a weekly that Mr. Giwa co-founded in 1985, said a messenger had delivered the parcel to his home in Ikeja, a suburb of the Nigerian capital.

Mr. Giwa's son, Billy, 19, took it to his father, who was having breakfast in his study with Kayode Soyinka, Newswatch's London correspondent, the magazine said in a statement.

"As he opened the parcel, the bomb exploded, fatally wounding him and throwing Mr. Soyinka off his chair," Newswatch said. In its 18 months of publication, Newswatch has earned a reputation for hard-hitting reporting, with cover stories about corruption and other sensitive issues. Studied in the U.S. Mr. Giwa was born in Oyo state, in western Nigeria, and studied for several years in the United States, earning a degree in English and Latin at Brooklyn College.

He was trained as a journalist in the United States and worked as a news clerk for The New York Times. He returned home in 1979 and worked on two national newspapers.

## PARCEL BOMB KILLS NIGERIAN JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF PLOTTING

In 1983, when he was editor of The Sunday Concord, he was detained for a week after the newspaper published what the police said was classified material. But a year later a high court ruled the detention unlawful and ordered Nigeria's police chief to pay Mr. **Giwa** compensation.

Nigeria is considered to have the freest and most diverse press in Africa, and the country's military leader, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, has often said he is committed to respecting all human rights, including freedom of expression.

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## Derek Ingram (1925-2018)

Nigerian Tribune

June 28, 2018 Thursday

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Length: 1073 words

### **Body**

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Derek Ingram was a distinguished British *journalist* and editor known across the Commonwealth most especially for his incomparable knowledge of the association and perhaps most importantly for his love for journalism - development journalism especially. He died at his west London home, Sunday, 17 June, aged 93. Derek had moved through the ranks to become the deputy editor of the Daily Mail. After seventeen years at the Daily Mail, he resigned as deputy editor after a disagreement with the aristocratic chairman of the newspaper Viscount Rothermere.

Derek left the Mail to start the Gemini News Feature Service in 1967, which was devoted to the coverage of development stories, especially from around the Commonwealth and disseminated globally. Gemini became so popular in newsrooms across the Commonwealth and the developing world in general that its base in London became the starting point for several bobbling Commonwealth journalists just starting a career in London in those days either in journalism or as foreign correspondents. Such Commonwealth journalists like Cameron Duodu from Ghana, and Trevor McDonald, from Trinidad and Tobago, used the Gemini News Feature Service to launch themselves into mainstream media and journalism in the UK. As London Correspondent of the Concord Press of Nigeria, I made it possible for the Concord to subscribe to Gemini News Feature Service. The subscription was still ongoing until I left in October 1983.

When I arrived in the UK in August 1978 to represent the Sketch newspapers of Nigeria as London Correspondent, Derek helped me to settle down by introducing me to the everyday 12:30 press briefing at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, where the UK's view and position on key events happening around the world on the day were first made known to diplomatic and foreign correspondents by government officials. He introduced me to his close friend and colleague, the Canadian broadcaster, Patrick Keatley, who was then the Diplomatic Editor of the UK Guardian newspaper. It was through Derek and Patrick that I was introduced to the Chatham House. They recommended me for membership and I became a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. They also, with another ex-Guardian Education Editor, Richard Bourne, introduced me to the Round Table Moot - the editorial board of the Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs, membership of which I have retained for about 25 years now. Derek travelled extensively in Africa as a *journalist* and for the Commonwealth. He related on a first-name basis with most pre-independence African leaders and politicians. He was a frequent visitor to Obosi, a village in eastern Nigeria, where he would visit Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Nigerian diplomat who later became Commonwealth Secretary-General. During Chief Anyaoku's tenure as S-G, Derek was given the responsibility of traveling around the Commonwealth to sound out opinions on how to rebrand, move the Commonwealth forward and make it more attractive, relevant, and effective especially in a post-apartheid and modern world.

## Derek Ingram (1925-2018)

He was a most reliable repository of African and Commonwealth history and confidante to several Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth. Until old age caught up with him and he could no longer travel, he had attended almost all Commonwealth Heads of Government Summits - he attended 20 in all. Derek co-founded the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) in 1978 with Patrick Keatley. He served as the pioneer President of the CJA from 1980 to 1990. His tenure as CJA president was remarkable for establishing the CJA in most countries of the Commonwealth and making sure that journalists across member-countries could rely on the CJA for support, especially in their incessant struggles against pressures on the press from dictators and that Commonwealth journalists received adequate training. When he left as CJA president, he handed over to a distinguished Nigerian editor Ray Ekpu. Derek became President Emeritus of the CJA after his retirement in 1990. Derek was also partly instrumental to the establishment of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). In a quiet but remarkable manner, he used both platforms of the CJA and CHRI to provide support for pro-democracy campaigners in Nigeria during the political crisis in the country in the mid-90s. He supported international opposition to both the Babangida and Abacha regimes that had trampled upon the democratic will of the Nigerian people by the annulment of the result of the June 12, 1993, general elections, which had been adjudged to be the freest, fairest and most credible in Nigeria's history.

Throughout the period Abacha remained in power in Nigeria, and despite the fact that a Nigerian had been elected and was now his successor as CJA president, Derek, and the CJA refused to take the international conference of the association to Nigeria, in order not to be seen to be providing credibility and recognition to the brutal Abacha regime, which had led to Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth over the extrajudicial murder of the Ogoni rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others. Immediately democracy returned to Nigeria 29 May 1999, Derek made sure that Nigeria hosted the next CJA international conference, which took place in the capital Abuja in 2000 in honour of the country's return to democratic rule. Besides, when Dele Giwa, the campaigning Nigerian editor was assassinated through a letter bomb on 19 October 1986, and Newswatch magazine that he edited was proscribed by the Babangida military junta, Derek was able to rally support of both the CJA and the CHRI and joined by the Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) to pressure Babangida to find Dele Giwa's killers and re-open Newswatch.

Born in 1925, he will be remembered as a distinguished Commonwealth writer, journalist and editor, a passionate believer in and fighter for freedom of the press, most especially, using his preferred phrase, the 'independence of the journalist'. He fought tirelessly for this to be the norm across the Commonwealth. Perhaps it is to his eternal credit and honour that the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance put together by the CJA, was launched last April in London to coincide with the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which was hosted by the UK. He will be sorely missed.

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2018

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## Derek Ingram: A tribute

The Nation (Nigeria)

June 29, 2018 Friday

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Length: 1073 words

### **Body**

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### Derek Ingram: A tribute

Secretary-General. During Anyaoku's tenure as Secretary-General, Derek was given the responsibility of traveling around the Commonwealth to sound out opinions on how to rebrand, move the Commonwealth forward and make it more attractive, relevant, and effective especially in a post-apartheid and modern world.

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**Load-Date:** June 30, 2018

Will the deceased get justice?



## Will the deceased get justice?

The Nation (Nigeria)

July 19, 2016 Tuesday

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Length: 1154 words

### **Body**

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The planned reopening of cases of assassination of two politicians at a time Nigerians had foreclosed any headway is a renewal of hope. BUNMI OGUNMODEDE revisits some of the unresolved high profile murder cases.

A glimmer of hope may have come for the families of those whose assassinations were politically motivated with plans by police authorities to re-arrest some of the principal suspects in the murders of former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Chief Bola Ige and ex-Deputy National Chairman (South-South) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Aminosari Dikibo. Before the police decided to reopen the cases of the two leading politicians, scores of cases on the murder remained unresolved and not a few Nigerians have lost faith in the ability of the judicial system to bring perpetrators of political assassinations to justice.

Though, there have been calls for the reopening of other unresolved murder cases beyond the duo of the late Ige and Dikibo, some have described the decision as a good starting point and expressed the hope that the reopening of the cases will no longer be a journey to nowhere. In Nigeria, political killings are not limited to the democratic era as many high profile assassinations in the 60s under the military have not been resolved.

Including the killings of the likes of first Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Gen. JTU Aguiyi-Ironsi, Brig Adekunle Fajuyi, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola and North's Premier Ahmadu Bello in the crossfires of the first military coup, till date, no suspect has been conclusively prosecuted and punished to serve as deterrent to others.

The brutal killings cut across every stratum of the society. The political circle, the judiciary, the business world, the academia all have their shares of senseless murders.

Not left out of the bitter pill are journalists. Since the killing of the profession's leading light **Dele Giwa** with a parcel bomb on October 19, 1986, many other budding talents have been assassinated in strange circumstances.

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**Load-Date:** July 20, 2016

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Will the deceased get justice?



## Will the deceased get justice?

The Nation (Nigeria)

July 19, 2016 Tuesday

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Length: 1154 words

### **Body**

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The planned reopening of cases of assassination of two politicians at a time Nigerians had foreclosed any headway is a renewal of hope. BUNMI OGUNMODEDE revisits some of the unresolved high profile murder cases.

A glimmer of hope may have come for the families of those whose assassinations were politically motivated with plans by police authorities to re-arrest some of the principal suspects in the murders of former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Chief Bola Ige and ex-Deputy National Chairman (South-South) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Aminosari Dikibo. Before the police decided to reopen the cases of the two leading politicians, scores of cases on the murder remained unresolved and not a few Nigerians have lost faith in the ability of the judicial system to bring perpetrators of political assassinations to justice.

Though, there have been calls for the reopening of other unresolved murder cases beyond the duo of the late Ige and Dikibo, some have described the decision as a good starting point and expressed the hope that the reopening of the cases will no longer be a journey to nowhere. In Nigeria, political killings are not limited to the democratic era as many high profile assassinations in the 60s under the military have not been resolved.

Including the killings of the likes of first Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Gen. JTU Aguiyi-Ironsi, Brig Adekunle Fajuyi, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola and North's Premier Ahmadu Bello in the crossfires of the first military coup, till date, no suspect has been conclusively prosecuted and punished to serve as deterrent to others.

The brutal killings cut across every stratum of the society. The political circle, the judiciary, the business world, the academia all have their shares of senseless murders.

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**Load-Date:** July 20, 2016

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## **Ex-Daily Times MD Dies in Road Crash**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

March 06, 2017

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Length: 585 words

### **Body**

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Former Managing Director of Daily Times Nigeria Plc and a one-time Senior Special Assistant to the former Vice president Atiku Abubakar on Public Communications, Dr. Adinoyi Ojo Onukuba, is dead.

Aged 57, Onukuba was involved in motor accident on Sunday evening in Akure, Ondo State while returning from the 80th birthday celebration of former president Olusegun Obasanjo.

A versatile journalist and playwright, Dr. Onukuba was born on March 9, 1960 in Oboroke-Ihima, Okehi LGA of Kogi State to the family of Mallam Shuaibu Onukuba and Hajia Aisha Onukuba.

He obtained his first degree in 1982 in Theatre Arts from University of Ibadan. He served his national service at Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi -Lagos in 1982/83.

He joined The Guardian newspaper as one of its pioneer reporters in 1983. He rose to the position of News Editor before travelling out in 1989 for graduate studies. He bagged Master of Arts degree in Journalism from New York University, New York, USA. He worked as a Research Officer at the African Leadership Forum, New York. Onukuba also served as the Information officer, Division of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) between 1994 and 1995. He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1996 from New York University.

Dr. Onukuba became Adjunct Professor of Mass Communication at the School of New Resources, College of New Rochelle, New York in 1997. Between 1997 and 1998, he worked as Press Officer, Department of Public Information, United Nations (New York). In June 1998, he was sent to Iraq as an Information Officer, United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator. Upon his return to Nigeria in 1999 to participate in the present democratic dispensation, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar appointed him as Special Assistant on Media Relations. He had known and related closely with both Atiku and Olusegun Obasanjo since 1984.

Onukuba got to the peak of his journalistic career in August 1999 when he was appointed Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the then ailing Daily Times of Nigeria PLC. He worked tirelessly to reposition the Daily Times and made it attractive to investors. The company was privatized in 2004. Onukuba returned to the presidency as Senior Special Assistant to the former Vice president Atiku Abubakar on Public Communications between July 2003 and April 2005. Beyond Onukuba's humble exterior lies impenetrable armour of principle and dedication to duty. In December 2005, the Okun Youth Solidarity Forum (OYSF) led by Hon. Adeniyi Sunday Bello, honoured him with the "Pillar of Youth Award" in recognition of his services to the State.

## Ex- Daily Times MD Dies in Road Crash

Earlier in 2001, the then Governor Abubakar Audu of Kogi State honoured him as one of the distinguished citizens of the state. Onukaba has received numerous other awards for his decency, integrity, creativity and kindness.

Adinoyi Ojo Onukaba, a seasoned journalist, playwright and publisher of high repute, has published so many books and journals including: "In the Eye of Time"- a biography of former President Olusegun Obasanjo. "Atiku Abubakar"- a biography of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. "Born to Run" - a biography of Late Dele Giwa, co-authored by him and Dele Olojede. Some of his plays include Her Majesty's Visit, A Resting Place, Tower of Burden, The Virginity Flee, The Lone Ranger, Bargain Hunting, and Soommalliyya. His play, "The Killing Swamp" was one of the three finalists for the 2010 NLNG Literature Awards.

He was married with children.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2017

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## **A President in Need of Disciples [opinion]**

This Day (Lagos)

February 13, 2016

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**Length:** 2051 words

### **Body**

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Fellow Nigerians, let me say right away that I do not envy President Muhammadu Buhari at this moment. It cannot be easy carrying the burden of nearly 200 million highly boisterous people. It is worse when your predecessors had messed up big time thus almost snuffing life out of a potentially great nation. What a shame!

I'm not trying to find and make excuses for the President. Far from it, but it is pertinent to constantly remind ourselves of how we got to this sad juncture. I seriously doubt if Mr President ever bargained for this monstrosity that has confronted him so early in his long awaited and much trumpeted second coming. The Naira has nose-dived in the most cataclysmic fall ever in the history of our beleaguered country. And the disaster I foresee and predict would be monumental if a miracle does not happen soon. I won't be surprised if our great leader is experiencing insomnia and wondering what has hit him like a thunderbolt.

When I had the privilege of sitting with our President one on one, I was reasonably persuaded that he has in him the right dose of passion and patriotism necessary to reignite this great country. He also has the guts to take on dangerous tasks. He wouldn't have been a Major General if he was lily-livered. There is no question in my mind that he has what it takes to lead Nigeria out of the doldrums. But whenever I think of the debilitating challenges he is currently facing what comes to my mind is that the man is running a lonely marathon. I'm not sure he has enough disciples around willing to imbibe his spirit of simplicity and integrity. The reason is very simple. It is not so easy to be a Buhari devotee.

What do I mean? Buhari is a preacher who teaches what is quite difficult for an average Nigerian to follow and obey. I already explained in my column last week why corruption is very attractive in Nigeria. The contradictions within our ruling classes make it almost impossible to be a pontiff in our clime. The society makes silly demands of the public officer. The public officer also has the mind-set of a demi-god. He knows everyone sucks up to him and expects him to be a Santa Claus in office. There are other expectations he must activate and actualise. In summary, he is not expected to retire into poverty and perdition. Now Buhari is saying that is no longer possible. And that Big Brother is watching everyone and everywhere. How realistic this is, we are yet to see.

Corruption is not an easy scourge to exterminate especially when it has become cancerous and malignant. Ours has spread far and wide. What is the President doing? Fighting corruption has become an all-consuming agenda, indeed, perhaps, the only visible agenda that is raking in all attention and headlines. No one knows how much has been recovered, where it is kept and what is being done with the humongous loot. The EFCC is working frenetically on overdrive. I hope they are able to cope with the deluge of cases that keeps unfolding almost on daily basis.

### A President in Need of Disciples [opinion]

The President also seems to have placed his fate more in the hands of Government technocrats. These civil servants are expected to propel the policy directions of this administration. But is that working as planned and expected? I can't confidently confirm anything of the sort. I'm almost certain they are already letting down the President. There is no other evidence than the budget conundrum that has left this Federal Government terribly exposed and heavily scandalised. Whoever participated in crafting that horrific document has not done the President any favours. In fact, the budget-drafting team has done incalculable damage to a government that rode to power on the crest of frugality and accountability. Not only is the budget outlandishly profligate it is atrociously hypocritical.

What Nigerians wanted from President Buhari is simple and straight-forward. One, reverse the reckless spending in Abuja and replace it with prudent spending on common-sense capital projects and investments. Two, make corruption unattractive by establishing a workable regime of crime and punishment. Three, tidy up the economy and create a conducive environment for investors and their investments. Four, arrest the perfidious attacks of Boko Haram and make every inch of the Nigerian landscape safer for every citizen or foreigner. Five, upgrade our worthless educational system and create substantial opportunities for our army of unemployed youths. Six, fix our comatose infrastructure and restore aesthetic glory to our environment. Seven, find some veritable alternatives to our over-dependence on a monolithic economy in this season of oil commotion.

Unfortunately, I don't think some of the disciples are working in tandem with the Commander-in-Chief. Rather, they are skilfully wasting the resources that are so difficult to come by. Worse still, they want Nigeria to mortgage its future by borrowing money to fund their expensive habits. I sincerely beg the President to cancel the rubbish budget and substitute it with one that will reflect the principles and values upon which he was elected. It is better late than never. Nigeria is in bad shape. There is no point pretending to be a wealthy nation when we are miserably poor. We must do what countries like China and India did, invest heavily in education and food production. Education is the greatest leveller and the key that can unlock a prosperous future. Remove hunger out of poverty and you would have killed penury half-way and also energised the people.

I watched in utter amazement as theorists propounded some jejune thesis on how to save the Naira against the US Dollar. They cleverly stood truth on its head by recommending that those sending their children to schools abroad should be ready to pay the full dollar rate. What stupidity? No sensible country plays politics with sound education and good health. Even at a time Nigeria had quality education most of those who later became our elites schooled abroad. They travelled by sea and later by air. Most of them enjoyed government or foreign scholarships. My own Brother left Nigeria as an indigent student in 1965 after his A'levels and returned with a PhD from Stanford University.

Those preaching that Nigerians should remain at home have refused to take care of home. These preachers will still spend public money on sending their own children abroad for studies and vacations. They will go for medical treatment abroad at public expense. Education is a universal phenomenon and no amount spent on it is ever wasted. It is a shame that our politicians and members of the privilegedtsia would rather punish Nigerian students abroad instead of cutting their own excesses at home. They would rather we produce half-baked illiterates than offer our youths the opportunity to display their natural wizardry globally. This is the worst decision any government can make and President Buhari should veto the shenanigan of the carpetbaggers who are trying to sell him a rubbish legacy. What will save Nigeria ultimately is a well-educated citizenry and not the beautiful government houses and bullet-proof cars. I can name thousands of our icons who schooled abroad and returned home with bright ideas needed to grow our economy.

The Chinese and Indians litter everywhere on this planet! You find them as IT gurus today because their governments encouraged them to acquire knowledge from the greatest institutions in the world. Only the children of the poor would be affected by our ill-thought decision while the rich can afford anything, anyhow. Education would then become the exclusive preserve of the privileged few and those who wish to join them would have to steal to catch up. We should not push our people into more hardship. Paying fees abroad is more verifiable and virtuous than budgeting billions for over-inflated contracts and flights of fancy.

### A President in Need of Disciples [opinion]

The President should please avoid enemies from every direction. In case he is not aware, Nigeria is tension-soaked at the moment. The change we promised was to reduce and not to escalate hardship. Nigerians are ever willing to make sacrifices if and when the leaders are seen to be reasonable and sincere. As promised, when I met our great leader after he took office, I will continue to advise this government in order to avoid the pitfalls of the past. There are huge challenges but they are not impossible to tackle. The solution is not the type of jamboree and propaganda that certain people are recommending. We finished campaigning with drums and tambourines last year; it is now time to settle down to serious work. Rebranding Nigeria every time a new government comes is shambolic and myopic. There is nothing to campaign about again after election. A beautiful work will always speak for itself. On a final note this week, the President should fast-forward the war against corruption by recovering as much loot as possible very urgently. We should decrease the raucous and riotous drama surrounding the corruption crusade by revving up the substance of the war and establishing our goals and destination. When tomorrow comes, no one would ask how many people were jailed but everyone would always remember the hunger that ravaged the land in the time of Lagbaja. It is the bitter truth.

**A TOAST TO FLORENCE ITA-GIWA AT 70** The name Florence Ita-Giwa flashed across my consciousness over 30 years ago. The news of her whirlwind romance with the famous journalist Dele Giwa and their short-lived marriage had spread like bushfire in harmattan. Of course, the assassination of Dele Giwa on October 19, 1986, would amplify Florence Ita-Giwa's name. The melodrama of Florence and Dele's wedding would later be captured by Dele Olojede and Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo's biography on the life and times of Dele Giwa, titled BORN TO RUN.

The description of this gorgeous lady and Calabar Princess read like fairy-tale and I looked forward to meeting her someday. I landed in Lagos in 1988 after completing my Master's in Literature in English at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and instantly took appointment at the African Concord magazine. Months later, in February 1989, I was transferred to a new publication, Weekend Concord, and there my rendezvous with Nigerian celebrities and newsmakers began. From Weekend Concord, I resigned and joined Classique magazine, owned by May Ellen Ezekiel Mofe-Damijo, now of blessed memory, as Editor.

It was while at Classique that I got to know very well some of the movers and shakers of Nigeria. Florence Ita-Giwa had already established herself as a veritable member of that class. She had a powerful aura and exuded panache. There was no way anyone could have missed a lady who mesmerised Nigeria with her beauty and brains. We met and we became friends forever. She never stopped extolling my writing skills. Unknown to her, I had been greatly influenced by Dele Giwa who incidentally was born at number 2 Atiba Square, Ile-Ife, where I later grew up, though we never met. Aunty Florence and I were party animals by virtue of our socialite status and we met at too many functions in Lagos and London. She and her circle of friends also stopped by at my Accra home for dinner and we danced late into the night. Aunty Florence is always such a jolly good woman.

I was particularly fascinated by her political adventures and charitable spirit. She served her people of Bakassi, a peninsula between Nigeria and Cameroon, loyally. She fought hard for them to remain within the geographical boundary of Nigeria. This coupled with her adoption and sponsorship of children from that area was how she acquired the moniker of Mama Bakassi. She became a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and later Special Adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo on National Assembly Matters. She handled every assignment with total dedication and competence.

Born on February 19, 1946, Senator Florence Ita-Giwa turns 70 in the next few days. I'm proud and privileged to raise a toast to this ageless beauty ahead of her celebrations which starts with a reception this evening by the Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria (FADAN, of which I'm a patron) and a seminar to be hosted by the African Women in Leadership Organisation next Monday in Lagos. Here's a toast to good health and more prosperity... â€¢

**Load-Date:** February 14, 2016



## **NUJ Abuja Protest Over Murdered Journalists**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

May 2, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 315 words

**Byline:** Abubakar Yakubu

### **Body**

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Members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Abuja Council Saturday carried placards to protest the killings of journalists and insistent threats to their lives.

The journalists, who joined other workers to mark the May Day celebrations at Eagle Square Abuja, held placards that read 'Stop the killings of journalist', 'Journalists need to be protected' and 'FOI bill is for every one'.

Our reporter learnt that the council had before that day sent a petition to the FCT Police Commissioner, Mr. John Haruna, over plans by yet to be identified persons to kill some journalists in the course of their constitutional duties.

In the petition, Mr. Jacob Edi, chairman of the council, expressed the worries of the council that politicians and political actors have made journalists targets of assassinations.

The chairman stated that a council member, Chuks Okocha of This Day, sent him a text he received that read thus: "Gbenga Aruleba (AIT), Yusuf Ali (The Nation), Olusola Fabiyi (PUNCH), Chuks Okocha (This Day). U all have no hiding place. U must be happy now dat Prof. Maurice Iwu has been sacked due to ur bad stories and reports. We will deal wit u soon. Remember Dele Giwa, Bayo Ohu and Edo Ubagwu? Gud luck".

The council chairman expressed worry over the development and called on the FCT police boss to provide 24-hour security for the affected journalists and others as well as leave nothing to chance in bringing to book all those that are responsible for the senseless killing of journalists in the country.

"By this protest letter, we are handing over these journalists to your protective custody and hope that no harm will come to either of them or members of their family," the petition read.

City News further learnt that several attempts to the GSM number 08063623794, where the threat came from yielded no result as the service provider kept saying the number was out of service.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2010



## **Babangida And the Bypass to Nowhere [column]**

This Day (Lagos)

September 3, 2010 Friday

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**Length:** 1622 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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On this page last week, Chidi Amuta, a man more difficult to ignore than to agree with, wrote a tribute to former military President, Ibrahim Babangida, his friend and benefactor. But Amuta's piece titled, "Babangida and the Western bypass," was more than a tribute.

It was part chastisement and part plea to the conscience of the Yoruba nation, which, according to Amuta, still bears Babangida a deadly grudge in spite of all that he did for Yoruba sons and daughters when he was military president and even after he left office.

The piece was also supposed to redeem the memory of those now in their late 20s or early 30s from the havoc and savagery of the prejudiced lot who, in Amuta's view, are determined to revise the history of the Babangida era. I am part of the prejudiced lot, but I have no apologies.

Why? Because my prejudice is neither personal nor blighted by my association with the so-called western bypass for many years. It is not based on fiction either or a meanness to deny Babangida credit for the good things he did which Amuta could not even fully list.

My prejudice is based on what I saw and experienced as an adult during Babangida's eight-year rule.

If I had any doubts that Babangida is unworthy of public office his conduct after he was forced to leave office 17 years ago has since erased such doubts. Sure, after the harsh spell that the country had been through under the Buhari/Idiagbon rule, Babangida seized power a different man. He would have been a fool to play Rehoboam, the Israelite king who took the advice of his friends and flogged his people with scorpions when he needed to soothe their pains.

Babangida wormed his way into our hearts, posing like our own Abdel Nasser the soldier's soldier who restored his country's pride and became a strong voice for pan-Arab nationalism. But Babangida, being Babangida, brought his own ambition game to a cropper. Now, he wants to be our De Gaulle or Churchill?

Yes, he pressed some of the best and brightest in the Yoruba nation to service. But except for the purpose of creating a comfort zone out of Babangidanistan, I do not see the point in dragging Wole Soyinka, Bolaji Akinyemi, Michael Omolayole, Ojetunde Aboyade, Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, Tai Solarin or any of the others mentioned into a debate about Babangida's credentials. These people loved their country and were happy to do their bit to bring it

## Babangida And the Bypass to Nowhere [column]

out of the difficult situation it was in at the time. I think it's unfair to their legacy and memory to suggest, as Amuta did, that they were recruited to appease some ethnic god who they, their nationality, and the nation are now obliged to repay.

There were other non-Yoruba professionals like Tony Momoh, Sam Oyovbaire, Jerry Gana, Tam David-West, Omo Omoruyi and Abubakar Umar Dangiwa, who stepped up to the plate believing it was a call to give their country a future and a hope. Except if they had good reason beforehand to suspect that Babangida's rule would turn out to be the disaster that it was or stayed on after the fact, it serves no more useful purpose reminding us that Soyinka served under Babangida than it does saying that Sani Abacha appointed Pius Okigbo to chair the panel on the Central Bank accounts in 1994.

Oh no, I am not so mean, or jaundiced, as to forget a few of Babangida's good works. The liberalisation of broadcast media licences, the tinkering with the structure of the capital market, the directorate for roads and infrastructure, and of course, the technical aid corps, which was a lifeline to a few African countries. But who, in Babangida's shoes, given so much, would have done less? Apart from Olusegun Obasanjo in his second coming as civilian president in 1999, there is arguably no other Nigerian leader in recent times who enjoyed so much drumbeat of goodwill at the inception of his rule and yet, as my people would say, ended his dance with the left hand.

How can one explain, for example, that the same man who opened up the media space, was the one who shut down Punch, hunted the press, and assailed academic freedom the highpoint of which was exemplified by his abduction and deportation of Patrick Wilmot in 1988 for "teaching what he was not paid to teach?" Wasn't the Liberian crisis also, for good measure, a gravy train on the watch of the man who enthusiastically supported the technical aid corps?

His main economic programme, the Structural Adjustment Programme, has been praised as a masterstroke ahead of its time. Maybe it was. But like too much of every good thing the consequences are in evidence, even today. Take the power sector, for example. Babangida did not bring power supply to ruin, but his half-hearted attempt to save it left behind a greater mess. In 1988, he put in place a 25-year power plan to redeem decaying infrastructure and narrow the supply-demand gap. The plan had barely taken off when he introduced SAP which left the prices of everything from the price of staple food to the unit price of electricity (which was 6 kobo in 1979) in a tailspin.

Babangida's government, incapable of telling the truth about anything, was neither able to pursue the power plan nor to tell consumers that the economic crisis created by SAP had inevitably widened the gap between the capacity charge for electricity (which covers the replacement cost of infrastructure) and the energy charge (which covers the operational costs). Simply put, government was picking up the subsidy while consumers who had grown by the millions were hardly paying the real cost per wattage consumed. To date, we are still in the quagmire.

In contrast to his predecessor, his personal touch was fairy tale stuff. His charming smiles often made me smile when I saw his face in the newspapers or watched him on TV. But that was before the parcel bomb that killed **Dele Giwa** at breakfast on October 19, 1986.

**Dele Giwa** had been my idol, my role model - one of the main reasons, apart from Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, why I wanted to become a **journalist**. Babangida has said he had nothing to do with the murder of **Dele Giwa** and has made it plain that he does not wish to answer any more questions on the matter. That is just as well. But the untidy manner in which his regime handled investigations into the murder, frustrating independent enquiry and fending off leads whenever they pointed up the military hierarchy, would cast a very long shadow on his past and his future ambition.

Neither the passage of time nor the force of a thousand brilliant pieces by Amuta can dim the memory of that day when as an undergraduate I filed past the shattered remains of **Dele Giwa** in front of Newswatch Oregun office to say a final goodbye to the man who had inspired me.

And how can I forget Major Remi Okeowo, my friend and classmate at the University of Lagos who died in the Hercules C130 air crash in 1992 that claimed the lives of a generation of some of Nigeria's best and brightest military officers? Don't get me wrong. I'm not blaming Babangida for the crash, even though it happened under his

## Babangida And the Bypass to Nowhere [column]

nose. However, the sheer levity and incompetence of the rescue, not to mention the shrouded nature of the fatal trip, never ceases to amaze me; it sticks in the nails and just won't go away.

But why should that be? Amuta said Babangida loved his friends - and went out of his way to please even his enemies. Okay maybe he was a nice guy but I don't think Mamman Vatsa's family - or a number of people who believe in fair play - will be sending him roses as he formally announces his intention to seek the PDP ticket in a few days, never mind that Amuta's piece made it look like the race for the party's ticket is Babangida's to lose.

Vatsa and others were charged with complicity in a failed coup to remove Babangida in 1986. The evidence against Vasta, was to say the least, dubious. Appeals were mounted to resolve the doubt in his favour and save him from execution. To stave off the pressure, however, Babangida's government announced, with "deep regret," that Vasta had been executed "one hour ago," when, in fact, he had not been executed at the time. Of course, Vatsa was later executed and those who did it have since washed their hands, but not their hearts.

Was the agape love reserved for M.K.O Abiola then? That's what Amuta seems to suggest - that Babangida loved Abiola more than the millions of voters who voted for him as their president in the freest and fairest election yet on June 12, 1993. It's the kind of love that pushes a friend over the cliff and returns home to drown itself in tears; Saulish love that puts sacrifice over obedience. Or else what was the point in bending over backwards to please the Yoruba nation, when what was required of him was to simply do the right thing by handing over to the winner of the election?

If the past is past, bringing closure, it now seems, to an era of "rule by settlement,"; debate about how the Gulf War oil windfall was spent; Babangida's refusal on a technical point to appear before the Oputa Panel that investigated human rights abuses; and the damaging legacy of First Ladyship after Better Life among other things, in vain have I tried to search for what Babangida brings to the future.

At 69, he reportedly said in an interview that he is motivated to run for the presidency because he had seen signs that the younger generation is incapable of running the nation.

Trust me, it's not about age, IBB; it's about knowing when to say, enough. Unfortunately with the stats made to look just the way he would like it - as if he is only inches away from the prize - nothing else matters now. Amuta may not agree, but the only bypass that Babangida needs, is the one that takes him back to his Hill Top Mansion in Minna - and keeps him there.

**Load-Date:** September 7, 2010

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## **Repent of your corrupt antecedents, Clergy urges IBB**

Nigerian Tribune

February 5, 2018 Monday

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Length: 448 words

### **Body**

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REACTING to a statement issued by former military President, Ibrahim Babangida asking President Muhammadu Buhari not to seek re-election in 2019, a Clergy, Most Rev. Steve Onwu has said the former leader's penchant for corruption has pitched him against the anti-corruption crusade of the present administration.

Onwu who is the Executive Director, New Initiative for Credible Leadership (NICReL) addressing a press conference in Abuja on Monday, also alleged that besides the Babangida's era as President seeing Nigeria rank highest on the Global Corruption Index, it introduced use of bombs in killing innocent citizens amongst other ills that the country is currently grappling to overcome.

The Clergy said it was regrettable that at old age, the Former President and his like have failed to repent of their sins but are rather seeking desperate ways to get back at the country to continue and continue to pilfer its resources.

'The people coalescing in this manner are connected one way or the other with the grand corruption that has kept Nigeria in the doldrums and they are also the ones that are losing their grips on the illicit revenue from corruption under the ongoing reforms.

'Even in the midst of these ominous conjugations, however, we could not but notice the dark humour of the man credited as the father of corruption and the one that institutionalized corruption in Nigeria now grandstanding on the same issue in his desperation for relevance.'

'If old age has erased IBB's memory, Nigerians are not able to forget that his economic policies left the country bankrupt and reduced to a nation in need of foreign help despite its abundant natural resources. The fallout of his rule underpins the economic morass that the country is still struggling to exit several decades later,' Onuh stated.

He also described as ridiculous the comment of the former military President on security alleging further that he planted the curse of insecurity in the country.

'His commentary on security is really sad as it amounted to him dancing on the graves of those that have been killed in an insurgency that has been clearly traced to some of his cronies. As a reminder to the Evil Genius, he introduced letter bomb in the controversial death of senior Nigerian **journalist, Dele Giwa**. It was an art he made into a science and his fingerprint has been all over several other bombing campaigns in the country.'

ALSO READ: Restructuring: Yakassai differs with IBB

Repent of your corrupt antecedents, Clergy urges IBB

NICReL called on Nigerians to put the Obasanjo, IBB, and the other members of their alliance (that are yet to come out) on notice that they shall be held responsible for any breach of peace in the run-up to the 2019 General Elections.

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2018

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## **POLITICS-NIGERIA: TALES OF MILITARY ABUSES RECOUNTED BY VICTIMS**

IPS-Inter Press Service

December 12, 2000, Tuesday

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**Length:** 1005 words

**Byline:** By Remi Oyo

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Dec. 12

### **Body**

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An investigating panel on human rights abuses during Nigeria's period of military rule will continue hearing testimonies from victims and perpetrators alike, in an unprecedented recounting of conspiracies, attempted coups, and torture of prisoners by the nation's security forces.

The panel was supposed to have concluded on Dec. 8, leaving time for two other sessions in the eastern city of Port Harcourt and the northern city of Kaduna. However, it has been extended by a week to allow all the witnesses to testify.

Headed by Chukwudifu Oputa, a retired Supreme Court judge, the panel was established by President Olusegun Obasanjo to recommend redress for victims and punishment for those found guilty of perpetrating gross abuses during the period 1984-1999.

But critics say the panel, which has no judicial powers, is nothing but a chronicler of the "theater of absurd."

"The Oputa panel is a waste of time, waste of money, waste of energy," septuagenarian lawyer and politician Abraham Adesanya said shortly after one witness admitted to carrying out attempts to assassinate him.

Adesanya, leader of the National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco), which vehemently opposed the despotic rule of late head of state Sani Abacha, asked: "How do you expect people to forgive those who were torturing our people?"

Referring to the copious apologies and tears shed at the panel by Abacha aides currently standing trial for political murders, the lawyer said apologies were not enough.

"There must be penitence, then forgiveness can follow. But in this case, there is no penitence whatsoever," Adesanya added.

Gani Fawehinmi, another lawyer and activist, also said in testimony before the panel that "everything must be in the open."

## POLITICS- NIGERIA : TALES OF MILITARY ABUSES RECOUNTED BY VICTIMS

In earlier comments, Fawehinmi, who was jailed by the military governments, insisted that former President Ibrahim Babangida must testify regarding the death in 1986 of Dele Giwa, CEO of the weekly magazine Newswatch.

Fawehinmi and Giwa's colleagues allege that Babangida and two of his top security chiefs had knowledge of the killing -- by letter bomb -- of the former editor-in-chief.

Babangida, who has denied knowledge of the death, has sought a court injunction barring the investigating panel from summoning him to testify.

In an exclusive interview with This Day newspaper published here on Dec. 10, Babangida denied knowledge of Giwa's death. "I guess Dele Giwa's death is one of the mysteries we have to live with," said the former military president, who ruled from 1985-1993.

"Why is Gani Fawehinmi harassing my life over what I know nothing about. Why would I kill a journalist when I could have locked him up?" he asked.

Babangida also does not appear to have much respect for the Oputa panel, which could unearth violations during his eight-year rule. "Where in the world do you see an accused being hailed or several people clapping while a trial is going on for charges as serious as murder?" he said.

But not everyone is refusing to appear before the panel. Not only has President Obasanjo appeared, he has been the recipient of apologies from several former army chiefs who testified that they lied to implicate their former commander-in-chief in a phantom coup orchestrated by Abacha in 1995.

Obasanjo, jailed for 15 years, along with several serving officers, four journalists and civilians, was Nigeria's military leader from 1976-1979.

Although Nigerians remember his emaciated figure following his release by Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar in 1998 after serving more than three years, Obasanjo's testimony at the Oputa panel did not generate as much controversy or publicity as that of Maj. Hamza Al-Mustapha, Abacha's former chief security officer.

Facing trial for ordering the deaths of leading opposition figures during the five years of Abacha's dictatorship, Al-Mustapha has smiled through the boos and jeers at the hearings, and denies any knowledge of torture, killings or bombings by members of the 17 separate security outfits that he commanded.

No one perceived by Al-Mustapha to be an enemy of Abacha, according to witnesses, was immune from the many torture chambers.

Witnesses, such as Abubakar Tsav, a former police commissioner, alleged that Abacha henchmen were behind the bombings in this former federal capital, the bastion of opposition to the dictator, who died in June 1998.

Even his deputy, Gen. Oladipo Diya, alleged that Abacha, aided by Al-Mustapha and some named generals, attempted to kill him with a bomb in 1997. Failure of the mission led to his arrest for another phantom coup, he alleged.

Award-winning journalist Chris Anyanwu -- jailed with Obasanjo -- spoke of problems with her eyesight and confiscation of her property.

She is seeking a public apology and compensation of \$ 2 million. Senator Olabiyi Durojaiye also wants compensation paid to his family and charity organizations for the 560 days he spent in Abacha's detention camp.

Durojaiye recalled that Frank Omenka, commanding officer of the Directorate of Military Intelligence, had told him upon his arrest in December 1996: "I will line all of you who are members of NADECO and waste you all with my bullets and bury you all in a common grave and say, here lie all those who caused trouble in this country."

Omenka, wanted on murder charges, is believed to be in exile in Brazil.

## POLITICS- NIGERIA : TALES OF MILITARY ABUSES RECOUNTED BY VICTIMS

The senator, a lawyer, said he was made to sleep on a bare floor for two months, was starved and suffered high blood pressure during incarceration.

Durojaiye said he suffered mental torture from hearing the wails and cries of people being flogged by security operatives.

Al-Mustapha has seized the unprecedented freedom granted by the panel to accuse several prominent figures of heinous crimes, from plans for an insurrection to the alleged murder of Moshood Abiola, the politician jailed by his former boss.

But Abiola's wife, Kudirat, was killed on the orders of Al- Mustapha, the confessed gunman Barnabas Mshelia told the panel.

Moshood Abiola was the winner of the 1993 presidential elections, which were annulled by the military.

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2000

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## **Nigeria@60 : New colours of crime**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 6, 2020 Tuesday

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**Length:** 3470 words

**Byline:** Rapheal

### **Body**

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Henry Umahi

In his radio broadcast announcing Nigeria's first military coup on January 15, 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu said: "Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 per cent."

Those were the analogue days. Crime has gone digital. Bribes, in particular, now define the country.

Over the years, crime has been institutionalised. The situation is such that the former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron, in 2016, remarked that Afghanistan and Nigeria were "fantastically corrupt countries", and "possibly the two most corrupt countries in the world."

Although President Muhammadu Buhari said that he was deeply "shocked and embarrassed" by Cameron's comment, many agree that Nigeria is a super heavyweight champion when it comes to crime, however you look at it. On the face of it, Cameron's remark could be regarded as undiplomatic but, at that time, Nigeria was ranked 136th out of the 167 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index.

Asked if Nigeria was fantastically corrupt, Buhari said: "Yes," adding: "I am not going to demand any apology from anybody." But, in a sense, he took a jab at the British, asking them to assist Nigeria in securing the "return of assets" stashed in the country by corrupt government officials and their collaborators.

Out of control

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

Corruption has become the order of the day and it affects virtually every arm or aspect of government. The result is that while the country is retrogressing in terms of social infrastructure, those in government or out of government are flying private jets and generally living lavish lifestyles.

According to Wikipedia, "Political corruption is a persistent phenomenon in Nigeria. In 2012, Nigeria was estimated to have lost over \$400 billion to corruption since independence. In 2018, the country ranked 144th in the countries listed by Transparency International's Corruption Index, with Somalia, at 180th, being the most corrupt, and Denmark the least."

Matthew T. Page, a nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote: "Corruption is the single greatest obstacle preventing Nigeria from achieving its enormous potential. It drains billions of dollars a year from the country's economy, stymies development, and weakens the social contract between the government and the people. Nigerians view their country as one of the world's most corrupt and struggle daily to cope with the effects."

### In the beginning

Before Nigeria's independence, bribes were taken in secret but it is now openly done. It has become a culture. Show me a public officer and I'll show you a briber taker.

Operatives of the Nigeria Police Force are, perhaps, the most corrupt set of public officers in the country. They operate in a way suggesting that extortion is a curriculum in the Police College. They say that bail is free but it's a lie from the pit of hell. All over the country, particularly in the South East, operatives mount checkpoints (toll gates) where they extort money from motorists.

Personnel of the Nigerian Army, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are also part of the racket.

Lecturers compel their students to buy grades. Some coerce the female students to have sex with them for marks. Some lecturers have been found guilty and punished accordingly. Worse still, admission into schools are sometimes bought and sold. The brilliance of students won't count in many cases. What counts is the ability of parents and guardians to "take care" of those in charge. Perhaps, that accounts for the poor quality of graduates roaming the streets.

Workers at electricity distribution companies feed fat on bribes. It's a vicious cycle.

### Legacy of robbery

Over the years, armed robbers have graduated from breaking into homes and robbing occupants. These days, they boldly block highways in broad daylight and rob travellers. They also attack banks, killing customers, workers and security personnel on duty.

Some robbers have made their marks in the last 60 years. Shola Oyenusu was one of the most dreaded robbers to traverse the land. Doctor Ishola, as he was popularly known, specialised in bank robberies, carjackings and heists. On September 8, 1971, he and his gang were executed by firing squad at the Bar Beach, Lagos, after being convicted by a military tribunal for sundry crimes. Many believed that he operated with juju because of his escapades. Even while being led to the stake, he smiled, having boasted that bullets would not penetrate his body.

Lawrence Anini was a law unto himself. In the 1980s, he terrorised Benin City, the capital of then Bendel State, and environs, along with his main man, Monday Osunbor. Inspector George Iyamu supplied intelligence and arms to the gang.

Anini was like Robin Hood. Sometimes, after successfully robbing a bank, Anini would go to the market and throw bundles of cash to the marketmen and women.

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

Anini's escapes prompted then President Ibrahim Babangida to ask the Inspector-General of Police, Etim Inyang: "My friend, where is Anini?" Anini and members of his gang were executed on March 29, 1987.

In the 1990s, Shina Rambo terrorised the country and beyond. He was perhaps the most notorious bandit, whose name sent shivers down the spines of people in the South West and neighbouring Republic of Benin. His operations were the stuff Hollywood is made of. He was indoctrinated into the underworld by his father, a soldier, who was a bad example. He was in love with rituals, using human and animal parts.

### Kidnapping

One of the problems bedevilling Nigeria is kidnapping and hostage taking. In fact, kidnapping has become a daily occurrence, spreading throughout the country. The phenomenon has scared both the local and foreign investors.

Kidnapping started gaining ground in the country in 2006 when the militants in the Niger Delta area seized expatriate oil workers to protest the environmental degradation of the oil producing communities.

Then it became a business when the militants started asking for ransom before freeing any foreigner in their net.

From kidnapping oil workers, the criminals started seizing high net-worth individuals. Now, everyone, rich or poor, is a target as kidnappers are increasingly indiscriminate. In many cases, buses carrying full load of passengers are diverted in the bush until their relatives negotiate and pay ransom. There are several instances where villages were raided and dozens of residents abducted, particularly in the northern part of the country. Many have lost their lives even after paying heavy sums.

Some states have made kidnapping a capital offence even as buildings belonging to them are pulled down. Yet, the numbers continue to rise. In April 2014, 276 school girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram in Chibok, Bornu State. Despite the international outrage, which sparked the #BringBackOurGirls# supported by the then First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, over 100 of the 'Chibok girls' are still missing. Some of the girls were reportedly released in exchange for money and prisoners. Some of the kidnappings in the country are attributed to Boko Haram.

In fact, kidnapping for ransom is one of the biggest organized crimes in Nigeria.

According to police sources, 685 kidnappings took place in the country in the first quarter of 2019, an average of seven per day. But many believe that it is a conservative figure as many of the incidents are not reported.

The Abuja-Kaduna highway, Benin bypass, Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway, Lokoja-Abuja highway are some of the notorious kidnappers' paradise.

Nnamdi Obasi from the International Crises Group said: "The gangs involved now appear more organized, operating in larger groups, with more elaborate logistics, striking more audaciously."

One of the most notorious kidnap kingpins in the country is Chukwudumeme Onwuamadile, alias Evans. For years, he made life difficult for many high net-worth individuals. Reputed to be a billionaire, Evans allegedly confessed to have received \$1 million as ransom for a victim; and he detained some up to seven months, until they paid the last dime of ransom. Evans, who was arrested in June 2017 at his palatial residence in Magodo, Lagos, is currently standing trial for multiple offences. His major arms supplier, Godwin Chinyere, was arrested in 2019.

Another kidnap boss, Obioma Nwankwo, aka Osisikankwu, was killed in December 2010 during a forest gun battle with soldiers. His celebrated exploits included the kidnap of 15 schoolchildren and four journalists in September 2010, in Abia, Abia State. The journalists were returning from a conference held by the Nigeria Union of Journalists in Akwa Ibom State.

Another notorious kidnapper and robber was Henry Chibueze, aka Vampire. He tormented people in South East, South South, Benin Republic, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire. The 30-year-old met his Waterloo in March 2017 in his

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

hideout in Omu Awa forest, Rivers State. Vampire met his end one month after his gang members had, on January 27, 2017, stormed the court where he was standing trial and freed him and other inmates.

Vampire killed his girlfriend and eight members of her family on February 16, 2013. According to the police, the Nwangele, Imo State, indigene confessed to have killed more than 200 people in various robbery and kidnap attacks.

While suspected kidnap lord in Taraba State, Hamisu Wadume, is currently facing trial, a militant leader in Benue State, Terwase Akwaza, popularly called Gana, was allegedly killed by soldiers on September 8, 2020. It was also alleged that soldiers killed some policemen who arrested Wadume and set him free.

### Blood everywhere

Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, crime-related deaths have been on the increase. Indeed, blood is literally flowing in the country as there is no day without reports of death.

According to the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, 1,071 were killed in crime-related cases in Nigeria in the first quarter of 2019. Many regard the figure as conservative.

There are also several extra-judicial killings by the police, military and other paramilitary organizations. Many innocent Nigerians have been killed by operatives at checkpoints and during police operations. Several others have died from stray bullets. Several are also tortured to death in detention.

Policemen hide under the Police Force Order 237 to perpetrate crime. The order permits officers to shoot suspects and detain anyone attempting to avoid arrest or escape from detention. So, spurious allegations are spewed against the dead who cannot speak. The most notorious unit of the police is the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (F-SARS). They brazenly harass and extort innocent Nigerians.

Recently, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo lamented that Nigerians don't know the difference between policemen and armed robbers.

According to Amnesty International, "the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial executions, other unlawful killings and enforced disappearances every year. The majority of the cases go uninvestigated and unpunished. The families of the victims usually have no recourse to justice or redress. Many do not even get to find out what exactly happened to their loved ones."

In 1981, a Nigerian athlete based in the US, Dele Ndubuisi Udo, was shot dead by a policeman in Surulere, Lagos. Six Igbo traders were killed in cold blood on June 7, 2005, by policemen at Apo Mechanic Village, Abuja. The victims included two lovebirds, Ifeanyi Ozor (25) and Augustina Arebu (22), who were about to tie the knot.

Similarly, there have been many unresolved killings.

### Unresolved high-profile murders

Dele Giwa, a journalist, was killed by a parcel bomb in his home in Ikeja, Lagos, on October 19, 1986, while having a late breakfast with a friend. His killers remain unknown.

On October 6, 1995, Chief Alfred Rewane, a businessman, was murdered in Lagos. No conviction was achieved.

Another journalist, James Kaito, was abducted and murdered on November 12, 1995. His killers remain anonymous.

On December 23, 2001, Bola Ige, a serving Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, was murdered in his home in Ibadan, Oyo State. No one has been convicted for the dastardly act.

In 2003, the vice national chairman of the defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Marshal Harry, was murdered in Abuja by faceless people.

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

Former vice chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Aminasoari Dikibo, was assassinated on February 6, 2004, by unknown persons.

Kudirat Abiola, the wife of business mogul, MKO Abiola, was assassinated on June 4, 1996. Her driver also died during the attack while in traffic.

On July 27, 2006, foremost Lagos politician, Funsho Williams, was found bound, strangled and stabbed in his home at Dolphin Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos. His killers are still walking free.

Also yet to be apprehended are the killers of top politician Otunba Dipo Dina, who was assassinated on January 25, 2010.

### Insurgency

There was a time Nigerians were regarded as the happiest people on earth. But those days are far gone. The people now live in fear because death is always lurking in the shadows.

Nigeria has become a jungle. It's a Hobbesian state where life is nasty, brutish and short. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2020, Nigeria is the third most terrorized country in the world, after Afghanistan and Iraq.

Boko Haram, a militant Islamic group with the purpose of instituting an Islamic state in the country, is the chief culprit. According to UNICEF, Boko Haram kidnapped over 1,000 children since 2013. Apart from kidnapping for ransom, the group is also active in human trafficking and organ harvesting. They leisurely and routinely cut off heads and make videos of such recreation.

Boko Haram was founded in 2002 but it began to bare its deadly fangs in December 2003 when it attacked some police stations in Yobe State.

In July 2009, the insurgents attacked Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno states, leaving scores of policemen dead. A joint military force responded and killed over 700 of them. The leader of the group, Mohammed Yusuf, was captured and he died in police custody. The death of Yusuf seemed to have galvanized the group and they went haywire.

In July 2010, Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau, appeared in a video, proclaiming himself as the new leader of the group.

Boko Haram militants attacked a prison in Bauchi on September 7. They killed five people and freed over 700 inmates.

On May 29, 2011, the day former President Goodluck Jonathan was sworn into office, Boko Haram detonated three IEDs near a military barracks in Bauchi. Life was snuffed out of no fewer than 10 persons in the attack.

Boko Haram attacked the United Nations premises in Abuja. Twenty-three people were killed while more than 75 others sustained injuries in the car bomb attack.

Boko Haram went on rampage on November 4, 2011 and killed over 100 people in multiple attacks on Yobe and Borno states in markets and 11 churches.

Abu Usamatul Al-Ansari was announced, in January 2012, as leader of a new splinter group known as Ansaru.

On January 20, 2012, over 200 people died in coordinated attacks by Boko Haram, targeting the police, military and prison, among others, in Kano.

Unnerved as it appeared, in April 2013, Jonathan announced that he had constituted a team to explore the possibility of amnesty for the jihadists. Shekau had a good laugh and responded: "Surprisingly, the Nigerian government is granting us amnesty. What wrong have we done? On the contrary, it is we that should grant you pardon."

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

On June 4, 2013, Boko Haram and Ansaru were proscribed as terrorist organizations.

Over 50 people died in June 2013 when Boko Haram attacked churches in various northern states on three Sundays in a row.

On September 17, 2013, they burnt vehicles and executed no fewer than 143 travelers near Benisheik in Borno.

The US State Department added Boko Haram and Ansaru to its list of terrorist organizations, on November 13, 2013.

On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in Chibok in Borno.

More than 200 Boko Haram fighters were killed on May 20, 2014, when they attacked three villages in Borno.

Blood flowed in Jos, the capital of Plateau State on May 20, 2014 when two explosions rocked the tin city. More than 118 people perished.

Boko Haram militants killed between 400 and 500 in Borno between June 3 and 4, 2014.

Between June 7 and 8, 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 20 young women in Garkin Fulani, near Chibok.

Between June 18 and 22, 2014, Boko Haram poured sorrow and tears on Kummabza village, Borno. They killed 30 men and kidnapped 60 women.

Armageddon visited Baga and neighbouring villages on January 3, 2015 when Boko Haram slaughtered about 2000 people.

On July 1, 2015, 145 people were killed by Boko Haram in Bornu while 58 others died in the hands of two female bombers.

Boko Haram fighters released 82 Chibok girls on May 6, 2017, and February 19, 2018, raided Government Girls Science and Technical College, Dapchi, and kidnapped 110 girls. One of the students, Leah Sharibu (16), a Christian, remains in detention.

On March 1, 2018, Boko Haram abducted three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) aid workers. They were executed.

In an audio message, Shekau pledged allegiance to the ISIS.

On May 24, 2018, Amnesty International released a report alleging that women and girls who escaped Boko were being raped by soldiers. Some of the women were impregnated and abandoned.

Boko Haram attacked a funeral gathering on July 27, 2019 in northeast and killed at least 65 people.

On February 9, 2020, Boko Haram members set 30 people, including a pregnant woman, ablaze in Bornu. On June 9, 2020, no fewer than 81 people were killed in Bornu and seven others abducted.

Indeed, terrorist attacks have become frequent in the last few weeks, leading to loss of scores of lives. Borno is the worst hit. According to the state governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum, Boko Haram burnt 47,615 houses, classrooms and health centres in the last decade. The state also has over two million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Over 36,000 people have been killed in the insurgency in northeast Nigeria.

September 2020 was a month to remember for Borno State governor as his convoy was attacked twice by terrorists. On September 27, the Boko Haram sect ambushed and killed four soldiers, 10 policemen and four civilians on the convoy of the governor. The insurgents opened fire with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. His convoy had been attacked days earlier.

## Nigeria @60 : New colours of crime

The group has attacked military facilities on many occasions, killing personnel and residents.

Meanwhile, Zulum has called for the invitation of Chadian troops to partner with their Nigerian counterparts in fighting insurgency in the region.

### Herdsmen/farmers' clashes

Since the return of democracy in 1999, suspected Fulani herdsmen have persistently attacked farmers in various states of the country over land resources. Thousands of people have died in the conflicts, mainly in the Middle Belt and South East.

### Rapists, ritualists on the prowl

Rape has become a scourge in Nigeria. Every day, there are reports of rape in the media. Even children are not spared by pedophiles.

Similarly, the quest for money and power has thrown up evil characters, who kill fellow country men and women for ritual purposes. In 1996, Owerri, the capital of Imo State, was on fire following the killing of an 11-year-old groundnut hawker, Ikechukwu Okoronkwo, at Otokoto Hotel for ritual purposes.

Khadijat, daughter of former deputy governor of Ondo State, Lasisi Oluboyo, was killed for ritual purposes by her boyfriend, Adeyemi Alao, in July 2018. In March 2019, an Akure High Court sentenced Adeyemi to death by hanging for killing Khadijat.

Same year, Elozino Joshua Ogege, a first class 300-level student of Delta State University, was killed in a very pathetic way, for ritual purposes by a four-man yahoo-yahoo gang. One of the perpetrators, Desmond, said: "We took her to a bush where we first plucked out one of her eyes while she was still alive. She was even crying and begging us to forgive her and let her go, but we plucked the other eye, removed her breast and heart before she died."

On December 8, 2019, a final year student of Theatre Arts at the Lagos State University (UNILAG), Favour Daley-Oladele, was killed in Osun State by her boyfriend, Owolabi Adeeko. One Prophet Segun Philip, a money ritualist, removed Favour's heart and used it to prepare pepper soup for Owolabi and his mother in a bid to turn things around for the family.

The post Nigeria@60 : New colours of crime appeared first on The Sun Nigeria.

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## **The greatest lesson I learnt in my 60-year journey: Toyin Onanuga**

PM News

March 27, 2022 Sunday

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### **Body**

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Toyin Machado-Onanuga, a permanent Secretary in the Lagos State Civil Service, who bows out this week, speaks with TheNews/PMNEWS on her career.

The Obafemi Awolowo University alumna also speaks on the greatest lesson that her 60-year life has taught her and advises the younger ones

How do you feel turning 60?

It's hard to believe I am 60 honestly. When I hear people I consider adults call me 'Madam' or greet me 'Good afternoon, Ma'am' - I ask myself 'Am I the one they are talking to?' The truth of the matter is that age is just a number. In terms of feeling, I don't think I feel any older than how I used to feel when I was 30, 40 or even 50. Yes, I have added on the years but, I still feel the same. I accept the fact, though, that the experiences I've garnered over the years count for something; life has taught me more and my perceptions have changed as I grew older, more so, having attained higher positions in my career. Then again, when I look at my children, who have also grown and are themselves adults, I see my colleagues, my peers from secondary school, university, how different they look so, I realise that I am no longer that young person I used to be.

But I do feel good though. I feel blessed that God has been good to me. He has spared me to witness and celebrate this milestone age. I am most grateful to God Almighty. But in terms of feeling my age, not sure there's been any significant change. Certainly, I can't compare myself with when I was younger, when I was more nimble and agile. Nonetheless, age hasn't really debilitated me. I don't have all those old age illnesses like diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis etc. Nothing like that. I thank God.

What's the secret to your youthful looks and good health?

There isn't any secret per se. People sometimes ascribe a youthful look to the genes. Perhaps it is so. But for me, I have for a long time cultivated the habit of being health conscious. For instance, I eat only twice a day - breakfast and dinner. And the dinner ideally will not exceed 5 or 6pm. I have cultivated this habit for over 15 years now, so it is part and parcel of me. Then I also ensure I do some form of exercise. And I don't do any other thing other than brisk walking. I don't lift weights or do anything strenuous. I just walk. I'm used to that. Then again, I watch my diet. I

### The greatest lesson I learnt in my 60-year journey: Toyin Onanuga

refrain from eating red meat as much as possible. I eat more of fish, vegetables, fruits. I love my salads, smoothies and enjoy my fruits. I do indulge myself once in a while, though. I like chocolates. But I eat them once a while in little quantities ensuring that I don't over indulge myself. Moderation is the key word. I also try as much as possible to rest adequately. Sleep is good for the body, after all.

What has life really taught you these past 60 years?

Well, life has taught me to be patient. And that what will be mine will be mine. Like the Yorubas say. 'Omi t'a o mu, ko ni san koja eni' In terms of even getting married, I remember I married in 1989, and at that time, I was 27 years old. But I knew of my school mates who had gotten married immediately after we left the University of Ife in 1985. During that time, once you graduated from the University, next thing your parents wanted to hear was that you've found a life partner. So, at the age of 27 it was like I was 'on the shelf'. But I learnt to be patient, to wait for my time. And I am happy that I waited and God chose for me, as it were. Because, I would say my husband literally walked in to me. I didn't go searching, God brought him to me; confirming the saying that God's time is the best. Even when I now got married, to have a child was another challenge. But I waited. And when God did it, it was in His own time. Ditto, when I came into the service, I was like, 'where would this thing take me?' But, lo and behold, at the end of it all, my career in the service had that icing on the cake and I was appointed a Permanent Secretary. So, to me, patience is a virtue that anyone who trusts God must have. What God has ordained, He will do in His own time. And that time will be good.

You just said your husband walked into your house. How did you meet him?

Actually what happened was that a good friend of mine was about to get married. Being age mates, she was concerned that I was not hooked up with anyone at that time. I think she and her fiancé decided they would hook me up with someone and that person ended up being Mr. Bayo Onanuga. We were of course introduced and, as God would have it, we took to each other, and today, the rest is history, like they say.

How has life been married to him?

Well, how else would life be when you are married to a workaholic like Mr. Onanuga. I would say that it's been a fantastic journey though. You see, my husband is a responsible family man. Not a man about town. If my husband is not at home, I know where he is, because he will always tell me. He is a responsible father. The minute he knew I was pregnant with our daughter then, he took care of me the best way he could and within the limited resources he had. My husband is somebody that would not demand so much from his wife. He is not fussy. If you ask him what he wants to eat, once he shrugs his shoulder, he is telling you that anything you make is okay for him. My husband also does not mind doing some house chores. When we moved to Lekki, for example, and for the fact that I work in Alausa, on the Mainland, wading through traffic to and from office, I would usually leave home early and get home late, tired from the hold up. So, it is only on weekends that I really have time to take very good care of the home.

But, my man shows great and uncommon understanding by taking care of himself when I'm not available. He took very good care of our daughter when she was going to school. He was doing the school runs then, ensuring that he dropped and picked her from school. So he has sacrificed so much for us as a family, and I am grateful and thank God for that. We got married in May 1989, going on 33 years now, and there hasn't been a day that I regretted marrying him. We do argue and have different opinions on issues at times, but it ends there. I would make my point, he would make his. But then, it would not result in rancour. We don't get angry arguing, let me say that. We argue and we resolve it. So, it's been a very beautiful experience for me.

You just spoke about your anxieties before your daughter came. Were you at any time under pressure from your husband's family?

Not at all! I would also want to say here and now that the Onanuga family that I married into are a very loving family. They took me in as theirs. And till date, they still see me as one of them. We have a very good and amiable relationship. We banter, we gist and relate very well. I give them their due respect as my in-laws, but then, they also accord me same. With them, no hassles at all. Yes, of course they were concerned when a baby was not forthcoming, but it was not an antagonistic concern. It was like if there was any problem, let us know so that we can

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assist. And I love that about the family. I'm just blessed that I married the Onanugas. They are a beautiful close-knit family. If you have an event and you invite them, they come out to support one another. I'm happy being part of the family.

Where did you grow up and what was growing up like?

I was born March 28, 1962 in Lagos, Lawanson, Surulere to be precise. I also grew up and schooled in Surulere as a young girl. I began my primary school education in 1968 at the age of six at Methodist Primary School, Subuola Street. After the completion of my primary education, I gained admission into New Era Girls Secondary School, Suenu Close, Surulere.

My parents, both Late, were Alhaji Layiwola Abdulfatai Machado from the Brazilian Quarters of Lagos Island, and Alhaja Mistura Machado, nee Abudu from Isoyin, Ogun State. My father's family house is on Odunlami Street, opposite what used to be known as Forester's Hall at that time. I am the last of my mum's five children although I have other siblings (half brothers and sisters) from my father. I lived my youth in Surulere till I got married in 1989. According to the account of my senior siblings, I was spoilt because I was the last born. But in all, our parents supported us in terms of our education. So nothing hindered our education at all. Two of my elder sisters are Medical Doctors, another was an ace news broadcaster at NTA Channel 7, (she's late now), I graduated from UNIFE with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Studies. I garnered work experiences from Newswatch Communications Ltd (Publishers of Newswatch and Quality Magazines). I was at Newswatch when I met my husband. I later joined Independent Communications Network Limited, ICNL, as an Advert Consultant after which I joined the Lagos State public service in 2002.

I must say that the decision to join the service was one of the best decisions I have ever taken in my life. It has given me the opportunity to have a better understanding of governance and what public service is all about. As Public servants, we are implementers of government programmes, projects and agenda. Not only that, we assist in the formulation of policies, interface with the public and ensure stakeholders engagement. My sojourn into the service has given me the opportunity to interact with very cerebral officers, with both technical and administrative know-how from whom I've learnt and gained.

20 years in the service and you are now about to retire. How has it been in the civil service?

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It's been challenging. It's been fun, yet tasking. The work of the public service is unending. You solve one problem today, rest assured, another would emerge from the solution provided. You provide rail transportation for one area, traffic congestion may increase in that area due to influx of people who wish to use the rail service provided. Government will therefore need to solve the issue of traffic subsequently. So, there'll always be unending government interventions. The service has also afforded me the opportunity of working closely with the likes of Mr. Sunny Ajose, a former and prominent Head of Service and later on Special Adviser to His Excellency, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola,(SAN), former Governor of Lagos State. I equally worked with Her Excellency, Mrs Adejoke Orelope- Adefulire, former Deputy Governor of Lagos State, and currently the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), when she superintended over the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, MWAPA. Prior to my appointment as Perm. Sec, I worked in what we call 'the Engine Room of the Service', that is, the Public Service Office, Office of the Head of Service. Here, I worked under the tutelage of fantastic Heads of Service, chief amongst whom is the current Head of Service, Mr. Hakeem Muri Okunola, who we fondly call our 'Olori Ebi bam bam!'. These are very astute and distinguished personalities with dynamic leadership styles that have helped to re-orientate and mould me. I give glory to God that He made me to pass through such individuals in the course of my career. I took a lot of things away from people like that.

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To crown it all, I was appointed Permanent Secretary by the Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu on 28 January, 2021 thus joining the highly esteemed and prestigious Body of Permanent Secretaries in the State's Public Service. That, for me, was a huge honour for which I will be eternally grateful. The position brought me to the Teaching Service Commission, which is essentially charged with the recruitment and training of post primary school teachers in Lagos State public schools. I met on ground, a very forward-looking and dynamic board chaired by a formidable personality, a retired Permanent Secretary herself, Mrs Elizabeth Olabisi Ariyo, a seasoned administrator in all ramifications. Under her chairmanship, TESCOM has changed the face of education in Lagos State by ensuring that round pegs are put in round holes and professional teachers are engaged to teach in our public secondary schools. My experience here as a Permanent Secretary will remain indelible.

Any regrets so far working in the public service?

None at all. If anything, I wish I had more time to work in the service. It's been very fulfilling for me to see myself working to implement this administration's T.H.E.M.E.S developmental agenda, helping my state advance and seeing the public service continue being a trailblazer. Nothing beats that for me. Like I said earlier, the work in the public service is unending. New challenges emerge that require solutions. I honestly wish I could give more. This is a state that has, for one, ensured that I am gainfully employed, ensured that my salary never once stopped, I have benefitted tremendously from the state. So, there is no doubt that the state has done me well and I wish I could give more. But, retire, I must, more so that it is statutory that you either retire at the age of 60 or on the attainment of 35 years in service, whichever comes first. So, once I mark my 60th birthday, that is the end of my tenure as a public servant.

I have however enjoyed the service. We've had our fun. We have our Public Service Week, where we relax, play games. The HoS Games is there, in which public servants compete with one another, one agency with the other. We have games like football, table tennis, ayo, chess name it. We have fashion parade. We have talent hunt. So the service has a way of making itself bubble for public servants. It is not all work. We have times that we relax and enjoy ourselves. The service has also provided an opportunity for me to meet a lot of people. I have met so many people in the course of the 20 years I have been in service. Of course, we are deployed from one ministry to another. So, once you go to another ministry, you meet new people, you meet new challenges that need to be addressed. All these are things that make the years fly past, and before you know it, you're exiting. But, it has been wonderful. I don't have any regrets whatsoever. I thank God that I worked in the Lagos State public service. And more so a service that is renowned for excellence. Yessooo!. We pride ourselves as trailblazers in Lagos State. Other States look up to us and take initiatives from us. They want to know how we're doing it. So this keeps us on our toes, ensuring that we break new frontiers in all sectors because the reward for hard work is more work.

Your maiden name, Machado, sounds exotic. Could you speak on that name?

I was telling you about my father. I said my father came from the Brazilian Quarters. The Machado name, if you Google it, you'll know it's a Portuguese name, borne by Brazilians and quite known in that country too. Surely, you must know that some indigenes of Lagos are returnees, that is, slaves who were brought back from foreign land to settle in Lagos. Some of such families are the Machados, the Gonzalezes, Salvadoras, etc. These families bear these foreign names till date. History has it that my forebears were taken from Nigeria to Brazil as slaves. According to what we were told, their slave masters gave them the name Machado, probably as a form of identification or, because they could not pronounce their indigenous names. There is only one Machado family in the whole of Nigeria. If there is any Machado you see anywhere, I am related to that Machado. It is the one and same family. When I came into the service, I came in with my marital name, Onanuga. But, with the consent of my husband, I added my maiden name to my marital name, just to affirm my 'Lagos-ness.'

And it's a name that has stuck since then. Even now I am more popularly known as Machado than Onanuga. The name is very rare, unforgettable and uncommon.

You had dreams growing up. Going down memory lane, was there anything that you wanted to be that you have not become?

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Yes, I did. But, I must stress that my dreams were modest. For instance, I did not have a dream of becoming the President of Nigeria some day, but then, I also knew what I didn't want to be. I certainly dreamt of making something of my life. I didn't want to be a school drop-out. I didn't want to beg for food in my life. I dreamt of getting good education, being a graduate, getting married and having three children, being a source of pride to my parents. I am therefore grateful that God has enabled me to achieve these modest dreams. I don't have three children but I have one, what if I didn't have any? But I have those who I did not bear naturally but who call me mum because of the roles I have played in their lives. Because I have been like a mother to them. So I am fulfilled.

When I came into the service, I had a dream of rising to the peak of my career. That has also been a reality. So I am grateful. Because some people would dream and it would not come to pass. Going from here now, honestly, retirement in my view should be a time to retire and rest. And I fully intend to do that - to rest. Yes, I don't want to rest my brain. Because you need to work your brain so that you don't become senile. To that extent I would do what I need to do to ensure that my brain is engaged. I have found out that I have a passion to impart knowledge. I have discovered that in the course of being in the service. I have a passion to be a mentor, to guide people, to counsel people, to support people. I have a passion for that. I discovered that as part of what came to me in the course of being in the service. And I intend to do that fully because I know that I need to do my own little quota to impart the society whilst I am still in this space. If it is one, two, three individuals that I am able to change their lives, oh glory be to God, because that is more fulfilling than anything. When you see people that you have impacted their lives, you are happy, you feel fulfilled..

What was it like working with frontline journalists like Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, Yakubu Muhammed in Newswatch and May Ellen Ezekiel in the defunct Quality magazine?

These are very brilliant journalists that you've mentioned. I didn't work with Dele Giwa because I think he had passed on before I joined Newswatch. But I worked with Mr. Ray Ekpu. I worked with Mr. Dan Agbese, a very brilliant writer. Of all of them I loved Dan's style of writing. Mr. Yakubu Muhammed, Mr. Soji Akinrinade and the likes of Nosa Igiebor, though they later went on to establish TELL. Dare Babarinsa. It was fun working with them. Those are brilliant journalists. They were committed to journalism. They blazed the trail as well. May Ellen Ezekiel of blessed memory was also a very pleasant lady. May her soul continue to rest in peace. I was around when she got married to Richard Mofe Damijo. I attended the wedding. Her junior sister and I went to Federal School of Arts and Science together. That period brings fond memories for me. I worked there for quite a number of years. It was whilst working there that I got married to Bayo. After I finished my youth service I worked there for four, five years till I married. I was in the advert department then. But because I married a journalist, I took interest in journalism, as it were. And I have written one or two articles in newspapers before. There was a time I was handling a human angle column in PM News, 'Dear Aunty Totty'.

What was it like married to a frontline journalist like Mr. Bayo Onanuga, who spoke truth to power during the military era. How did you feel then during those challenging periods?

My husband is a very interesting man. You find that he doesn't talk too much. But his will power is as strong as steel. And if there is one Nigerian that I know I can beat my chest and say that he has not allowed position or fame or popularity to remould him, to change him, to make him cocky, that would be Mr. Onanuga. I still told him recently that I appreciated one thing about him. My husband bounces ideas off me. If he has one idea, he would say, What do you think about this? And he would take in whatever suggestion or advice that I give to him. I remember the time of the military junta and when he had to flee to the United States. I had to flee our house as well to stay with a family member with my daughter. My daughter was just three or four or thereabout. I remember that those times were really trying period for me. And it was not funny at all when my husband was incarcerated, was arrested several times. There was a time he almost got arrested whilst my daughter was with him in his office at Ogbia at that time. So it was not a palatable period. There was a lot of anxiety, trepidations. Ladi, the wife of Mr. Dapo Olorunyomi was detained with a child. It was really a very tough period, especially when they were contending with the military regime at that time. But now it is all water under the bridge. We have overcome it. But what I want to say is that my husband never faltered in his beliefs. He never faltered in his faith in this country, in his faith in the sense that this country can only get better with good leadership. So he would always be on the side of what is good for the overall majority. That is the side he would stay. And I have no doubt in my mind that this trait of his would follow him

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to his grave. I have no doubt. He is not ready to compromise. He was appointed Managing Director of News Agency of Nigeria. And still, till today they would call him and tell him Oga we miss you. Because his own style of leadership is exemplary. He would not say something and then not do it. He would tell you this is what I want and he would show you by example that this is how I want it. So he is a leader that leads by example. And that is one quality that is rare in leadership generally.

What advice do you have for the youths, especially for the girl child?

Those growing up should know that after prayer it is the sweat of your brow that will get you there. You must work hard. All this quest, unholy, unrighteous, devilish quest for money and fame and wealth is wrong. It is ill wind that would blow nobody no good. Rome was not built in a day. I will give you an example. When I married my husband, I fetched water on my head three, four houses away. Yes, when we didn't have water. I would sit at the backyard and wash my husband's clothes. I would iron them. Some people say they cannot get married because they have not bought a car. I didn't have a car when I got married. My husband was driving one jalopy car like this. The first car I ever had was won during a promo by IKB. My husband did kabu-kabu when I was pregnant with our daughter, after he left Concord.

So what is the hurry? The youth of today want to blow, as they say. What are they blowing? So Yoruba people would say Ibi pelebe lati mu ole je. It is from that flat portion of the bean cake that you start eating it. So you have to start low and then grow up. We lived in a rented apartment for 11 years before we built our own house. What is the hurry now? Who is running after them? Who are they trying to impress? We the parents? No way. Because we started from that lowly place. I married into a rented apartment, two bedroom apartment. I didn't think it was beneath me. I was a graduate. I never lived in a rented apartment all my life before marriage. I didn't say, Ah you, you don't have a house. I cannot live in a rented apartment o. No, I didn't. So what's the hurry? Who's running after these kids? What does life mean to them? Where are they going with it? If they have loads of money, what would they do with it. Ask them. What do they want to do with it? The men amongst them want to buy the biggest cars, the flashiest cars and drive about town and take the most expensive drink. Is that drink not going into that same stomach that Fanta or Coca Cola or water will go into? Will that very expensive drink do their body more good than water?. No. Who is running after them?

Please let our youth know that if they destroy their beginning, then their latter years can never be okay. Because what they are pursuing at this their tender age would only lead to destruction. They better know that they need to slow it down a bit and know that it is from their sweat and their toils that they will make it. Why is it that it is the thieves, the corrupt ones in the society that they wish to emulate? Why is it that those are their role models? Why? Can't they look at the good ones and say, I want to be like this? I want to be like this man because he started low and he got there. Today, we are living in Lekki, but we never started living there. We lived in Oko Oba. We lived in Ogbia, in a rented apartment and we didn't die. What's going on now. Honestly. It is disturbing to me as a mother to see the way our youth are going about their lives right now. See, how many people were educated when we were young too? How many people? Not everybody was educated. My mother was not educated. And yet she went to the market, she sold and from there she built the first house, the second and the third. She obtained loans to build houses and then she paid back. Where is the truth? Where is honesty? Where is integrity? They've flown out of the window?

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## NIGERIAN MILITARY RULERS BLAMED FOR MURDERS

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### **Body**

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A COMMISSION charged with investigating human rights abuses during Nigeria's three decades of military rule has concluded three former military rulers were personally responsible for a number of extra-judicial killings that took place under their respective tenures.

The report of the commission, nicknamed the Oputa panel, was suppressed by the current Nigerian government for more than two years and was finally brought to light by a Washington DC-based civil society organisation, the Nigerian Democratic Movement, who published it on their website.

Its findings recommend the former rulers, Ibrahim Babangida, Muhammadu Buhari and Abdulsalami Abubakar, be barred from holding public office in Nigeria ever again.

The Oputa panel - full name the Human Rights Violations Investigation Committee - was established by President Obasanjo soon after he came to power in democratic elections in 1999. It was intended as a signal that Africa's most populous nation was turning over a new leaf after three decades of military rule since independence from Britain in 1960.

Two of those singled out by the panel's findings are General Ibrahim Babangida and General Muhammadu Buhari, both are thought to be lining up presidential bids in time for the 2007 elections. It also heavily criticises General Abdulsalami Abubakar who remains a prominent figure.

Among the panel's findings was a call for an investigation into Babangida's role in the murder of Dele Giwa, an investigative journalist, who was assassinated by a letter bomb in 1986.

The panel also declared Buhari, who overthrew a civilian government in 1983 before himself being removed by Babangida in 1985, should be held responsible for his part in the execution of three alleged drug traffickers in 1984. At the time Buhari ordered the executions by presidential decree.

Akubakar was judged the be accountable for the death of Moshood Abiola, a politician.

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NIGERIAN MILITARY RULERS BLAMED FOR MURDERS

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## For Awoyinfa, My Boss, Teacher At 60 [opinion]

This Day (Lagos)

July 21, 2012

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Length: 2169 words

### **Body**

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Fellow Nigerians, in this season of the Ramadan, it is good to have kind words for good people. The man you are about to read about is one good Nigerian I met in 1988 and struck a friendship with instantly. By the time you finish reading this special tribute to my boss for life, as I like to call him these days, you would agree with me that Mr Michael Ajibola Tiamiyu Awoyinfa may not qualify to be a Saint yet but he's perhaps one of the Angels I have identified in Nigeria. His total dedication to journalism and writing is uncommon. His interest in the man in the street is incurable addiction. He loves to take every story from the angle of the ordinary man.

Even when he has cause to write about the rich and famous, he prefers to unveil them to reveal the man behind the mask. I seriously doubt if any soul has written more articles and essays on a broad spectrum of subjects than this prodigiously gifted man of the words.

He's a master story-teller who weaves his masterpieces like Sundiata, the griot of the ancient Mali Empire, and writes with the eloquent lucidity of a Chinua Achebe.

The beauty of his work is in the grandeur of its simplicity. You may be fooled by his almost casual narrative style he employs but his writings actually drip with poetic prose. His sentences are usually short, sharp and direct. Like a spellbinder, he draws you into his narrative until you get hooked like a fish and there's no escape for you. This outstanding man of letters taught me most of the things I know today as a writer and reporter. It is only fair that I give back a token of my appreciation for all he did, and still doing, in my life.

The story you are about to read belongs in the realm of phantasmagoria. It is too surreal to be real. It is a tale of how one man who did not know me from Adam catapulted my career beyond my wildest dreams. That man is no other than the birthday boy, Michael Awoyinfa, who has done well keeping his boyish looks even as he celebrates 60 on Monday, July 23. I'm proud to have met this quintessential gentleman, a leader of men and a literary octopus of no mean achievement. Looking back today, it is difficult not to be superstitious that God must have sent the Michaels to affect my life and support my career - Mike Awoyinfa, my boss at Weekend Concord; Mike Adenuga, my one and only Chairman and Mike Effiong, the Editor of Ovation International who has matured on the job and ready to take over from me. Even my closest Ghanaian staff in Accra goes by the name Michael Yirenkyi. They are my Angels in a land littered with fake friends.

The story today is about Michael Awoyinfa. How did God send me to this legendary writer? Let us start from the very beginning. I had gone to Lagos from Ile-Ife in search of a job in April 1988. I was about completing my Master's degree in Literature-in-English at the Obafemi Awolowo University and desperately needed a job. My original dream

## For Awoyinfa, My Boss, Teacher At 60 [opinion]

was to be a teacher, marry a teacher and live happily thereafter. But man proposes and God disposes. All efforts to get a teaching job had failed as a result of the embargo on appointments and promotions in institutions of learning by the military administration at the time. Unknown to us then, what started as an austerity measure on campuses was going to snowball into the complete annihilation of our educational system. Joblessness, despair and acute frustration began to set in.

On the advice of my best friend, Prince Adedamola Aderemi, I started trying my hands at writing articles from around 1986. His reasoning was that my combination of Yoruba and English literature would make my writing more fluid and exciting than that of most writers. The University Of Ife of those days was swarming and bustling with literary giants - Wole Soyinka, Wande Abimbola, Oyin Ogunba, Wole Ogundele, Richard Taylor, Ola Rotimi, Biodun Jeyifo, Kole Omotoso, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Ropo Sekoni, Adebayo Williams, Chidi Amuta, Jane Brice, Funso Aiyejina, Akinwumi Isola, Okot p'Bitek and David Rubadiri (the famous poets from Uganda and Malawi respectively) - and fledgling writers like me wanted to be like them. We were also influenced by the powerful newspapers and magazines of the day led by The Guardian, Concord newspapers, Newswatch, The Vanguard and later this week. The Daily Times had been stripped bare by the exodus of its biggest journalists to Chief Moshood Abiola's Concord Group.

Each of those publications paraded some awesome superstars. The Guardian was overflowing with dare-devil writers - Stanley Macebuh, Olatunji Dare, Odia Ofeimun, Lade Bonuola, Femi Kusa, Andy Akporugo, Edwin Madunagu, Chinweizu, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Sonala Olumhense, Amma Ogan, Onukuba Adinoyi-Ojo, Emeka Eluem-Izeze, Chuzzy Onuora Udenwa, Greg Obong-Oshotse, Taiwo Obe, Tunji Lardner Jnr, Nduka Irabor, Tunde Thompson, Debo Adesina, Mitchell Obi, Folake Doherty (now Mrs Wole Soyinka), Seyi Olu-Awofeso and others. Nothing could be greater than seeing your by-line in The Guardian.

My first attempt to appear in The Guardian yielded fruit in the African Guardian magazine in 1986. It was a story I had co-authored on The Olojo Festival of Ile-Ife. It was mercifully sent in by Onukuba, who had earlier gone by the name Shaibu. I was managing Motel Royal Limited, owned by His Imperial Majesty Olubuse II, when I struck friendship with Onukuba. He encouraged me to write on the op-ed page of The Guardian. My first piece was the literary fireworks between Odia Ofeimun and I on the controversy surrounding the decision of the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o to stop writing in English and revert to his native Kikuyu language. In Odia's view, this would limit readers' access to his great works. While I agreed with Odia's theory to some extent, I had other understanding of Ngugi's seeming retrogressive position. Ngugi was seeking a way to promote the African languages before they became extinct.

I fired back at Odia in a piece titled The Politics of Language and Odia shot me down a few days later with his cerebral essay titled Language Politics. I was on top of the moon the first time my name appeared in The Guardian and was in this state of giddiness for some time to come. This inspired me to write more and more. I doubled my presence in newspapers with a regular column in the SundaY Tribune which was then edited by Folu Olamiti.

And I began to fly as a cub writer. The Concord newspapers had paraded at different times some of the biggest names in Nigerian journalism that included **Dele Giwa**, Doyin Abiola, Yakubu Mohammed, Ray Ekpu, Henry Odukomiya, Abiodun Aloba, Duro Onabule, Sina Adedipe, Tom Borha, Stanley Egbochukwu, **Dele Alake**, Lewis Obi, Nosa Igiebor, Dare Babarinsa, **Dele** Olojede, M. C. K Ajuluchukwu, May Ellen-Ezekiel, Mike Awoyinfa, Dimgba Igwe, Chike Akabogu, Nnamdi Obasi, Segun Babatope, Bayo Onanuga, Patrick Wilmot, Nsikak Essien, Rose Umoren, Sanni Zorro, Olu Akerele, Soji Omotunde, Babafemi Ojudu, Doyin Iyiola, Wale Sokunbi, Gabriella Osamor, Funmi **Dele Giwa**, Yemisi Oyewole, Tinu Odugbemi, Cameron Daodou, Tunji Bello, Richard Mofe-Damijo, Omololu Kasim, Sam Omatseye, Dapo Olorunyomi, Seye Kehinde, Kunle Ajibade, Olusegun Adeniyi, Aliu Mohammed, Ben Okezie, Femi Adesina, Shola Osunkeye, and many others.

I would find myself in this distinguished company. But one man stood out in Concord, Mike Awoyinfa. His reportorial style had been noticed and amplified by his original Editor, **Dele Giwa**. **Dele Giwa** was so thrilled that he created a special column, Reporters' Notebook, for Mike Awoyinfa. Mike was thus a superstar in Concord.

### For Awoyinfa, My Boss, Teacher At 60 [opinion]

My original plan was to work in The African Guardian but could not secure a job with Nduka Irabor who was the Editor. Onukaba then introduced me to Lewis Obi who was the Editor of African Concord. It was during that life-changing visit to Concord that I met one of Nigeria's greatest editors of all times, Mike Awoyinfa. He was sitting quietly at his desk as Features Editor of the National Concord. I discovered he was more of a writer than a talker. He spoke few words but usually came alive once the topic dove-tailed to journalism, literature, sports and music. He was an authority in all. Ours was a case of love at first sight. Oga Mike, as we later addressed him, was a consummate **journalist** who derived immeasurable pleasure from literary excellence. He would go to the depth of the sea to get a good story.

Unknown to me, some of the icons of journalism were watching this Adire-wearing pan-Africanist writer from Ile-Ife. Oga Mike was already following my literary voyage that early in my career. He would not allow me to enter his office and leave without dropping a piece despite my jobless status at the time. I sat down and crafted a story on the most expensive restaurant I had visited in Lagos courtesy of Princess Oyekemi Oyediran, The wife of Prince Adedamola Aderemi, daughter of Professor Kayode and Mrs Omotola Oyediran and grand-daughter of the late sage,

Chief Obafemi Awolowo. It was an exciting account of a dinner hosted on her 24th birthday by her cousin, Dr Duro Soley, at the prestigious Lagoon Restaurant in Victoria Island. I played around with the exotic menu and described how the grilled kafka reminded me of a cockroach. I also lampooned its prices which I considered too expensive for the palate. I couldn't fathom how and why anyone would spend my three months' salary on a single dinner.

It was the beginning of our literary romance Though employed by the African Concord, Oga Mike regularly dragged me to National Concord to undertake special stories on special occasions. I did many features on Africa's literary giants including reports on Nawal El Saadawi (the Egyptian radical feminist writer, physician and psychiatrist), Mariama Ba (the Senegalese feminist writer), Nuruddin Farah (the famous Somali writer) and crowned it with the one I wrote when Naguib Mahfouz the Egyptian novelist won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988, two years after Soyinka did.

We'll later become inseparable as I was seconded from African Concord to join the pioneer staff of Weekend Concord by our Managing Director Dr Doyinsola Hamidat Abiola, a move I resisted initially. I was clearly unaware of what fate had in store for me in Weekend Concord and especially with a boss like Mike Awoyinfa who allowed me to rule my world unhindered. We were working on the weekend paper from February 1989 when Oga Mike told me to go out and find a maiden cover story at all costs.

I had no idea what such a story should be but went out as instructed by my boss. For days I was combing the wilderness in search of a scoop. I could not be reached by anyone in my office because there were no mobile phones like now at that time. Mother-luck smiled at me as I approached Mrs Laide Soyinka for an interview on her marriage to the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka. After much cajoling

from me, I got more than I bargained for, a rare interview on the private life of Africa's biggest literary force. Not just that, I got several pictures of their wedding day never splashed before on the pages of newspapers.

I returned from my trip figuratively drunk like Amos Tutuola's "the palm-wine drunkard". I was floating in Cloud 10 as I broke the news of my world exclusive story to my Editor. He took me straight to the canteen where we had a great meal to celebrate this journalistic conquest. Over lunch, we discussed the different angles to the story and excitement was palpable on our faces. I later sat down to craft one of my best stories ever. Oga Mike dedicated the maiden Editor's column to me and described me in superlatives.

We serialised the Laide Soyinka interview for two Saturdays and topped up on the third Saturday with an incredible interview with Ilemakin Soyinka who I got to speak on love gone sour between mum and dad. Our paper was an instant hit and our Managing Director, Dr Doyinsola Abiola was on top of the moon. The idea of a Weekend Concord was her brainchild. It used to be theorised that newspapers

can't record good sales on a Saturday but Dr Abiola thought otherwise. My story exploded the sales and I was amply rewarded with promotions by Mike Awoyinfa.

For Awoyinfa, My Boss, Teacher At 60 [opinion]

We launched the paper in March 1989 but within two months, I earned double promotions from a staff writer straight to Literary Editor, in May 1989. Six months later, I became News Editor, making me the third man, after Mike Awoyinfa and his deputy, Dimgba Igwe, in November 1989. Six months later, Mike Awoyinfa personally drove me to the penthouse office of Classique magazine where I accepted to edit May Ellen Ezekiel's celebrity magazine. That job made me the highest paid Editor in Nigeria by May 1990, at the exact age of 30.

I'm eternally grateful to the one God used to turn my career in journalism into a huge success. There's nothing else I can give a man God has blessed with the greatest gifts on earth, good health and contentment. As he turns 60 on Monday, I can only wish him, his wonderful wife, Olubukola and their children, joy without limit.

**Load-Date:** July 23, 2012

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## **2011 - Anti Babangida Coalition Sets to Mobilise Opposition**

Leadership (Abuja)

October 19, 2010 Tuesday

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**Length:** 356 words

**Byline:** Kazeem Akintunde

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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A new group, the Anti- Babangida Coalition, (ABC), is set to begin house to house campaign, aimed at preventing the former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida from coming back to power next year.

The group under the leadership of Mr Sina Odugbemi said in Lagos yesterday that they are ready to die in their bid to stop Babangida from realising his objective of returning to power again.

Mr. Odugbemi who spoke at a press conference described Babangida's desire to rule the nation again as an insult on our collective integrity as a nation.

"This sacrilege and odious affront on our integrity must be frontally confronted on all fronts by all the people who wish Nigeria well in her cautious steps towards enduring democratic rule,".

He described Babangida as a virus that must be prevented before another serial damage is inflicted on the nation.

Mr. Odugbemi said the group will soon move to the North to sensitise the people on the need not to allow Babangida back in power adding, "this campaign will be total, national and global with rallies and enlightenment programmes to educate the citizens on the evils and the real dangers of another IBB virus in the nation's body polity."

He said the former military president while in power surrendered the economy of the country to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, IMF, and the World Bank through his Structural Adjustment Programme Odugbemi said that SAP led to the closure of many industries as well as the attendant loss of jobs which eventually led to the wiping out of the middle class in the country. "Under his regime, corruption became institutionalised; he deodorised and liberalised corruption to make it most attractive through the settlement syndrome, while he also criminally annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election."

Mr. Odugbemi said Babangida squandered the nation's wealth and was also responsible for the murder of Dele Giwa, journalist and founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch Magazine.

He warned the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, not to have anything to do with the former ruler adding that he would be a bad product to sell to most Nigerians.

2011 - Anti Babangida Coalition Sets to Mobilise Opposition

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2010

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## LOOKING FORWARD

Western Mail

December 15, 2001, Saturday

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**Section:** FEATURES; Pg. 13

**Length:** 366 words

### **Body**

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TODAY LONDON: British Comedy Awards. London BRISTOL: Concert to benefit the British Red Cross, Red Crescent and their health and first aid programmes in Afghanistan. Featuring Massive Attack and Portishead. At the Bristol Academy.

TOMORROW MADAGASCAR: Presidential elections. President Didier Ratsiraka seeking his fifth term.

MONDAY End of Ramadan.

Hunting with dogs to resume with special permits.

YORKSHIRE: Prince of Wales arrives at Skipton Railway station to meet farmers and representatives from the rural community who have suffered during the foot -and-mouth outbreak.

LONDON: Commission on the Organisation of the School Year to launch its final recommendations for the transition to a six-term school year.

Local Government House.

NIGERIA: Supreme Court starts appeal hearing to compel former military ruler Ibrahim Babangida to answer charges linked to 1986 parcel bomb killing of journalist Dele Giwa.

TUESDAY WARWICKSHIRE: DVLA Christmas auction of number plates at Ragley Hall stately home (to December 19).

LONDON: Jewel-encrusted gowns belonging to Dame Barbara Cartland and personal effects of Rudolph Nureyev to go under the hammer in "Passion for Fashion" sale at Sotheby's, Bond Street.

CAPE TOWN: Trial resumes of a 21-year-old security guard, Luyanda Mboniswa, accused of murdering former South African first lady Marike de Klerk .

BRUSSELS: Nato North Atlantic Council Defence Ministerial meeting begins.

WEDNESDAY BRUSSELS: EU meeting of Fisheries ministers, (to tomorrow), to fix annual fish catch for next year.

## LOOKING FORWARD

BRUSSELS: "Multi-country demobilisation and reintegration programme" focusing on a number of Central African countries, including Congo.

TOKYO: Carol Bellamy, Unicef executive director, speaks on "Efforts to combat trafficking of children, child prostitution and child pornography." Foreign Correspondents' Club.

THURSDAY US: 100 days since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

BRUSSELS: World Bank discusses economic situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

PARIS: French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine meets Polish counterpart Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz.

FRIDAY LONDON: The annual "What the Papers say" awards at The Cafe Royal, Piccadilly.

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2001

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## Will David Ugolor Get Justice?

Vanguard (Lagos)

December 11, 2012

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Length: 444 words

### **Body**

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AFTER the 3rd May 2012 murder of the former Private Secretary to the Governor of Edo State, Comrade Olaitan Oyerinde, police arrested one of his closest friends, Reverend David Ugolor, as the allegedly sponsor of the assassination.

Why would Ugolor kill his friend? More importantly, operatives of the Department of State Services, DSS, paraded a group of youth, different from the police's, arrested with implicating evidence, and some of them made statements that pointed to the possibility of their involvement in the murder.

After seven months of severe travails Ugolor was discharged and acquitted of robbery and murder by a Benin Chief Magistrate's Court on 29th November 2012. A magistrate court still handles murder and robbery cases in 2012 Nigeria?

Two different groups of suspects by two different law enforcement agencies increase the confusion. How can the killers of Oyerinde be found in the confusion?

Oyerinde's murder appears politically-motivated. And will it join the long list of unresolved murders?

Many are awaiting the result of President Goodluck Jonathan's order to IG Mohammed Abubakar to find the killers. Abubakar was also asked to re-open investigation of other such cases.

- Garba Bello, official of the State Security Service, murdered in Kano in 2010 with his wife, three children.
- Abdulahi Muazu, Head of EFCC's Forensic Unit killed in his Kaduna home in 2010.
- Chief Funso William, a Lagos State governorship aspirant was murdered in 2007.
- Chief James Bola Ige was assassinated as the Attorney General of the Federation in December 2001 in Ibadan.
- Chief Marshall Harry of the All Nigerian Peoples Party was murdered in 2003.
- Chief Aminosoari Dikibo, a PDP chieftain, killed in 2003.
- Chief Andrew Agom, former Managing Director of Nigeria Airways, a PDP chieftain, was shot dead.
- Ogun State AC governorship candidate Dipo Dina killed.

## Will David Ugolor Get Justice?

- Dr. Ayo Daramola, PDP gubernatorial aspirant in Ekiti State killed.
- Out-spoken pilot Jerry Agbeyegbe was shot dead on a Lagos bridge.
- Mr. Barnabas Igwe, chairman of Onitsha NBA and his wife Abigail were killed.. Mr. Victor Nwankwo, a publisher, was killed.
- Hajiya Abubakar Rimi was killed in Kano.
- Dele Giwa, a journalist, was letter-bombed in 1986.
- Omololu Falobi, journalist, was killed in 2006.
- 22 December 2006, Chairman of the Editorial Board of Thisday, Godwin Agbroko, was shot dead on the Oshodi-Apapa Expressway.
- In 1996, Bagauda Kaltho, a reporter with The News, disappeared in the custody of security agencies who later announced he killed himself.
- Bayo Otu of The Guardian killed in 2009.

We call for justice for Oyerinde, Ugolor and other victims of these unfortunate incidents.

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2012

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## 23 Years After, IBB Opens up On Crashed Hercules C-130

This Day (Lagos)

December 06, 2015

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Length: 970 words

### **Body**

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- Says plane shouldn't have flown Abimbola Akosile

Twenty-three years after a military plane crash in which more than 159 officers lost their lives in Ejirin swamp in Lagos in 1992, then military ruler, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) has finally spoken on the ill-fated incident.

Babangida, in an exclusive chat in the maiden edition of The Interview, disclosed that the crashed aircraft ought not to have flown on that specific day, based on the issue of maintenance and number of flying hours already attained.

Responding to a question posed by The Interview on what actually transpired on that day and if the crash was properly investigated, the 73-year-old former president said, "It was investigated. It was reported. But you guys had a mindset. Certain people had a mindset; nobody was interested in the report. But it was investigated. What happened in sum total was that the aircraft should not have been flying. There are mandatory stages, number of hours and maintenance. All those things that are mandatory were not there."

When he was asked on what happened to the people who authorised the plane to fly on that ill-fated day, Babangida said there was no penalty meted out, adding, "They ought to have been punished. I know that blame was apportioned. I wouldn't know about the punishment. We investigated; we even apportioned blame but no penalty."

On why that was so, he simply remarked, "That is the Nigerian factor." Responding to inquiries on who killed renowned journalist, Dele Giwa who died from a parcel bomb blast, Babangida said, "A Bomb". When asked in the interview on who sent the bomb, he replied, "Would you ever think somebody could sit and ask a soldier or anybody, go and kill that man?"

Upon the interviewer's response that "It depends....", IBB was quoted to have replied, "It depends on who? If what you hear about other African leaders is anything to go by, you are right to believe that it could happen because of what happened in the case of the Mobutus of this world. But there is also one human being who believes in God, who believes you cannot take away life, who believes that God forbids you to do that, who believes that God created you equally. Somebody of that nature cannot, in all fairness order the execution or killing of another person."

When he was pressed on his relationship with late Dele Giwa, Babangida replied, "We were friends. Very soon, somebody is going to accuse me of saying he is my friend. I knew him very closely. I have correspondence

## 23 Years After, IBB Opens up On Crashed Hercules C-130

between him and me. But that is not enough for you to believe that we were friends. What is enough is that I took a bomb and killed him."

When The Interview countered that "There was a general feeling that he knew a lot of military guys and knew more than he was supposed to know....", IBB cut in..... "That he knew we were dealing in drugs and Gloria Okon. Somebody should have come out with it by now. He must have left some manuscripts."

When he was asked if he suppressed the investigation, the former president replied, "There was a report on that investigation if you may be interested to know."

On the interviewer's remark that witnesses in the investigation were apparently hidden, Babangida replied, "No. Most of what you guys talked about was fictitious. Even one of the persons you guys said was involved does not seem to exist. Gloria Okon; she does not seem to be in existence.

And then you came out with, what is the name of the other girl who was supposed to be my wife's friend? She was in prison or something; you came out with that one. There is virtually no truth in it all. People are not very good in putting stories together to make it look credible. They only make it look fantastic. If you are dealing with an idiot, of course you can do anything. But you deal with a man who thinks a man who tries to rationalise".

On Saturday, September 26, 1992, a Nigerian Air Force Hercules C-130 (NAF 911) transport plane, carrying more than 200 persons, took off at 5:27 pm from the Runway 19 of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, with its destination the city of Kaduna in northern Nigeria.

However, a few minutes after take-off, the heavy-laden plane, which was said to be carrying not just the military boys and girls but young students of the Nigerian Military School (NMS), Zaria, alongside civilians, relations and friends of military officers, developed a fault and nose-dived into the deep swamp not too far from the Lagos State Low Cost Housing Estate, Ejigbo to the Festac Town, Lagos, killing all those onboard.

In the crash officers of the 19, 20, 21 and 22 Regular Courses of the Nigerian Defence Academy were badly hit. A list of 159 names of those officially listed as passengers of the C-130H was released on October 1 by the Director of Army Public Relations, Colonel Fred Chijuka.

The list was made up of seven Lieutenant Colonels, 96 Majors, a Sergeant, Michael Bahago, two students - Mr. O B Oshodi, Mrs. M A Abu, and a reporter, Mr. Augustine Okpe. There were also the eight-officer crew including Alaboson, Mamadi, Squadron Leader J A Adeiza and Flight Lieutenant S O Adamu. The other men, Alum Wakala, Tarfa Saidu, W T Datong and A Soyemi in addition to 19 Air Force officers, were made up of 18 Squadron Leaders and a Sergeant, O. Jaja.

The Nigerian Navy lost 16 Lieutenant Commanders, Ghanaian Armed Forces, five; Tanzania lost Major M S Mgonja while Ugandan Major J R Mulazi also lost his life in the crash.

The Nigerian Army Education Corps lost a total of 19 officers, Infantry 17, Artillery 15, Intelligence nine, Signals nine, Supply and Transport eight, Military Police seven while the Electrical and Mechanical Armoured and Medical Corps lost four officers each. Others included Ordnance three while Finance and Personnel and Training lost two men each.

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2015



## **Nigeria ranks 13th among 14 nations on Impunity Index**

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 2, 2018 Friday

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Length: 622 words

### **Body**

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IN its latest report on Tuesday ahead of today's commemoration of the annual 'International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists', the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has ranked Nigeria as the 13th among 14 nations rated in the 2018 Global Impunity Index.

The CPJ is an American independent non-profit, non-governmental organisation, based in New York City, New York

It publishes the Impunity Index annually to mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on November 2.

It calculates the number of unsolved murders over a 10-year period as a percentage of each country's population. For this edition, CPJ analysed journalists' killings in every nation that took place between September 1, 2008 and August 31, 2018.

The reports rank states with the worst records of prosecuting the killers of journalists.

In the past decade, at least 324 journalists have been silenced through murder worldwide and in 85 per cent of the cases, no perpetrators have been convicted. It is an emboldening message to those who seek to censor and control the media through violence.

More than three quarters (82 per cent) of the cases took place in the 14 countries that the CPJ included on the index this year. All 14 countries have featured on the index multiple times since CPJ began to compile it in 2008, and half have appeared every year.

The countries in order of their rankings are: Somalia, Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Phillipines, Afghanistan, Mexico, Columbia, Pakistan, Brazil, Russia, Bangladesh, Nigeria and India.

According to CPJ, Nigeria has featured on the ranking for the sixth time because of government's failure to bring murderers of journalists to justice.

In the period under review, Nigeria has had five unresolved murders of journalists. The five cases are: Bayo Ohu of The Guardian. He was killed in Lagos on September 20, 2009; Enenche Akogwu of Channels TV, who was killed on January 20, 2012 in Kano while covering Boko Haram crisis; Nathan S. Dabak and Sunday Gyang Bwede, both

## Nigeria ranks 13th among 14 nations on Impunity Index

of The Light Bearer. They were killed in Jos on April 24, 2010; and Zakariya Isa of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA). Isa was murdered on October 22, 2011.

So far, nobody has been brought to justice by the in the murder of journalists who were killed in connection with their job.

Since the late founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch Magazine, **Dele Giwa** was killed through a parcel bomb in 1986, hardly has a year passed without members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm losing at least one of their members to murderers.

### Methodology

CPJ's Impunity Index calculates the number of unsolved **journalist** murders as a percentage of each country's population. For this index, CPJ examined **journalist** murders that occurred between September 1, 2008, and August 31, 2018, and remain unsolved.

Only those nations with five or more unsolved cases are included on the index. CPJ defines murder as a deliberate attack against a specific **journalist** in relation to the victim's work.

This index does not include cases of journalists killed in combat or while on dangerous assignments, such as coverage of protests. Cases are considered unsolved when no convictions have been obtained, even if suspects have been identified and are in custody.

Cases in which some but not all suspects have been convicted are classified as partial impunity. Cases in which the suspected perpetrators were killed during apprehension are also categorised as partial impunity.

The index only tallies murders that have been carried out with complete impunity. It does not include those where partial justice has been achieved. Population data from the World Bank's 2017 World Development Indicators were used in calculating each country's rating.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2018

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## **Wake Up, Nigeria Is Dying - a Reply to My Fulani Friends (I) [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 22, 2018

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**Length:** 1248 words

**Byline:** Obadiah Mailafia

### **Body**

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ON Friday 11 May, I wrote an article titled, "Genocide, Hegemony and Power in Nigeria", featuring on the back page of the financial newspaper BusinessDay.

In the said article, I sought to explain the ongoing killings being perpetrated by Fulani militias in the Middle Belt. I linked it to the political economy of pastoralism in West Africa. I also argued that part of the problem lay in the fact that in spite of the fact that Fulani make up 41 percent of the population in their original homeland of Guinea, they have never enjoyed political power there. As a consequence, they have turned their attention to Nigeria, which they believe to be their patrimony as of right.

I decried what I believe amounts to ethnic cleansing and genocide in Plateau State, Taraba, Benue, Nasarawa and Southern Kaduna. I not only condemned the killing in unequivocal terms; I defended elder statesman General T. Y. Danjuma when he called upon his embattled people to defend themselves. I took the view that, based on my knowledge as a student of international law, that a people facing an existential threat to their very survival have not only a right but also a bounden duty, to defend themselves and to resort to self-help where the state is unable and/or unwilling to come to their rescue.

Predictably, the hordes of long-suffering Middle Belt youths howled with delight while I received angry messages from the Arewa intelligentsia, some of whom I have counted as friends for decades. I received some flak from well-wishers who felt I should not be so direct lest my enemies use it to deny me opportunities for personal advancement. Some of my dearest Hausa-Fulani friends felt dismayed and disappointed by my output. A few expressed anger, if not outright hostility.

I am more keenly aware than most that the vocation of public intellectual carries with it a heavy risk. Was it not the philosopher Aristotle who famously declared that a man will have absolutely no enemies only and only if, he does nothing, says nothing and lives as nothing and nobody? Socrates, the greatest of all the philosophers had his life snuffed off him because he dared to say some unpalatable home truths. He was accused of corrupting the youth by questioning the shaky moral foundations upon which the entire architecture of Greek civilisation was uneasily perched. In England Earl Russell was thrown into jail. Nelson Mandela was gaoled for 27 and a half years. In our Nigeria of today those who repeat the lies of the oppressors will be hailed while those who speak truth to power are regarded as traitors or worse.

## Wake Up, Nigeria Is Dying - a Reply to My Fulani Friends (I) [opinion]

One of the bitterest attacks I have received so far is from a gentleman by the name of Abdullah Musa Abdullah. His piece, Obadiah Mailafiya: Ethnic Intoxication or Religious Bigotry?, was sent to the editors of The Vanguard Newspapers on Friday 18 May. There was a lot that was totally incoherent if not ungenerous, in Mallam Abdullah's attacks on my person. I shall avoid commenting on the ad hominem attacks because they have no place in the world of intellectual discourse. Indeed, logicians since ancient Athens have consigned ad hominem arguments in the discredited pantheon of logical fallacies. Rather, I shall focus on the gravamen of his critique.

In his opening salvo, our friend attacked by sense of objectivity by insisting that objectivity is, by definition, impossible in the world of human beings: "Is it for possible for a human being to be objective, dispassionate? I may be too timid to answer. Many thinkers, writers have expressed as near fact the influence of environment, genetics, beliefs, on human thoughts and actions. Since there is no human being without such influences, we can say that objectivity is a utopian aspiration."

If Mallam Abdullah insists that objectivity as such is an impossible "utopian aspiration", then perhaps he forgot to include himself in that impossibility theorem. I do not know whether he has ever heard of the Dutch jurist and philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd. He was the world's greatest authority in the philosophy of mind as it relates to presuppositional thinking. Dooyeweerd insists that all human thought has religious underpinnings. According to him, before we can truly appreciate where a person is coming from we must first dig into the prepositional foundations of his mindset. To that extent, our friend is right. We all have our biases. But then we must not reduce everything to nonsense. All social scientists are expected to spell out their biases from the onset. From there we can move forward on the basis of evidence, facts, statistics, reason and logic. Mathematics and the pure sciences have lesser problems with biases. But even on that score, Thomas Kuhn warned in his famous *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, that biases abound even among scientists. Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein, both of them the greatest physicists of the century, debated endlessly and could not agree on many things.

So, the point is taken. But that should not paralyse us to the point of silence. We therefore have to speak, not in the manner of babbling idiots, but sentient, rational beings endowed with Reason and Responsibility.

Mallam Abdullah went on to say, and I quote: "Dr. Obadiah Mailafiya courted the media after his sojourn as a Deputy Governor of CBN. Whoever courts the media has an objective to achieve. Some fame, some influence." This statement implies that, after leaving CBN, I somewhere decided to "court the media" for ulterior motives. I do not blame Mallam Abdullah. I do not know how young or old he is. I started writing for the newspapers in the late seventies when I was an undergraduate of Ahmadu Bello University. I did some poetic bagatelles as well as amateurish articles for the New Nigerian newspapers as a seventeen year old. Whilst a Research Fellow of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPSS, Kuru, in my early days, I wrote a number of quite influential articles. One of them was on Sharia, titled, "The Secular Order and its Enemies", echoing the great philosopher of science Karl Popper. The article was even quoted by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, now Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, in his doctoral dissertation at London University, now published as a book, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, African Book Collective, 1994.

During his field study as a doctoral candidate, Father Kukah, as he then was, drove to NIPSS one day and announced at the gate that he wanted to see "Doctor Mailafia". The security guards told him there was no such person among the fellows of the institution. One of the wiser ones suggested it might be me. They took him to my house, only for him to find a twenty-three year old junior research officer. We formed a lasting friendship from that day.

The point I am making is that, throughout my career, I have always dabbled with newspapers, radio and television. In the eighties, NTA used to pay handsomely for TV appearances. They used to pay for my flights from Heipang Airport in Jos up to Ikeja just to do a one-hour programme. Those were the good old days. I was also a regular writer in The Nigerian Standard and on Plateau Television and Radio. And even when I moved abroad, I was a regular contributor to the newspapers. As a student in Paris, the late super-journalist **Dele Giwa** wrote me in the summer 1986 to be his anchorman in Paris. A few weeks to my taking up the offer as Paris Correspondent for Newswatch **Dele Giwa** was killed by a letter bomb.

Wake Up, Nigeria Is Dying - a Reply to My Fulani Friends (!) [opinion]

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## **Find the Killers [editorial]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 11, 2012 Friday

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**Length:** 454 words

### **Body**

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WHEN in 1987, a presidential order was issued to the Inspector General of Police to fish out a notorious criminal, few days after, Lawrence Anini, the criminal who was terrorising Benin City, was arrested.

President Ibrahim Babangida had asked the then IG Mohammed Gambo-Jimeta in public, "My friend, where is Anini".

Many are awaiting the result of President Goodluck Jonathan's order to IG Mohammed Abubakar to find killers of Oyerinde Olaitan, Principal Private Secretary to the Edo State Governor.

The order is even taller. Abubakar is to re-open investigation of other assassinations. The long - though inexhaustive list include:

- . Garba Bello, an official of the State Security Service, murdered in Kano in 2010 with his wife and three children.
- . Abdulahi Muazu, Head of the Forensic Unit of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, in his Kaduna home in 2010, the sixth EFCC operative to die in two years.
- . Chief Funso William, a Lagos State governorship aspirant was murdered in 2007.
- . Gunmen, in 1983, fired many shots on the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chief Edwin Ume-Ezeoke, leaving him for dead.
- . Chief James Bola Ige was assassinated as the Attorney General of the Federation in December 2001 in Ibadan.
- . Chief Marshall Harry of the All Nigerian Peoples Party was murdered in 2003.
- . Chief Aminosoari Dikibo, a PDP chieftain, killed in 2003.
- . Chief Andrew Agom, former Managing Director of Nigeria Airways, a PDP chieftain, was shot dead.
- . Ogun State AC governorship candidate Dipo Dina killed.
- . Dr. Ayo Daramola, PDP gubernatorial aspirant in Ekiti State killed.
- . Out-spoken pilot Jerry Agbeyegbe was shot dead on a Lagos bridge.

Find the Killers [editorial]

- . Mr. Barnabas Igwe, chairman of the NBA in Onitsha and his wife Abigail were killed in Onitsha.
- . Mr. Victor Nwankwo, a publisher, was killed.
- . Hajiya Abubakar Rimi was killed in Kano.
- . **Dele Giwa**, a **journalist**, was killed with a letter bomb in 1986.
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- . Bayo Otu of The Guardian killed in 2009.
- . In 1996, Bagauda Kaltho, a reporter with The News, disappeared in the custody of security agencies who later announced he killed himself trying to bomb a Kaduna hotel.
- . Less prominent Nigerians have been killed, some by the police at checkpoints and others by the unknown killers who prowl the land.

Which of these murders would Abubakar resolve? What happens if he fails to find Olaitan's killers? Nigerians expect that all crimes are considered unacceptable. It is only when a prominent fellow is murdered that the police spring into action as if their purpose is to wait for such moments.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2012

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## **Find the Killers or ... [editorial]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 11, 2012 Friday

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Length: 452 words

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**Load-Date:** May 23, 2012

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## **Ulli Beier's 'madman' at Aro psychiatric hospital**

Nigerian Tribune

October 21, 2018 Sunday

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**Length:** 2220 words

### **Body**

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Ulli Beier, that German kindred spirit and arts connoisseur, had wandered into Nigeria on October 1, 1950. Within a few weeks, Nigerian culture and arts, which had begun to be disclaimed by the emerging elite on the pretext of modernisation, began to feel his hands of renaissance. Beier frequently wandered into the Aro Psychiatric Hospital in Abeokuta in that same early 1950s, seeking to use art as a therapy to heal its mentally-disturbed patients. On one of Beier's visits, he had walked into the wards where the mentally-challenged were sequestered. Rants of disturbed patients rent the air. He walked through the aisle of the well-arranged beds and looked at the patients, one after the other. And he stumbled on this gentleman. As if by a divine pull, the German found something strange and atypical about the man. He was calm, looking subdued and pensive. Immediately, Beier's architectural mind began to construct a huge prototype of his kind and he decided to engage him in a talk.

'What brought me here?' the man had retorted to Beier's mild enquiry. And out of his mouth proceeded pleasantly-shocking well-penciled English. This further arrested the attention of the German. So, the calm man began his story. He had been sleeping one night with his few months-old child beside him. And he lapsed into what clearly was a nightmare. In that tormenting dream, he saw a huge black bird seeking to peck him and he wrestled the animal. All of a sudden, he leapt from his nightmare world into the physical world and beheld the bird by his side. He strangled it to death. He was sweating profusely from the encounter and as he began to savour his victory over the accursed animal, he realised, to his horror, that the child beside him was the bird he had just strangled. Neighbours raised the alarm and the world concluded that he had a mental breakdown. Before he knew it, he had landed as a patient of the mental hospital.

This Beier encounter inside the ward of Aro Mental Hospital can illustrate the huge sanatorium that Nigeria is. No wonder, the head of that hospital was quoted recently to have said that the number of patients the hospital gets monthly has hit the roof top of between 250 and 300 persons. When you compare the cacophony of crazy issues we grapple with as a people with the supersonic speed at which the rest of the world is moving into the digital world, you cannot but conclude that we are in a very big madhouse where mad stunts and maddening demonstrations proceed out on hourly basis. There is only a sprinkle of seemingly sane ones among us like Mr. Calm whom we demonise.

Hardly does a day fly past that you are not confronted with issues that clearly mark us out as a people living in a sanatorium. Impunity from government and even from us against one another is on the rise; social crises are as thick as the smell of a decomposing stench. It is either a 70-year old man is raping a three-year old, a 'couple sells day-old baby to pay debt' or the police is torturing a man to death. Granted that such social vices are all over the

### Ulli Beier's 'madman' at Aro psychiatric hospital

world, their unmitigated disaster for social stability should point the mind of a thinking government to the calamity that lies ahead.

At the leadership level, we seem to be taking one step forward and a thousand steps backwards. Muhammadu Buhari who, in 2015, held great hopes for the redemption of this country is being seen to have so badly performed that an Atiku Abubakar seems the narrative of consideration as replacement. Have things become this bad? Accusations that would make the Adamawa-born multi-billionaire liable for jail in the 1950s, 1960s and even early 1970s Nigeria are the selfsame canons of his acclaim by the electorate today. The Nigerian sky is painted with crimson; we just don't care any longer.

My friend, Debo Abdulai, editor of this newspaper's daily title, had riled me up during the week. He had written: 'The things that should enrage us no longer enrage us: A young female aid worker was executed by Boko Haram; a governor was caught on video dollarising his babanriga; young boys become rich doing runs (yahoo plus); girls barely out of their teens beating boys in smoking drugs; party primaries controlled by thugs and motor boys; elections monetised and bastardised by superintending officials. Those who argue that there is a new normal in town may not be wrong. We look, talk about it, move on. Another day, another normal. We shall be all right soon.' These are clear traits of a madhouse. But how soon is that soon? How soon will we be mentally all right as a people?

There is this story of Prince told me by another friend who worked for an ex-governor in the South West. The entourage of the governor had followed him to a squash tourney in Lagos. While they waited for the squash-addicted governor, Prince had strolled past and my friend, renowned for squeezing drama out of every life event, had engaged Prince. Prince is known in the neighborhood as a mentally unstable man. Like Mr. Calm, he spoke well-penciled Queens English and didn't have the disheveled hair of a deranged. Neatly dressed - indeed known in the vicinity for his aesthetics - he lived in solitude in his father's house and was said to have lost the bearing of his mind through excessive inhale of marijuana.

'Prince, how are you?' my friend had begun, by way of provoking a discussion. 'You called me Prince? How did you know I am a Prince?' he asked. The theatrical show-seeking fellow said, 'merely looking into your face, I knew you were a Prince.' Prince was livid. 'Merely looking into my face, you knew I am a Prince? You are a 419!' Prince had fired. And he launched into a sermon which sounded like the moment of sanity of an insane. 'You are all slaves of the governor,' he began, 'because one man is playing squash, all of you, like jobless people, stand here, waiting for him to finish You're mad!'

Nigeria is a great case study which has never ceased to amaze students of society and politics. How can a country hold so great promises yet flounder this terribly? How could a people be this endowed and yet be numbered among the impoverished? Another friend of mine was at the Harvard Business School a couple of years ago. During a lecture on Governance and Innovation, the instructor offered the example of Bogota, Colombia. Formerly Bogotá Capital District. It was called Santafé de Bogotá and is the capital of and the largest city in Colombia. It is the most populous city in Colombia. In land mass, Bogotá is the largest city in Colombia and could be said to be one of the biggest cities in Latin America. Boasting so many universities and libraries, Bogotá was once named 'The Athens of South America' for its pleasant aesthetics and landscape. Unfortunately however, at a time, the city lost this pleasant renown and became one suffering dire straits. It witnessed an incredible somersault and had to grapple with the problem of drugs and global estimation of it as the drugs capital of the world.

You will recall that the Bogota typecast became a universal burden for the whole Colombia as, the moment you mentioned it, what came to people's subconscious was a people immersed in drugs and the redoubtable problems associated with drug cartels. Recall also the story of Pablo Emilio Escobar Gavíria who was a notorious but extremely wealthy Colombian drug lord. He had an exclusive cocaine trafficking route that embarrassed the world. Escobar capped it all by, in 1983, taking a short-lived shot at Colombian politics. He is estimated to be one of the wealthiest criminals in human history and is notoriously profiled as 'The King Of Cocaine' and was believed in the 90s to have an estimated net-worth of US \$25 billion.

### Ulli Beier's 'madman' at Aro psychiatric hospital

Bogotá thus became a study in extreme case of violence and insecurity. The number of homicides in the city stood at 3,657 per year in 1995, street robberies 13,027 per year, house robberies 1,301 and bank assaults, 382. Thousands of lives were lost in the process and thousands were handicapped while urban residents lived in an environment of fear and insecurity. A researcher once tagged Bogota 'City of street robberies, beggars, armed pedestrians, never-ending traffic jams, uncollected rubbish; Bogotá of panic, intolerance, and hate.'

But came Antanas Mockus, a philosopher, mathematician, and professor. Mockus lost his job at the university and in 1995, became the mayor of Bogotá. He began a series of urban experiments which involved social engineering. He first started by asking himself, what drives people into taking decisions? He discovered that this falls into three layers, viz fear of the law (refraining from social ills because the law will take its course); reprimand of conscience (that I will not live it down for life if I ever steal money from government purse) or societal shame (that if I am involved in stealing, none of my children would be able to bear my name again as it will be akin to Oyenusi, the robbery kingpin of the 1970s). Mockus used this last classification to work on the Bogota residents and in a short while, the city of filth, drug, violence and fear became a city of glory.

So, the instructor asked, if I leave my laptop behind in this class, how many of you wouldn't steal it due to any of those three classifications? Each of the students in this Harvard class chose the classification that drives their countries but my friend stood up and told the instructor that in Nigeria, none of those three classifications can stop anyone from committing crime. Law? It is not made for people of the high social cadre in Nigeria and the consciences of virtually everyone in Nigeria is cold dead. Shame has long been interred in Nigeria as well.

Nigeria, we do not need anyone to tell us, is fast evaporating from the glacier of normal societies. Her leaders are inept, incompetent and are tickled by mundane fancies that do not drive world leaders. The citizens have become perverted, sub-human and very pessimistic about the future of their land. Things have gone so bad in virtually every sphere of life in Nigeria that it is no wonder that spiritualists have taken over the function of providing hope and succor for the people. No wonder socio-political and economic proffers that solve the problems of other lands hold no hope for our land. We are all Princes inside this huge sanatorium.

### **Dele Giwa** as Jamal Khashoggi

Yesterday marked the 32nd years of the assassination of that avant-garde **journalist**, **Dele Giwa**. **Giwa** was one of the pioneers of the brand of investigative journalism which Nigeria needed to confront the sleaze that marked the massive corruption of the military era. Parcel-bombed in his Lagos home, his death provoked a new wave of concerns about the safety of journalists in the dispensation of their duties. Gory pictures of **Giwa**'s mangled body adorned the pages of newspapers and magazines all over the world, with a phrasal jab at the spleen of his killers affixed to front pages of virtually all news dissemination leaflets of that time: Who killed **Dele Giwa**?

Till now, no one has provided answer to that worrying query. After **Giwa**, scores of journalists have been killed in no less horrendous manner and state censorship of printed works reigned. Bagauda Kaltho disappeared into thin air during the era of the goggled General, Sani Abacha, ex-Daily Times' Eddie Ayo-Ojo was assassinated in a mysterious way as well, while Amakiri had his head shaved with broken bottles in 1973 for embarrassing Alfred Diette-Spiff, the military governor of the state, with his negative report.

In the former Soviet Union, there was a comprehensive state supervision of the process leading to the publication of the manuscripts of George Orwell's novel, Nineteen Eighty Four is a vivid portrayal of this censorship by the Russian ruling class in the old Soviet Union. Same system of censorship prevailed in military governments in most of Africa, as well as in Apartheid South Africa between 1950 and 1994 where there were various shades of governmental restraints on free speech and publications.

While censor of works has reduced greatly due to 20th and early 21st centuries advent of electronic media, as well as the internet and other 'new/social media,' the concept of 'freedom of the press' has been further problematised, raising the issue of how free journalists and the written/spoken words are. In the last few weeks, issues of Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi's disappearance have trended in the globe. Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian **journalist**, author, and ex-editor-in-chief of Al-Arab News Channel, and editor of the Saudi Arabian newspaper Al Watan, who turned the paper into a platform for expressing agitations for Saudi Arabian progressives, was killed inside its Consulate in

### Ulli Beier's 'madman' at Aro psychiatric hospital

Istanbul and his body allegedly dismembered. While global suspicion is on Saudi Arabia, two days ago, she confirmed that Khashoggi was killed 'during a fight.'

The difference between ***Giwa*** and Khashoggi is, however, that of their climes and efficacy of their institutions. While, in a matter of days or weeks, the actual killers of Khashoggi would be un-shrouded, paving way for him to really rest in peace, ***Giwa*** hasn't rested in the last 32 years. His killers walk the land free and are perhaps the ones we do ranka dede to today inside their plum offices and imperial mansions.

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2018

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## **Gaddafi's Madness And the Senate President Who Saw Tomorrow [analysis]**

Leadership (Abuja)

March 17, 2011 Thursday

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**Length:** 1508 words

**Byline:** George Agba

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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In this report,

recalls a statement by the Senate President, David Mark that Libyan President, Col. Muammar Gaddafi was a mad man who needed not to be taken seriously and implies that this may have been a prediction of the very madness the African leader is unleashing on his people for asking him to relinquish power.

Commenting on the gruesome murder of a forefront Nigerian Journalist, Dele Giwa in 1986, Radical Jamaican scholar and former Ahmadu Bello University lecturer, Dr. Patrick Wilmot once said, "Like all Journalists and social critics, all Dele Giwa did was to hold a mirror so that the society can see its own reflection; if you don't like what you see in the mirror, breaking the mirror will not change anything and killing him will change even less, because the truth of a man cannot be dissolved in his own blood".

Even Dele Giwa himself as a former features editor of the old Daily Times of Nigeria on the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed on February 13, 1976, wrote thus: "Mohammed knew that the reform agenda he was crusading would offend the powerful and the mighty but he was determined to carry on because the Job that has to be done must be done".

This was likely what President of the Senate, David Mark did for Africa when he described Libyan President, Col. Muammar Gaddafi as a mad man.

In March 2010, at a plenary while Senate was discussing a motion on the bomb blast which claimed one life in the premises of Delta State government house annex in Warri and also on sectarian crisis in some parts of the country, Senator Ayim Ude from Ebonyi State inserted into the motion a list of prayers; among them was a prayer condemning inflammatory comments by both internal and international personalities, including that of Gaddafi, the Libyan President.

In his reaction, Gaddafi called for the splitting of Nigeria along religious lines- Christians and Muslims as a panacea to the ethno religious violence claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and properties.

Presiding President of the Senate, Mark, in a swift reaction dismissed such call, saying that discussing the matter in the hallowed chamber would have amounted to giving unnecessary publicity to "a madman".

## Gaddafi's Madness And the Senate President Who Saw Tomorrow [analysis]

According to Mark, "why do you want to give a mad man that level of publicity? He said the same thing about Switzerland; he said the same thing about England and it did not work. Truly, in my candid opinion, I do not think he needs that level of publicity."

Coincidentally, a motion moved by Deputy Senate Leader, Victor Ndoma-Egba, (SAN) on the spate of crisis and violence was to be amended by Senator Ude, drawing the attention of the upper legislative House to the call by Gaddafi.

Other Senators including members of the House of Representatives roundly came down heavily on Gaddafi. Specifically, Senator Joel Danlami Ikeanya from Taraba described Gaddafi as a reckless and an incurable madman who should restrict his advice and energy to his country, Libya.

Senator Danlami stated: "He is a reckless leader and his madness is incurable. Nigerians have lived together and we have mixed, intermarried as Christians and Muslims and I believe we need to live together. Even in Isreal, we still have Muslims and in some places, Arabs are there and I believe he (Gaddafi) has lost his conscience. He is not a leader people should believe in".

Ironically, that was another opportunity the Nigeria mass media, writers and columnists had to lash on Senator Mark. Some columnists became more catholic than the Pope. According to close political observers who were sympathetic to Mark, they lost their sense of reasoning and became Libyans rather than Nigerians. They criticised and indeed berated the President of the Senate for asking Nigerians to ignore the call by Gaddafi.

The thinking was that Nigerians and even those Journalists, who are expected to know better, most of the time, allow unnecessary sentiments and emotions to becloud their sense of reasoning.

What these analysts and columnist failed to understand in this context is that Ghaddafi's initial expectation was that Nigeria should be split into North and South. To him (Gaddafi), this remains the panacea to the incessant sectarian violence in Nigeria.

Pundits believe that Gaddafi and his likes have long worked for Nigeria to become a failed state without success and since this has been impossible they are gradually working towards the balkanisation of Nigeria along religious and ethnic lines. They are fanning embers of ethnicity to win those ethnic chauvinists to support this cause. This revelation, these pundits say, has only blown the lid off the plans of the Gaddafis. It has shown that most of the crises in Nigeria are sponsored by very powerful individuals from within and outside.

Those living in glass houses should not throw stones. When they do, such stones should not be thrown into a hugely populated area because the entire populace will show their angst in various forms. Some will pelt the glass house with rotten eggs, others with tomatoes while others will go further to use expensive shit. The comment on Nigeria by Gaddafi amounted to throwing stones into the heart of a huge population from a glass house and the reactions have been negatively overwhelming to the helmsman of Libya.

Then Mark is the man who saw tomorrow. Now, Gaddafi is more devastating and gruesome. For someone who says he believes, and persistently pursues the agenda of a one United Africa to then preach balkanisation of another country, shows sheer incoherence of thought and ideology.

In the on-going crisis in Libya, Gaddafi had rolled out more than 50 armoured tanks, sophisticated ammunition and troops against his fellow country men and women whom he swore to protect and defend. How else can a leader be more lunatic than Gaddafi? This is perhaps why Senator Mark called him a 'madman'.

While commanding him for predicting the madness Gaddafi is currently unleashing on his own people in Lybia, it is worthy of note that the Senate President has, before now, had more than a fair share of brushes in the media since he came into public life. As a former Communications Minister, he was roundly vilified in the media for asking telephone owners under the then Nigeria Telecommunication (NITEL) to pay their bills. Expectedly, the media lashed on it and reported Mark as having said that "Telephone is not for the poor". Senator Mark has made spirited

## Gaddafi's Madness And the Senate President Who Saw Tomorrow [analysis]

attempts to explain the context in which the statement was made. He had explained that if you own a telephone line, you must pay your bills so that the then NITEL can survive and render better services.

That singular action, many believe, resuscitated NITEL. The organisation was able to pay salaries and allowances of its workers as at when due. It was no longer relying on government subvention to operate. Besides, Mark introduced the digitalisation of NITEL and the difference was seen.

But then more than a few Nigerians, including the media took Mark to the cleaners as an "enemy" of the poor.

Eventually, the Global Service for mobile Telecommunication (GSM) came to Nigeria. Public commentators who have had time to revisit the attack on Mark raised questions as to how these critics intend to Apologise to Mark. The simple question is this; how many Nigerians today would own a line without having a prepaid or recharge card, and how many Nigerians own a GSM telephone line free of charge?

As a Telecommunication Engineer, Mark was only being futuristic; he knew that the telephone is an asset which did not fall from the moon as a free gift. In other climes, Mark would have been praised and even given laurels for being a visionary that he is without sounding immodest, with the positive revolution in the Telecommunication industry.

The truth of the matter is that Senator Mark is too frank, too blunt. He does not call a spade another name other than what it is. That is just his offence. He says it as it is; no pretences, no pontificating nor prevarication.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Senate President, Mr. Paul Mumeh, while maintaining that Mark has been vindicated with the present happenings in Lybia said, "We should learn to decode a message instead of laying the messenger on the slab for slaughter. The Ocherome Nannas of this world should bury their heads in shame for betraying the trust as an ombudsman, educators, informers and social crusaders.

"They should hide themselves in shame because like the telephone issue, Mark has once again been vindicated; the true manifestation of Gaddafi's madness is currently on display. They should in an enlightened society apologise to Senator Mark and be more patriotic to the nation".

For Gaddafi, what goes round truly comes around. He would realise that while he was busy pointing a single finger at others, the remaining four were indeed, pointing at him. No foreigner would truly love Nigeria more than Nigerians themselves. The Gadfly must have understood the true meaning of the saying; "voice populi, voice dei", meaning the voice of the people is the voice of God.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2011

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INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS COMMEMORATED IN NIGERIA



**INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST  
JOURNALISTS COMMEMORATED IN NIGERIA**

States News Service

November 23, 2015 Monday

Copyright 2015 States News Service

**Length:** 504 words

**Byline:** States News Service

**Dateline:** PARIS, France

**Body**

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The following information was released by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

Nigeria joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists at a high level conference organized by UNESCO in conjunction with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) at the Reitz Continental Hotel, Abuja, on 2 November 2015.

At the conference attended by over 75 participants, Mr Waheed Odusile, the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to re-open investigations of killed journalists, and in particular the case of **Dele Giwa**, a **journalist** and founder of Newswatch Magazine, who was killed on 19 October 1986 by a letter bomb, to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Mr Odusile listed the journalists who were killed, attacked, kidnapped and detained from 2006 to 2015 and asked for more concrete measures from the authorities to apprehend the perpetrators of these acts. He noted that recent developments in the country have further raised concerns about the safety of journalists and the large number of media professionals working without insurance.

Ms Adele Nibona, the Culture Specialist at the UNESCO Abuja Regional Office, while delivering the message of the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, urged the nation to take all the necessary measures through legislation, protection mechanisms and new adequate resources to ensure that investigations and trials relating to crimes against journalists are undertaken.

Participants commended UNESCO's efforts in assisting the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to set up a monitoring network on safety of journalists in Abuja and in all 36 State Councils of NUJ. The Monitoring Network objectives are: encouraging tolerance of diversity of views on issues and adherence to the rule of law in handling grievances, in addition to establishing, maintaining and sustaining professional relationships and communication between journalists and agents of the State.

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS COMMEMORATED IN  
NIGERIA

Mr Harry Ogwuche Obe, Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), explained the statutory mandate of the Commission to deal with human rights issues. He called on journalists to take advantage of the existence of the Commission to access its services in 24 out of 36 States of the Federation. He stated that the Human Rights Commission is committed to mobilizing its resources to ensure a better and safer working environment for journalists.

The Commissioner of Police Mr Adeyemi Ogunjemilusi appealed to journalists to refrain from sensational reporting while declaring that a number of police reforms are being embarked upon that will ensure the respect for human rights.

Ms Ekaete Umoh, Director in the Federal Ministry of Information, gave a brief assessment of impunity for crimes against journalists in Nigeria and stated that press freedom has been enhanced through the Freedom of Information Act of 2011.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2015

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## Khashoggi's murder

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 28, 2018 Sunday

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Length: 694 words

### **Body**

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AS Nigerian journalists were getting ready to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of Dele Giwa's murder through a letter bomb on October 19, news broke of the disappearance in the Saudi Consulate in Turkey of a very popular journalist and Washington Post columnist, Jamal Khashoggi on October 2.

Khashoggi had gone to the embassy on a second invitation to obtain a document certifying that he had divorced his ex-wife, so he could marry his Turkish fiancée, Hatice Cengiz who waited in vain for about 11 hours for him to come out but he never did. Sadly though, the Saudi government insisted that Mr.Khashoggi left the consulate even when there was no evidence to that effect.

The Saudi government insisted that all reports about his disappearance or death were 'completely false and baseless'. Khashoggi was well known for his journalistic works spanning many years. He reported for various media organisations in Saudi Arabia on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and even on Osama Bin Laden. He was reportedly close to the Saudi royal family and even served as an adviser to the government.

However, with no love lost between him and the royal family in recent years, he went on a self-imposed exile to the United States last year. It is therefore very curious that his disappearance has been a product of different incoherent versions for almost three weeks now. For about two weeks, the Saudis denied he disappeared in their consulate. Then claimed he died during interrogation, then changed to the story of a botched abduction back to Saudi Arabia. Just a few days ago, with mounting global outrage, the Saudi government publicly accepted that Khashoggi had died during a botched operation to return him to Saudi Arabia.

UN investigators said that Khashoggi was a victim of 'extra-judicial execution carried out by the Saudi government. The Saudi prosecutor on Thursday declared that the journalist's murder was a pre-meditated crime. No matter the post-murder rhetoric, the bottom-line is that the journalist is dead and the worst is that his corpse is not available to the family for proper burial.

Khashoggi's murder comes at a time journalists around the world are almost in despair over their safety, both in democracies and dictatorships; in conflict zones and in peaceful environments. In the last 15 years, 1,035 professional journalists have been killed globally. A huge percentage was murdered in the course of their duties. Some died in cross- fires during wars and conflicts like the iconic Marie Colvin, the Sunday Times award winning war correspondence who died in Syria in 2012 alongside a French photo-journalist. About 11% died in the course of other dangerous assignments.

### Khashoggi's murder

The Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) has decried the fact that in 2017 alone, 262 journalists were behind bars for doing their jobs, with China and Turkey imprisoning more journalists than anywhere else in the world. Syria and Mexico remain the most deadly countries for journalists according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

It is apposite to state that the verbalising of total mistrust for journalists and the political propaganda against the pen profession have emboldened people to continually attack the media and journalist globally. This latest murder of Khashoggi must be thoroughly investigated and proper sanctions meted to culprits.

It is encouraging that most countries like Germany and others are ready to place sanctions on the Saudi government following the journalist's murder. Curiously though, most African governments have kept sealed lips since the October 2 news of the journalist's disappearance and subsequent announcement of his murder.

It is a worrisome trend because journalists all over the world deserve to do their legitimate job in atmospheres of safety and peace. Murders, assassinations, imprisonments and torture must not be meted to harmless journalists contributing their quota to national development. Our hope is that those responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi be prosecuted in a court of competent jurisdiction and punishment appropriately meted to serve as a deterrent to future murderers of innocent journalists.

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2018

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## Poor Leadership, Bane of Our Development - Eminent Nigerians

Vanguard (Lagos)

September 05, 2012

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**Length:** 1534 words

**Byline:** Uduma Kalu and Gbenga Oke

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Again the reason for Nigeria's underdevelopment has been blamed on bad leadership. This was the view of eminent persons, who gathered in Lagos, yesterday, for the presentation of a collection of essays, *Moving in Circles* written by four former directors of *Newswatch* magazine, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed and Soji Akinrinade

Chairman of the event, Prof. Anya Oko Anya, in his speech, lamented the inability of Nigeria to have a training programme for her leaders which he said had undermined Nigeria's development. He attributed Nigeria's loss of Bakassi to Cameroon as one of the leadership problems, alleging that former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon donated Bakassi to Cameroon and former President Olusegun Obasanjo completed the exercise without consulting the indigenes or the National Assembly.

And the comments made by eminent guests, who came to support the four erudite journalists to condemn, not just the suspension of the almost 27 years old magazine from the news stands but the sack of its founding directors.

From media chiefs to politicians, academia, journalists, including almost all the governors of the federation, who were represented, the message centred on leadership and the imbroglio involving the ex-directors and the magazine's new publisher, Mr. Jimoh Ibrahim.

However, Adamawa State Governor, Alhaji Murtala Nyako, who was represented by his Deputy, Bala Ngilari, expressed faith in Nigeria's continued unity, adding that the book has provided the nation a platform to chart a new future. He argued that if Nigeria was to experience any change, it would come from journalists, whom he said speak the truth.

Also, his Kano State counterpart, Malam Rabiu Kwankwaso, represented by the Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of the state newspaper, Triumph, Mr. Kabiru Muhammad Gwangwazo, hoped that the book would help to end Nigeria's vicious cycle of underdevelopment because it has a lot to offer the people.

Reviewer of the book, former Managing Director of the defunct Post Express, Dr Chidi Amuta, said the essays spanning nearly four decades recollect the recurring nature of Nigerian history and society showing the repetitive profile of the country's problems such as electricity, health, education, political violence, corruption, political repression of opposition and loss of faith in the country among others.

## Poor Leadership, Bane of Our Development - Eminent Nigerians

Presenting the book, Anya noted that President Jonathan was grappling with problems he did not create, arguing that Nigeria's problems had accumulated over the years and were often ignored.

He said: "This book made me remember two problems we have in Nigeria which are leadership and patriotism. Unfortunately, Nigeria does not have a training programme for its leaders, we just see it happen. We do not have processes and procedures that enable us to select leaders, they just come on board. Cast your mind back, Gowon just happened, Murtala Mohammed just happened, Olusegun Obasanjo just happened, General Buhari just came on board, Ibrahim Babangida just happened but none of these men went through a process of training on what is the most important assignment in life which is leadership, they just emerged."

"On patriotism, how will you be patriotic about a country that does not care for you? I can see a young American ready to die for his country because America is ready to go to war just because of one American. But what do you have in Nigeria today?"

Anya said the manner in which Nigeria lost Bakassi to Cameroon without Nigerians and the National Assembly being consulted before the oil rich zone was ceded was a pointer to the twin problems in Nigeria.

"Right now on the table is the issue of Bakassi. These are Nigerians and not strangers. Before the colonial people came, Bakassi was part of Nigeria. When we were getting Independence, Bakassi was part of Nigeria. Then we woke up one day and they said it is no more part of Nigeria. There is a process by which such matters are decided in countries that are serious. Ceding a territory is not something you decide without proper consultations with the elected representatives of the people, which is the parliament."

"On this matter, the National Assembly, as far as I know, has not been involved. It was alleged by Harold Smith, the former Secretary General of the Commonwealth, in his memoirs, that he was surprised at the way General Gowon was prepared to give away Bakassi. I hope one day I would have the opportunity to ask Gowon this question because Harold Smith alleged that when he asked, he was told that they wanted to make sure that the Eastern part of Nigeria had no access route to escape in case of a future war. That is the man that declared at the end of the civil war, 'no victor- no vanquished' but he was already planning how to avoid a future war by denying Nigerians what God gave them."

"If you must donate Nigerians, you must first ask the people whether they are ready to be donated and if you say that Gowon started the problem, what of Obasanjo that completed the process? As elected leader, you do not give away your country under any circumstances without having the backing of your country. It is Obasanjo that should have taken the matter to the National Assembly but he did not and that is an indication of the quality of leadership we have and how committed they are in the interest of Nigerians."

In his welcome address, Chief Executive officer of MayFive Media, publishers of the book, Mr Ray Ekpu, said he and his colleagues were in the business of starting a new life in the writing and publishing arena which gave birth to the new book.

His words: "Since the four of us who are authors of this book retired from Newswatch on May 5, 2011, we registered a company called Mayfive Media Limited to reflect that watershed date of our exit from an enterprise we painstakingly nurtured for 27 years and we have so far published two books namely Ojukwu edited by Ray Ekpu and the Columnist's Companion; the Art and Craft of Column writing by Dan Agbese while the third book is Moving in Circles which was just unveiled."

"For the four of us, this has been an incredible journey because we have known each other for 30 years and worked together in different combinations, although originally it was a four-man journey with Dele Giwa at the helm of the affairs. But it still remained a four-man journey with Soji Akinrinade joining the train and it has been a journey garnished by undiluted friendship, mutual respect, professionalism and rigorous intellectual exchange."

Speaking on the face-off between them and the new core investor, Mr Jimoh Ibrahim, Ray Ekpu said they had thought that judging by the discussions they had with Ibrahim, the original vision of the magazine would be enriched by a value adding investment.

### Poor Leadership, Bane of Our Development - Eminent Nigerians

"As you already know, Newswatch magazine has been killed, its assets are currently being stripped, staff are in quandary and there is vicious strategy of ethnic cleansing going on at the office, even in our wildest imagination, we would never have thought that a magazine we had nursed for 27 years through rain and sunshine would come to such grief."

He went on: "We thought Mr Ibrahim came to help journalism not to harm it, we thought he came to support journalism not to scuttle it, we thought he came to buy and build not to buy and bury our dear magazine. When you kill a publication, you kill the hopes and aspirations of million of readers, advertisers, distributors, vendors, researchers and the general public because Newspapers are more of a business, they are a nation's battle-axe, the keeper of the nation's conscience, the sentry on guard duty, the nemesis of scoundrels, dictators and other sundry; they defend the underdog against the top dog, the weak against the strong, they give voice to the voiceless."

He however added, "Mr Ibrahim has been mouthing incomprehensible sentiments about our dear **Dele Giwa**, trying to fraudulently ingratiate himself with the iconic **Journalist**. The **Dele Giwa** we knew would never have contemplated the non-publication of Newswatch even for one week. NEVER!"

According to him, "To see things that irked us more than three decades ago still dominate our public discourse today would justify the title of this volume. They include unreliable power supply, bad hospitals, rising inflation, falling education standards, corruption in high and low places, incompetent governance, decay in infrastructure, the celebration of decadent values, neglect of the welfare of the masses are all themes that will not go away.

Present at the event were Publisher of Vanguard, Sam Amuka; Dr Chidi Amuta; Dr Doyin Abiola; representative of Anambra State governor, Prof Akachi Ezeigbo; Dr Segun Babatope; Mr Rufai Ladipo; representative of Bayelsa State governor, Mr Francis Agbo; representative of Minister of Health, Prof **Dele Oluleye**; Kayode Soyinka; Mr Mike Awoyinfa; Dimgba Igwe; Ernest Okonkwo; representative of Osun State governor, Dr Adeleke Ipaye; former AIG, Tunji Alapini; Chief Yakubu Sanni; Dare Babarinsa; Editor-in-Chief/General Manager of Vanguard, Mr Gbenga Adefaye; Editor of Vanguard, Mr Mideno Bayagbon; Nollywood actor, Mr Nobert Young; Mr Mitchell Obi, and Prof Ralph Akinfeleye among many others.

**Load-Date:** September 5, 2012

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## Crusaders for Coops & Rural Dev.

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 10, 2016 Monday

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**Length:** 1323 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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I dedicate this column today to my brother, colleague, friend and schoolmate of NIJ Class '87, Comrade Emmanuel Chijioke Ibeleme, a quintessential journalist.

Although Crusaders for Cooperatives and Rural Development (CORDEC) was conceived in Umuaroko Ndume Ibeku, a village in Umuahia, Abia State, it recently made a grand outing in Azhi Bisa, another village, in Niger State.

Collaboration is the word especially these days it is becoming tougher and tougher to survive alone in endeavours. This brings into focus the collaboration between Ibeleme, an Abuja-based journalist and Maazi Okoroigwe, a lawyer also based in the nation's capital. On Saturday, September 24, both lawyer and journalist took their friendship a step further when they embarked, in their own words, "on a crusading cooperation for the development of rural areas of Nigeria." Their joint outing to a place in the remote area of Nigeria known as Azhi Bisa, Niger State, navigated through the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

After Moniwok Gardens established by Okoroigwe was inaugurated, it was time to unveil Cooperative Highlights, the newsletter of CORDEC, the acronym for Cooperative and Rural Development Centre, a multi-perspective non-governmental organisation (NGO). In his presentation on CORDEC, Ibeleme who is also a comrade told the audience that CORDEC was founded on August 9, 1995, but registered on January 13, 1998, at the Owerri, Imo State office of Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) with a certificate No.Ow-002452. He added that CORDEC was conceived as a platform to champion wholly and entirely for rural people and cater for their cause by cooperating and developing the rural areas. Ibeleme stated that CORDEC is rural based so as to be able to focus on activities from the perspectives of rural people."

According to Ibeleme, CORDEC was founded out of difficulty which arose from firsthand experience of hard life by people in the rural areas who, notwithstanding their poor material condition, resolved to seek ways and means of

### Crusaders for Coops & Rural Dev.

improving their situation. "We in the countryside saw poverty and thus have the capacity to vividly describe what the contours of poverty look like; we agreed that the solution to our problems was not in jetting out of where it pleased the Almighty God to situate us but by doing positive things for ourselves." Regrettably however, Ibeleme told his audience that he was "forced by the nature and character of politics and politicians in Abia State to embark on self-exile." That's how "I landed in Abuja. Otherwise, I've no business coming to Abuja. I would have loved to stay at home and use my talents to contribute to the growth and development of my place."

In their determination before he moved to Abuja, Ibeleme played with words and successfully came up with the combination that fitted perfectly well in what he concluded would be the solution to their problems because "it made much sense for us to cooperate in the rural area and develop ourselves in a place that became our centre of activities. That was how the beautiful and sweet-sounding acronym that is CORDEC came to be." The philosophy of CORDEC is that "anybody who must address us on anything at any event must do so in the rural area, for after all, that is where a majority of Nigerians live, and where all the big men and women resident in the cities have their parents and extended members of their families." Ibeleme further noted that "it is bad enough that our politicians use the rural people and dump them after elections, only to await a repeat performance. That is one other area that CORDEC would try to put a stop to by holding public officers accountable. The rural people must be made to know their rights."

The collaboration between a lawyer in who so God has deposited much endowment, and Ibeleme, a print journalist, is a collaboration of two unrepentant rural community development activists. They first met at the first international summit of the Catholic Men Business Fellowship International (CMBFI) which held in Maitama, Abuja, which Okoroigwe hosted in his capacity as President of Abuja Archdiocesan Catholic Men Organisation (AACMO). Both lawyer and journalist have become closer, realising that they have many things in common.

Ibeleme told the gathering that before he met Okoroigwe, an offer of N5m (five million Naira) would have been enough to get him out of Abuja to relocate to his village "to develop my ideas for the benefit of my people" but now, after meeting Okoroigwe, he cannot relocate to his small village of Umuaroko Ndume Ibeku in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State even if he's offered N20m (twenty million Naira). He added: "As rural community activists, we'll be moving from one rural area to another. It's now a covenant, and God willing, our objectives will be accomplished."

Both Okoroigwe and Ibeleme are passionate about the life and the issues that affect the rural people. This is because they are also village men. "Most of us are. If, according to a certain data, three-quarters of Nigerians live in the rural areas, why wouldn't we be interested about them and their affairs?"

Indeed, Ibeleme's passion for rural people led to the series of trips he had embarked on in the course of his career in journalism, "to unearth the sorrows, woes and other things that grieve these Nigerians who have been condemned and consigned to the waste bin!"

Till today, some seven years after he left Umuahia, he still maintains a strong relationship with his home people. On his part, Okoroigwe has set up cottage industries in Nsukka, his country home. In, he is one of the promoters of Nsukka Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NSCCIMA) which is holding a trade fair in November, this year. He's truly in touch with his home people.

Before now, CORDEC had only convened a Human Rights Forum in memory of Agwu Okpanku, former top Nigerian journalist. That event took place on Tuesday, December 21, 2004 in Akanu Ohafia, Abia State, where Agwu Okpanku hailed from. Agwu Okpanku was the College scholar at the University College (University of Ibadan) as it was then known. In Okpanku's class were the likes of the late Senator Uche Chukwumerije, the late Ajie (Dr) Ukpabi Asika, former administrator of East Central State and the late Prof Adiele Afigbo. Other members of that class are Prof Anya O Anya and Prof Ukwu I Ukwu, among others. That first class Nigerian journalist, who hailed from Akanu Ohafia, was gruesomely murdered in the Second Republic of old Imo State. That was long time before the flaming life of Dele Giwa, another colourful Nigerian journalist, was dastardly extinguished. Is it not a puzzle that Dele Giwa's death is celebrated and not so Agwu Okpanku's?

### Crusaders for Coops & Rural Dev.

With Okoroigwe, CORDEC has properly taken off, and this is historic. So, as the poet and professor, Niyi Osundare, wrote of Ibeleme and his club of crusaders in the 1990s, he said to Okoroigwe, "may your tribe increase and your faults decrease." Ibeleme also told Okoroigwe that "meeting him has become the watershed in the life of CORDEC."

Even though Okoroigwe has thrown his whole weight behind CORDEC, the truth remains that he alone cannot carry the burden. So, Ibeleme appealed to Nigerians to come forward and render assistance. "Come up and support us. There is so much to do with CORDEC which is envisioned to be the most talked about crusading NGO for rural people wherever they may be. The good news is, CORDEC is the unique umbrella which insists that every good thing in the cities should be available in the rural areas.

Nothing is wrong with giving to the goose as the gander has been given. Also, the mission of CORDEC is that it will raise the best crusaders for cooperatives and rural development activities. This mission is to accomplish the enormous task of helping to develop rural areas through cooperative efforts," Ibeleme enthused.

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2016

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## Press freedom under attack

Nigerian Tribune

July 11, 2017 Tuesday

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Length: 598 words

### **Body**

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NO good system of government can exist without press freedom. This is because the media remains an independent body where societal battles are fought and rectified. However, the provisions of the law of the land limit press freedom somewhat. All the rights given to the media under Section 39 were also collected in section 45 of the same 1999 constitution. Look at the provision of section 45 which states that 'Nothing in this constitution shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.'

Arguably, the rightist and the leftist provisions fuel questions in the minds of journalists and thus create an unfavourable environment for the operation of journalists in Nigeria. This is very sad to witness in a democratic society. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was promulgated on December 10, 1948 by the United Nations, Article 19 guarantees press freedom without interference and regardless of frontiers. The 1999 constitution, in section 39, subsection one, provides for freedom of expression and information dissemination by the press. According to the 2017 World Press Freedom ranking compiled by Reporters Without Borders, press freedom in Nigerian has recorded a decline in the International Press Freedom Index, with six per cent regression between 2016 and 2017.

The report further reveals that press freedom in Nigerian came down from 111 in 2016 to 122 in 2017 out of 180 countries graded. What this means is that press freedom in Nigeria is under attack, which in a way is affecting the success of democracy in Nigeria. As Amartya Sen, a Nobel laureate, pointed out, no democracy with a free press ever endures famine. It is also on record that Nigeria experienced horror in 2012 when Lagos-based Channel TV reporter, Enenche Akogwu, was targeted and killed by Boko Haram agents during the coordinated attacks on Kano, North-West Nigeria. This was long after the parcel bomb that killed Newswatch magazine co-founder, Dele Giwa in 1986, and Bagauda Kaltho of The News in 1996 in Kaduna at the height of the mayhem that followed the annulment of the June 12 presidential election in 1993. Till date, the agents fingered for the deaths are still at large.

Reporters in Nigeria who investigate crime or corruption are often tortured and sometimes murdered. Not long ago, a local journalist, Amran Parulian Si-manjuntak of Senior Weekly newspaper, was murdered by a group of unidentified people after dropping his child off at school. However, the case had no follow up, proving the government's negligence about journalists' safety. As a consequence, more violent acts against journalists have emerged. What remains a million dollar question is how the performance of the watchdog function by journalists has become a crime.

The United Nations' Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, said: 'I am deeply concerned about the failure to reduce the frequency and scale of targeted violence that journalists face and the near absolute impunity for such crimes.'

Press freedom under attack

Paraphrasing the words of Harizal, 'This could be a bad precedent for our law enforcement and at the same time shows how our country has made little to no effort to protect journalists'. To be able to curb these attacks on the press, media organisations have to define the zones where their reporters operate. Also, for those who cover war and criminal gangs, their organisations need to provide insurance cover in the event of injuries or death. Government also has a big role to play. They have to ensure that the non-state actors who attack journalists are swiftly brought to book.

**Load-Date:** July 11, 2017

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## Rawlings Must Vomit Abacha's Blood Money

The Herald (Ghana)

July 18, 2016 Monday

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**Length:** 666 words

### **Body**

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– Nigerian **journalist** Insists; As The Herald Lands Some Facts

Following former President Jerry John Rawlings admission that, he received US\$2 million from a former Nigerian Head of State, a Nigerian **journalist**, Louis Odion, is asking the ex-Ghanaian leader to return the money.

The Nigerian **journalist**, in an article called on the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to explore diplomatic means of ensuring Mr. Rawlings, is made to refund the US\$2 million, he received from the former Nigerian military dictator, General Sani Abacha in 1998.

Meanwhile, The Herald , has gotten some information from the closet of ex-President Rawlings, which suggests he has not given a true account of the event involving General Abacha's courier, Alhaji Aliyu Ismaila Gwarzo, who was then the National Security Adviser, when he delivered the Foreign

Policy cash to him in 1998 to verbally polish Abacha's inglorious ways internationally.

Some names have been mentioned and living witnesses given to The Herald in connection with a confidential letter which moved from the Osu Castle to Gen Abacha in Nigeria with respect to the traded foreign policy cash.

This letter signed by an ex-Minister – name withheld- in the Rawlings regime to the Nigerians, is said to have mentioned the exact amount paid to Mr. Rawlings.

It has been established that, as far back as September 2000, Alhaji Ismaila Gwarzo, who is still alive and in his village also called Gwarzo, according to The Herald's sources in Nigeria, had appeared before a Swiss judge and a team of Swiss detectives, and offered to pay half a billion US dollars to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

For instance on Wednesday, September 20, 2000, the 24 Mambilla Street, Aso Drive office of the National Security Adviser in Abuja, played host to him.

## Rawlings Must Vomit Abacha's Blood Money

His presence that morning, was in connection with his role in the looting of the national treasury during the inglorious Abacha era.

He was summoned to appear before the Swiss detectives to assist the Swiss judge and his team to track and recover the loot of the Abacha junta,

which at the time were believed to be stashed in several foreign bank accounts.

Aliyu Ismaila Gwarzo was born in the village of Gwarzo in Kano State, about 72 kilometres from the capital Kano. He entered the police force where he held a number of positions of increasing responsibility, retiring with a senior rank. In June 1986, the military head of state General, Ibrahim Babangida, appointed him Director General of the newly formed State Security Service (SSS), responsible for domestic intelligence. His Deputy Director was Lt. Colonel A.K. Togun.

In a case that attracted considerable media attention, Dele Giwa, editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine, was killed on 19 October 1986 by a parcel bomb. Two days earlier, SSS officials, had summoned Giwa to their headquarters, where Colonel A.K. Togun, accused him of planning a social revolution and of smuggling arms into the country. Gwarzo was suspected of involvement in the assassination, but could not be questioned due to his position.

The Nigerian journalist, wrote "now, with the receiver openly admitting collecting \$2m from Abacha, it would not be out of place to ask EFCC to explore diplomatic means to ensure Rawlings made a refund in the spirit of the chastity the man himself speaks so passionately about today,".

Mr. Rawlings, while speaking to the Guardian Newspaper in Nigeria, admitted receiving the money from the President of Nigeria in 1998, but said it was \$2 million and not \$5 million as alleged.

Prior to the confession, he had neither confirmed nor denied the claims, which were first reported by the Chronicle Newspaper in 1998.

Mr. Rawlings' Ministers at the time, as well as Majority MPs, shot down an attempt by the Minority New Patriotic Party (NPP) at the time to push for an investigation into the unlawful payments, and a subsequent impeachment of Mr. Rawlings.

More to come!

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/631/1801/54/146885336070.jpg>

rawlings-1.jpg

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2016

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## **Nigerian Nobel Prize Winner Calls for Justice in Journalist's Murder**

The Associated Press

October 22, 1986, Wednesday, AM cycle

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**Section:** International News

**Length:** 556 words

**Byline:** By ROBERT WELLER, Associated Press Writer

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Nigeria

### **Body**

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Nobel Prize-winning author Wole Soyinka has added his voice to a chorus calling for an independent investigation into the letter-bomb murder of journalist Dele Giwa.

Soyinki called on President Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida to bring to justice the killers of Giwa, saying "the euphoria that greeted my award has turned to ashes in our mouths." The National Union of Journalists, the Newspaper Proprietors Association, artists and university students and professors, church and labor leaders and the Nigerian Bar Association have called for an impartial investigation. There are demands that top security officials be suspended while an investigation is underway to assure the public that it is impartial.

Nigerian newspapers on Wednesday quoted Soyinka as telling Babangida that the "finger of suspicion should be allowed to point in any direction no matter how highly placed." Giwa, 39, the founder of Newswatch magazine, was killed by a letter bomb delivered to his home Sunday. Senior officials of the State Security Service and the director of military intelligence have said they questioned Giwa the week before he was killed, but they have denied any role in his death.

Soyinka visited Babangida on Tuesday to thank him for the Commander of the Federal Republic Award he was presented last week.

"My visit was supposed to be a courtesy visit, but it turned out to be where I could call for justice, because the euphoria that greeted my award has turned to ashes in our mouths," he said. Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature earlier this month.

"Those touched in any way by the slightest shred of suspicious circumstances, no matter how highly placed should be kept away until investigations are completed," he said.

The Nobel laureate said he left his meeting with the president "convinced that he will keep his word to use everything in his power to see that justice is done." However, Soyinka added, "If any of those who are even remotely, by circumstantial events, linked to this had been civilians they would have now been under lock and key." Soyinka said he told the president: "Evidence that now exists suggests that certain individuals are connected

## Nigerian Nobel Prize Winner Calls for Justice in Journalist's Murder

to circumstances leading to (**Giwa**'s) death. Such people cannot be part of the investigative process."After visiting the president at military headquarters at Dodon Barracks, Soyinka went to the Newswatch magazine offices to sign a condolence register.

He signed the register with the words, "We shall not rest until justice is done."**Giwa** was one of the most highly regarded journalists in the country and was the chief architect and one of four founders of Newswatch, the West African nation's first weekly news magazine. It was often on the cutting edge of Nigerian journalism, vigorously reporting corruption.

The last issue before **Giwa**'s death focused on a notorious criminal alleged to have begun his crime spree after police murdered his brother and then tortured and killed his mother.

The issue also carried a report on a military officer and air commodore who commandeered a container load of goods from a businessman, and when police reclaimed it, went to police headquarters with soldiers and forcibly removed it.

Because of the country's economic collapse, international news magazines became unavailable and the founders of Newswatch said they were filling the vacuum.

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## Onukaba, Former Daily Times MD Dead

PM News

March 6, 2017 Monday

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Length: 735 words

### **Body**

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Former Managing Director of the Daily Times Nigeria Plc, Dr Adinoyi Ojo Onukaba is dead. He was aged 57.

Onukaba died at about 6 pm on Sunday at a village near Akure, Ondo State capital. The spot is said to be about ten minutes to Akure.

He was on his way back to Abuja from Abeokuta, Ogun State, where he had joined other dignitaries to attend the inauguration of Obasanjo Presidential Library.

One of his relations, Mr Yusuf Itopa confirmed his death in Lokoja on Monday.

He said that late veteran ***journalist*** turned politician was knocked down by an oncoming vehicle while running into a nearby bush to escape an armed robbery attack.

Itopa who is devastated by the death of Onukaba said that three of them, including his driver, were travelling when they ran into a blockade mounted by armed robbers.

He said Onukaba's corpse was later deposited at a mortuary in Akure from where it will be brought for burial today in his hometown, Ihima, Okehi Local Government area of Kogi State.

The late Onukaba who was Senior Special Assistant on media to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar had earlier lost his first wife, Rachael about five years ago.

He, however, remarried in 2015 to Memunat

Onukaba is survived by three children, two girls and a boy.

He started his journalism career in The Guardian in 1983 and made his mark covering the airport in Lagos.

Onukaba struck friendship with many Nigerian dignitaries on this beat, including the former head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo. The relationship with the latter blossomed into Onukaba writing the first biography of the retired General, titled *In the Eyes of Time*.

The relationship with the latter blossomed into Onukaba writing the first biography of the retired General, titled *'In The Eyes of Time'*. He also wrote the biography of Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's former vice-president. It was titled *The Story of Atiku Abubakar*.

## Onukaba, Former Daily Times MD Dead

He was born on March 9, 1960, in Oboroke-Ihima, Okehi LGA of Kogi State to the family of Malam Shuaibu Onukaba and Hajia Aisha Onukaba.

He obtained his first degree in 1982 in Theatre Arts from University of Ibadan. He spent his National Youth Service Corps year at Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi -Lagos, from where he joined The Guardian in 1983.

He rose to the position of News Editor before travelling out in 1989 for graduate studies at New York University, New York, USA.

While in New York, he worked as a Research Officer at the African Leadership Forum, New York.

He also served as the Information officer, Division of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) between 1994 and 1995.

He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1996 from New York University.

Dr Onukaba became Adjunct Professor of Mass Communication at the School of New Resources. College of New Rochelle, New York in 1997.

Between 1997 and 1998, he worked as Press Officer, Department of Public Information, United Nations (New York). In June 1998, he was sent to Iraq as an Information Officer, United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Upon his return to Nigeria in 1999, he worked with former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, as Special Assistant on Media Relations.

He had known and related closely with both Atiku and Olusegun Obasanjo since 1984.

Onukaba got to the peak of his journalistic career in August 1999 when he was appointed Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the then ailing Daily Times of Nigeria PLC.

Onukaba returned to the presidency as Senior Special Assistant to the former Vice-president Atiku Abubakar on Public Communications between July 2003 and April 2005.

On several occasions, Onukaba had shown interest in the governorship post of his state.

But not being a man with deep pockets, he never made it beyond the primaries. His last attempt was in 2015 when he contested for the seat. He also lost at the primary level, on the platform of the All Progressives Congress.

Apart from his books on Atiku Abubakar and Olusegun Obasanjo, he also co-authored Born to Run', a biography of Late Dele Giwa, with Pulitzer winner Dele Olojede.

Onukaba despite his journalistic career never divorced himself from his first love, Theatre Arts.

Thus, he had written several plays, some which are Her Majesty's Visit, A Resting Place, Tower of Burden, The Virginity Flee, The Lone Ranger, Bargain Hunting, and Soommalliyya.

His play, 'The Killing Swamp' was one of the three finalists for the 2010 NLNG Literature Awards.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2017



## Former Daily Times MD, Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo murdered

National Mirror

March 6, 2017 Monday

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**Length:** 713 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Lagos, March 6 -- He was on his way back to Abuja from Abeokuta, Ogun State, where he had joined other dignitaries to attend the inauguration of Obasanjo Presidential Library .

One of his relations, Mr Yusuf Itopa confirmed his death to newsmen in Lokoja on Monday.

He said that late veteran ***journalist*** turned politician was knocked down by an oncoming vehicle while running into a nearby bush to escape an armed robbery attack.

Itopa who is devastated by the death of Onukaba said that three of them, including his driver were traveling when they ran into a blockade mounted by armed robbers.

He said Onukaba's 's corpse was later deposited at a mortuary in Akure from where it will be brought for burial today in his hometown, Ihima, Okehi Local Government area of Kogi State.

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He spent his National Youth Service Corps year at Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi -Lagos, from where he joined The Guardian in 1983.

## Former Daily Times MD, Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo murdered

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**Load-Date:** March 7, 2017

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## Clowns, the Tortoise And Babangida's Quest [column]

Vanguard (Lagos)

September 8, 2010 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1033 words

**Byline:** Owei Lakemfa

### **Body**

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THERE will be legions of presidential candidates for next year's election, but I bet that the most hilarious will be former military dictator, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. He already has in place, a band of chorus boys and unimaginative clowns with one Kassim Afegbua as lead vocalist.

Afegbua said to be Babangida's spokesman wrote an hilarious piece titled "The Questions Babangida Wants Discussed". Reading it makes one question the type of minds that produce the outlandish claims of the former dictator's alleged success in government. Let us take the issue of Abuja for instance.

The committee that recommended it as the new capital of the country was set up by General Murtala Ramat Mohammed and was accepted by General Olusegun Obasanjo. The building commenced soon afterwards, especially under Alhaji Shehu Shagari and it remains a city in progress. But Afegbua wants Nigerians to believe that "it was IBB who brought us here (Abuja)"

Under Shagari, Abuja was already being put to use, but Babangida suddenly moved the capital to Abuja not because it was completed or he was visionary, but following the April 22, 1990 Gideon Orkar coup attempt in which he almost lost his life; a fearful Babangida ran to Abuja to hide under the Aso Rock and barricade himself.

In the process, civil servants were literally frog-jumped to Abuja under appalling conditions resulting in many broken marriages. Due to Babangida's disorderly retreat to Abuja, accommodation was mainly not available for the public servants forced to relocate and many had to live in their offices, this also led to the evil 'Abuja marriage' phenomenon. Is this the type of "success" story a serious-minded person would peddle as a campaign material?

Afegbua's primary aim in the article was to justify his principal's paranoia for probing questions like who bombed enterprising ***journalist, Dele Giwa*** and why the sly ex-General annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election won by Chief Moshood Kashimawo Abiola? Now, despite his claims to high intelligence, Babangida has been unable in the past 17 years to give a simple or straight forward answer to why the election was annulled. In taking precious newspaper space on this issue, you would have expected a supposed spokesman to answer this question; rather Afegbua exhibited a baffling denseness.

He said the journalists who ask Babangida such simple and historically correct questions are "being lazy scholars".

## Clowns, the Tortoise And Babangida's Quest [column]

Yet his claimed 'scholarship' did not in any way attempt an answer, rather he makes the bizarre submission that "rather than condemn in such wholesale manner the annulment, we should also be able to commend the man who made the election to be credible in the first place".

Were Babangida to be president next year(God forbid!) is this the type of answers we will get to serious national issues?

What do you make of other incredible claims of the 'megaphone' such as that Babangida retired "from service to his fatherland" when we all know that in order to save the fatherland from the destructive clutches of Babangida, he was forced out of office and power. What about the delusionary claims that "IBB is today undoubtedly the father of modern Nigeria" and that he produced "well celebrated icons as Tony Elumelu, Jim Ovia and the Dangotes of today"? Babangida's team celebrates his poverty-inducing Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)as testimony of his 'success' in office!

That is the IMF-imposed programme that destroyed local industries and wiped out factories, including in the textile and footwear sectors, grossly devalued the currency, destroyed the education system, sharply increased the prices of petroleum products while delivering darkness rather than electricity. Only adjusted minds will celebrate such tragedy.

The World Bank distanced itself from IBB's tragic economic policies while years back, the IMF apologised to humanity for imposing SAP on African countries. Is this what any serious presidential aspirant will celebrate? Perhaps he assumes that Nigerians are daft.

If Babangida is allergic to questions on **Dele Giwa**'s murder and the annulment, can he explain why his regime grinded basic human rights into the dust? Why it banned viable professional and mass based organisations like the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Nigeria Labour Congress(NLC) and criminalised any discourse opposed to his programmes such as SAP and his fake 'Transition Programme'? Why is he silent on the massacre of pro- democracy protesters in 1993 and that of Ahmadu Bello University students, seven years earlier?

Well, Babangida says he is focused on the future; he deceives gullible Igbo elites that if they campaign for him, he would spend only one term and hand over power to them in 2015. All such elites need do is ask themselves which of his numerous promises in office did Babangida fulfil? For instance, he promised to hand over power four times:1990, 1992, January 1993 and August 1993 and four times he failed to do so before his ouster.

Today, he promises, Nigerians "true federalism", state police, resource control and a corruption-free society. How can a man whose regime had corruption as an abiding state policy, promise to fight corruption? Well, he can start first by telling us where he got the billions of dollars in his possession and how much tax he paid on them.

Babangida acknowledges the massive opposition against him but says there are also those who love him. This doubtlessly is true: Millions in Germany loved Adolf Hitler, legions loved Benito Mussolini in Italy, General Augusto Pinochet, the butcher in Chile and his counterparts like Idi Amin in Uganda and Mobutu Sese Seko in Congo were not without supporters.

The evil apartheid regime had its supporters in Pretoria, Washington and London, while the Biblical Satan has its followers. So there is nothing outstanding if Babangida has his own lovers.

Babangida is like the tortoise who is embarking on a fruitless journey, and when asked: "Mr Tortoise, Mr Tortoise, Mr Tortoise, when are you coming back?" The Tortoise replied "Not until I have been disgraced, disgraced, not until I have been disgraced!"

Clowns, the Tortoise And Babangida's Quest [column]

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## Untold Stories of Nigerian Media

This Day (Lagos)

December 12, 2015

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**Length:** 1388 words

**Byline:** Yinka Olatunbosun

### **Body**

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Writing a review on two of a four-volume series of incisive interviews with top Nigerian media leaders is a rare privilege. One reason is that the books in review, Nigerian Media Leaders: Voices Beyond the Newsroom Volume One and Two was edited by Richard Ikiebe, a former Daily Times reporter whose career path led him up to the Presidency.

Another reason is that the calibre of personalities featured in both series are historic firebrands; with intimidating record of excellence in a profession that is consistently rated among the world's most dangerous. If there is a third reason, then it will be the fact that the issues raised in the documented conversations point in all directions including the writer, the reader and the content.

In November, when Ikiebe presented these books to a gathering of journalists during a meeting of the members of the Lagos Chapter of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) at the Ladi Lawal Press Centre, Alausa, Ikeja, he seemed to be very concerned about getting the books into the right hands. From personal perusal, the books can be described as essential read for all media professionals, would-be professionals and those who may have been disenchanted with the decline in the practice of courageous journalism.

No doubt, many bookshops are awash with books that their writers claim to be citable authorities but since Fred Omu's classic historical piece, *Press and Politics in Nigeria (1859-1937)*, there seem to be a dearth of rigorous scholarship in the contemporary understanding of Nigerian media. Some of the existing works before these books are poorly edited, lacking details, dumping crucial issues and sadly too, they are persuasively, if not mandatorily, sold to students of mass communication.

As Patrick Dele Cole rightly observed in his foreword to the volumes, Ikiebe "offers an invaluable service to Nigerian journalism and history" through these literary pieces. For Ikiebe, it was a project he championed as a senior Fellow and Director of the Centre for Leadership in Journalism, School of Media and Communication, Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos to crystallise the experiences of post-independence journalists just as Professor Omu did in his time.

His students, who worked with him on this project are Obianuju Asika, Segun Balogun, Ayodele Oloyede, Kanto Ekenta, Timothy Konyehi, Jacqueline Bossua, Joachim MacBong, Omawumi Ogbeh, Chidi Ifeanyi, Abimbola Murtala and Segun Oluwatosin. Both volumes were dedicated to the memories of three exceptional journalists namely, Dele Giwa, Stanley Macebuh and Alfred Opubor.

## Untold Stories of Nigerian Media

As daunting as the thought of reading two 388-paged books in a short time may sound, the editor had ensured that in their final state, the volumes are arranged in readable and high-quality prints while situating the reader in the room with each interviewee. Rather than edit each interview into efficient pieces with perfect finishing lines, the works retain actual responses from the narrators such as Pa Laban Namme, Dr. Christopher Kolade, Pa Sam Amuka, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Dr. Patrick **Dele**-Cole, Prince Tony Momoh, Aremo Segun Osoba, Engr. Vincent Maduka, Dr. Doyin Abiola, Mal Mohammed Haruna, Betty Irabor, Nduka Obaigbena, Ray, Ekpu, Dan Agbese, Frank Aigbogun, Prince Henry Odukomiya, Femi Adesina and several others.

The stories were told from the angles of publishers, veteran broadcasters, content producers in electronic media, public servants and policy-makers in media practice. Through the questions and answers, the past, present and future of Nigerian media are submitted under the intellectual microscope. In addition, the volumes provide a rationale for rethinking the role of media in nation-building especially in democratic Nigeria. Tapping from wealth of experience of these key players, much could be read between the lines about the controversies surrounding the romance of Nigerian media and the government.

In a broad overview, all the journalists agreed to a lot of facts about the profession. One point of convergence is the plummeting professionalism. Another is the impact of corruption and education on the true practice of journalism. They all recommended continuous training for journalists and the need to study the operating terrain before running the business of media ownership.

They disagreed on the debate on when journalism is at its best in Nigeria that is, during military or democracy rule. While some of the interviewees held that courageous journalism existed before democratic rule in Nigeria, others remarked that the media flourished better in the atmosphere of freedom which democracy births. However, they warned that freedom comes with responsibility and charged young journalists to combine professionalism with virtues such as humility, hard work, resilience and willingness to learn.

There are a few instances where the interviewees evaded probing questions, even attempting to convert the interviewer to the interviewee. For instance, Ikiebe wanted to know the circumstances that led to the murder of **Dele Giwa** from his friend and associate, Ray Ekpu. Ekpu recounted the final moments of the first **journalist** to be killed by letter-bomb and his friction with the Babangida-led administration. However, from his revelation, the former Head of State had a good working relationship with the slain **journalist** till the unfortunate incident. Ekpu's piece was emotional as he recalled that dark period of living in perpetual fear while professing to love being a **journalist**.

For Betty Irabor, Doyin Abiola, Bilikisu Yusuf, Agbeke Ogunsanwo and Victoria Ezeokoli, it was a time to feel the pulse of women who have excelled in a male-dominated field against the forces of statutory, proprietorial and self-censorship.

In all, the volumes are potential references in media discourse in Nigeria as they give insightful direction to a path-finding reader. Two stage comedies, Ahmed Yerima's The Lottery Ticket and Jerry Alagbaoso's Specks in Our Eyes will be staged at the Abuja Sheraton Hotel today.

The stage plays, produced by Mosaic Theatre Production and Cruise Entertainment, will start by 4 pm and will both be repeated as from 7pm at the Ladi Kwali Convention Centre of the Sheraton Abuja Hotel. They will be performed by some of Nigeria's best theatre artistes, such as Patrick Diabuah, Omololu Sodiya, Odera Orji, Kelvin-Mary Peters and a host of others.

The plays are directed by Agozie Ugwu and produced by Ekene Ngwu, the duo who featured Ramsey Nouah in Ola Rotimi's Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again in Abuja, last August.

The production also has the multitalented British Council-trained and certified lighting and set designer, Richie Umezinwa as the technical director.

The Lottery Ticket, with hilarious scenes and twists, discusses the greed and gullibility of man, while Specks in Our Eyes, a satirical comedy, explores the ills of the society with an aim to correct them by encouraging self-reflection.

## Untold Stories of Nigerian Media

In its bid to explore the efficacy of theatre as a veritable tool for the stimulation of attitudinal change in our society, the Mosaic Theatre Production and Cruise Entertainment has remained committed in enshrining theatre in the corporate culture of Abuja. They are enticing the Federal Capital Territory audience to see two stage comedies in one sitting at Sheraton Abuja Hotel, which has become the venue for most stage performances in Abuja.

The producer, Ekene Ngwu, said: "Our efforts to popularise theatre and its benefits to society in Abuja have been well received as our event in August was well attended and also supported by organisations like Sheraton, Silverbird, AfricaMagic TV, Ebony Life TV, Hot FM, Drumstix and a host of others. Many other theatre producers have been emboldened by our resolve and efforts, and that is a good sign that Abuja people would come to love theatre and its live performances more than screen dramas."

Ace director, Agozie Ugwu, who is a lecturer and a PhD student of theatre and film studies, said: "Theatre is like a glutton; it feeds from and serves every discipline in human society, arts and sciences inclusive, and that's why we believe that if we keep doing what we do, our positive impact on the social, psychological, behavioural, scientific and environmental issues and aspects of our society, and the world at large, will definitely be felt."

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2015

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## **The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

October 17, 2011 Monday

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**Length:** 1766 words

**Byline:** Patrick Naagbanton

### **Body**

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I FORGOT completely that the returning and repulsive month called November, is around the corner again. The agony of a nation descending into a deeper crisis, and the death of Kingsley Baridilo Kpea, the Ogoni-born petroleum engineer and Comrade who died recently in an Indian hospital, are troubling me, to forget the nauseating month November.

I am glad that I was not born in November, I was born in August. Sometimes August tramp like November. November goes and comes in several seasons either like our JP Clark's or Wole Soyinka's Abiku. Four scenes in the November drama make me to hate her.

Anytime I move closer to her, I feel sad and angry. November heightens my blood pressure. November is a nasty nefarious note. It was on November 1, 1990, that a special police gang allegedly acting on the orders of an oil giant, seized Umuechem, that serene agrarian village in the Etche community north of Port Harcourt.

The police squadron smoked the distressed locals, leaving in its trail blood, raped women, looted and blundered properties belonging to them, many maimed for life, while some were arrested, tortured and disappeared in custody.

November 10, 1995 was the culmination of the extra-judicial killings, rape, looting, maiming, arrests and detentions of poor Ogoni natives, and eventually, the savage hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa, distinguished satirist, writer and activist, and his compatriots.

On April 21, 1993, Lt. Col Dauda Musa Komo, then military administrator of Rivers State allegedly acting for the said oil giant and the Nigerian State under the authoritarian Sani Abacha's junta had issued the infamous secret memo which was leaked.

The document code-named, "Restoration of Law and Order in Ogoniland; Operation order 4/94", which charted the plan of a wasting military operation to be led by Major Paul Okuntimo, the Ogbom, Kogi State-born commander of the Gestapo Rivers State Internal Security Task Force, RSISTF, applied the orders to its letters. Ogoni was worse than Umuechem.

### The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa [opinion]

After Okuntimo's sway at the RSISTF, Major Umahi Obi, who hails from Asaba, the capital of Delta State, a devotee of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, RCCG, took over, and continued from where his predecessor, the Ogbom masquerade stopped.

The killings, disappearance, maiming, rape, arrests and torture were abhorrent and offending. I narrowly escaped when his troop stormed my Port Harcourt residence then in search of me. Bariara Kpalap, a committed Ogoni activist was not as lucky as I was. He was taken into custody.

Kpalap spent nearly a year in RSISTF's torture chambers. The young man suffers permanent impairment from the whippings in Afam area of Oyigbo Local Government Area. President Goodluck Jonathan just rewarded Ibrahim Auta, the judge who sentenced Saro-Wiwa and others to death. Auta is now the president of Federal High court in Nigeria. The Nigerian judiciary is in a horrid mess.

While travelling with Uche Okwukwu, the tall and effulgent Ikwerre lawyer to Calabar, the capital of Cross River State, to mobilize students, academics, youth and workers, to celebrate the first anniversary of the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and others, we were kidnapped by agents of the Nigerian state.

We had stopped over at the University of Uyo to meet with leaders of the student union government, SUG, to solicit for their participation in the anniversary events.

We didn't know that Asuquo, the president of the SUG, a lofty and dark man, with wide chest, loose lips and widespread noses, was an agent of the infamous State Security Services, SSS, when he strolled around the SUG'S massive office with his coterie of aides (all students) they would cheer and shout "Sultan".

Asuquo or Sultan after discussing with us, accepted to mobilize students of the institution to participate in the event. He later sneaked into his inner room. Few minutes later, over 40 SSS operatives had infested the vicinity of the institution to track Okwukwu and me. As we boarded a wobbling bus bound to Calabar, we were seized and taken to several places unknown to us.

My co-traveler (Okwukwu) and I were later transferred to a grubby and congested cell at the police headquarters in Uyo. We were in the same cells with inmates whose crimes range from robbery to murder, and without food and water.

Though, the cell mates were quite welcoming and showed much solidarity for our cause and case. We had barely spent two days there under callous conditions when in the dazzling morning of November 6, 1996, one inspector Okoro who had showed genuine solidarity to our cause since our abduction, held the rusty iron bars that doored our cell room, shouting, "Uche and Patrick".

He brandished a clean copy of The Punch newspaper which displayed the catastrophic news of an ADC plane crash, and beneath the headline, was the mention of Professor Claude Ake, world legendary political economist as one of the victims.

The news spread in our cell and beyond. We wept and mourned, and pointed accusing fingers at the blood thirsty dictator Abacha for killing Ake. November is not good for me. Fare thee well, November.

November, the month I hate, is here again. I am just reminded. It was a Nigerian, Lagos-based **journalist** and friend who I had courted during those days of military gangsterism in the country, who drew my attention to a report in The Daily Trust, an Abuja-based national newspaper of October 5, 2011, which was written by Hope Abah, the Bayelsa State reporter of the paper.

The newspaper ran the story conspiratorially, "Why Saro-Wiwa was Hanged-Bayelsa SSS Boss". According to the report, "Late Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged because he had concluded plans to cede the Niger Delta region from the rest of the federation and to create a separate country of his own, Bayelsa State Director of State Security Services (SSS), Andrew Iyayi, has said".

### The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa [opinion]

"The SSS director made the revelation yesterday (October 4, 2011) while delivering a lecture at this year's Bayelsa Nigerian Union Journalists (NUJ)'s press week held at the council hall in Yenogoa.

Iyayi disclosed that the late Saro-Wiwa and eight others had acquired a standing army, designed a national flag, a national anthem and other security items that were to be handed over to the United Kingdom for a declaration of a federal state" other online news outfit like The Bayelsa State News Online, The Nigerian Mail Online, Naija News and Events Online reproduced The Daily Trust report.

November is here again, and we should expect more of such fabrication and untruth. I am not related to the late Saro-Wiwa in any way. What I do for him (defending) I also do for others who don't have a voice like him. I don't do it for a fee. I do it because I have a good conscience. We are in a world where twist, treachery and fraud hold sway.

In my several articles I have dealt with those allegations against Ken Saro-Wiwa such as killing his elder brothers (Ogoni 4 ), raising army to breakaway and other lies against him. Read Saro-Wiwa; In Memoriam, The Guardian on Sunday, November 14, 1999; That Agaba Dance on Saro-Wiwa's Grave, The Guardian Sunday, November 30, 2003, page 17; A Saro-Wiwian Nightmare?

The Guardian Sunday, February 8, 2004, page 51; Ken Saro-Wiwa's Mother; A Tribute Ogoni Star, February 14-27, 2003, Page 10; Anatomy of Terrorism in the Delta, The Niger Delta Channel magazine June, 2001 edition, page 39;

The Silence of The Irish Farmers, The Midweek Telegraph, August 31-September 6, 2005, The Come Back of Professor Ibrahim Gambari, The Midweek Telegraph June 11-17, 2008, Kogbara and The Anti-Saro-Wiwa Scheme, The Guardian on Sunday, July 12, 2009, Fawehimi; End of An Essential Episode, The Guardian, Wednesday, September 9, 2009, page 51; Foreword To Okuntimo's Book on Saro-Wiwa's Ogoni, Sahara Reporters, New York, USA, February 4, 2010; Keen for Journalist Chris Ikwunze, The Midweek Telegraph, February, 2009; and Saro-Wiwa and Daminabo' Book, The National Network, January 30, -February 5, 2006, page 7.

I have read that thrilling espionage novel, The Spy who came in from The Cold (1963) written by John Le Carre. The name, John Le Carre is a pseudonym name of David John Moore Core well, a former senior Spy for M15 and M16, both British intelligence networks.

I read that classic novel not because of its subject matter, its characters and style charmed me. Andrew Iyayi is not John Le Carre's Spy who came in from the cold, but The Spy Who Came in from the Sea. I pity this country. This is how top undercover agents and security chiefs cock up stories and reports, to mislead us.

The SSS which was founded on June 5, 1986 by the Babangida's dictatorship following its reformation of the National Security Organization (NSO), its thematic responsibility should have been domestic policing, peace and security, the SSS operates like Frederick Forsyth's The Dogs of War (1974).

The Dogs of War is another espionage fiction that interests me a lot. SSS chief and operatives are enmeshed completely in the seemingly unending corruption, endemic to the Nigerian systems and state. The SSS is an apparatus of political repression, blackmail and instability.

Poor Dele Giwa, one of those who inspired, me to be a journalist, that son of very impoverished parents of Edo State origin, who rose to prominence through hard work, commitment and passion for his heavy barrel of pen would have been alive today.

Then deputy Director of SSS, Colonel A.k Togun and Colonel Halilu Akilu, director of military Intelligence had lied like the Bayelsa Spy master that the harmless, handsome and brilliant Dele Giwa, was planning a revolution and was smuggling into Nigeria arms, to prosecute it.

On October 19, 1986, Giwa was bombed. Togun, Akilu and Babangida shall know no peace until they travel your path, Oh Dele Giwa!

The SSS Provocateur and Ken Saro-Wiwa [opinion]

Iyayi should support his accusations with facts, and not to flutter his tongue hysterically on Saro-Wiwa, I was a round character in that Saro-Wiwa/Ogoni tragedy. I was not a spectator. Andrew Iyayi Saro-Wiwa rebukes you. I am tempted to deduce all sorts of conspiracy theories from the SSS director's flare-up.

Why have there been more organized attacks against the personality and legacies of Saro-Wiwa under the Jonathan administration. Is this the new direction?

The Saro-Wiwa family should as a matter of urgency and utmost importance institute criminal defamation suit against Andrew Iyayi, that silly Spy who came in from the sea, who speak out of appalling ignorance, self-interest, and dished out sadly second hand lies. Saro-Wiwa rebukes you.

Naagbanton is an independent journalist and activist based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2011

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## **Enduring legacies of Orlando Owoh**

Nigerian Tribune

November 3, 2018 Saturday

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Length: 662 words

### **Body**

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November 4, 2018 marks the 10th anniversary of the transition to the great beyond of the music icon, Pa. Stephen Olaore Oladipupo Owomoyela, popularly known as Orlando Owoh. Orlando Owoh was a popular highlife musician during his life time.

Born on February 14, 1938 to a building contractor father and a musician Pa. Jeremiah Olusesi Owomoyela, in Osogbo which today is the capital of Osun State, His father wanted him to follow his vocation, that is, building contractor. However, having music running in the vein of his family, Orlando Owoh decided to take a career in music. After dropping out of school in Standard Four, his father handed him over to Chief Kola Ogunmola to be trained in both theatre and Juju music. He did not stay long with Ogunmola due to a circumstance that was beyond his control and ended up with another Juju band in Osogbo known as **Dele Akindele** and Chocolate Randies Band, where he was trained and granted freedom. He set up his own band in 1958 which he called Orlando Owoh and his Omimah Band. Omimah is the cognomen of Ifon, Ondo State, his home town.

A good entertainer, he was among the Nigerian Musicians/artists who entertained Queen Elizabeth of England at the Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos in 1956 during her official visit to Nigeria. Not only that, he joined other musicians to perform at Independence celebration at the same venue in 1960. Also, he was among the musicians who entertained the wounded soldiers on the Nigerian side during the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970. Others are Dr. Victor Olaiya and Cardinal Jim Rex Lawson. On the Biafran side was Philip Ejiagha. Not only that, he was among the Nigerian Musicians contracted by Military Government to welcome dignitaries to the Festac 77 in Lagos.

Psychoanalysis of his music shows him as an entertainer, teacher of moral praise singer, story teller, promoter of African culture, social critic and pro-democracy activist. During the struggle for democracy between 1989 - 1999, he joined other musicians like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Kollington Ayinla, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister and others to oppose the continued stay of military in government. Beyond this, however, his album on the gruesome murder of a renowned **journalist** in Nigeria, **Dele Giwa** on October 19, 1986 where he pointed accusing fingers at the government of the day brought him into collision with the authority. A trump up charges of unlawful possession of drugs was made against him and he was detained for more than two years until a tribunal set up by the military government set him free for want of evidence. After the attainment of democratic rule government in 1999, he served as a watch dog of Nigerian government by producing albums where he criticized them for failing Nigerians. For his death, he would have led other musicians to bemoan cluelessness of the Nigerian ruling class which has made the nation the bastion of poverty in the world.

## Enduring legacies of Orlando Owoh

Orlando Owoh was a controversial musician in life no doubt about that. Aside being a social-critic and a non conformist, he was an ardent hemp-smoker and saw nothing bad in it. He even called on government through some of his albums to legalise it. He was down with a stroke affliction in 2003 which affected his career and fortune. In the course of seeking solution to the ailment, former governors Olusegun Agagu of Ondo State, Olagunsoye Oyinlola of Osun State and Babatunde Raji Fashola of Lagos State rallied round him when the trouble lasted. They variously footed his hospital bills both at home and abroad. The affliction became protracted around 2007 and caused him his life on November 4, 2008.

A decade after his demise, his memory lingered due to many evergreen albums he produced which are still relevant to the contemporary socio-economic and political events in the nation. More importantly, three of his children followed his footsteps as musicians and with other musicians who are singing his brand of genre are keeping his memory alive.

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2018

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## Bloody year for global media

Mail & Guardian

May 2, 2010

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# Mail & Guardian

Length: 468 words

## Body

These are dark days for Nigerian media. The murder of three journalists last weekend was a reminder of the dangers faced by truth-seekers in a country where bribery and corruption are rife. Edo Ugbagwu (42) a court reporter with the *Nation*, was shot dead at his home in Lagos after men broke in and began arguing with him. According to Lawal Ogienagbon, a deputy editor at the *Nation*, Ugbagwu had not been working on any controversial stories and had received no threats. On the same day, Nathan S Dabak (36) and Sunday Gyang Bwede (39) working for the Christian newspaper the *Light Bearer*, were stabbed to death while on their way to Jos, the central Nigerian city which has seen the deaths of hundreds of Christians and Muslims. The killings were condemned by the Nigeria Union of Journalists. Nigerian journalists have been targets over their reporting in the past. In the country's most infamous case, **Dele Giwa** of *Newswatch* magazine, died after opening a letter bomb in 1986. The crime remains unsolved and many blame the nation's security services under dictator Ibrahim Babangida, who recently announced he would run in next year's presidential election.

The three murders last weekend contributed to the bloodiest month in a year for news media around the world, according to the International News Safety Institute. It said 17 news media staff died violently in April including Patient Chibeya, a Congolese **journalist** shot dead in front of his home by men in military fatigues. Last month also saw the loss of Cameroonian editor Germain Ngota in prison after allegedly being denied medical treatment. The institute is backing a call for one minute's silence in newsrooms on Monday, World Press Freedom Day, to honour more than 1 500 journalists who have died working over the last 14 years. The most recent *World Press Freedom Review*, published by the International Press Institute, made bleak reading for the continent, noting that at least 14 African journalists lost their lives in connection with their work in 2009. "African journalists faced a vast array of violations of their right to press freedom and freedom of expression," it said. "These included intimidation, harassment, threats, attacks, beatings, illegal detentions, arrests and imprisonment. Their equipment was confiscated and destroyed; many were forced to flee their home countries or stop reporting. "Media houses were censored and sometimes shut down; their broadcast signals were jammed and copies of their publications seized. Newspapers, broadcasters and journalists alike faced spurious lawsuits. Many reporters were slapped with criminal

## Bloody year for global media

charges, often for alleged defamation and sedition, and very often for covering corruption or the activities of security forces." - guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media 2010

### Notes

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On World Press Freedom Day, reporters are being asked to observe a minute's silence for the 1 500 journalists killed in the last 14 years.

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2012

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## Nothing like Notting Hill Carnival

The Sun (Nigeria)

September 10, 2016 Saturday

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**Length:** 1096 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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I had heard about it, read about it, pictured it in my mind's eye, knew what to expect in a carnival, but nothing prepared me for the loudness and awesomeness of Notting Hill carnival, Europe's biggest carnival and the biggest festival of black people outside Africa.

From all parts of London, in all degrees of dress and undress, they flocked north-west to Notting Hill for the street party, dressed in feathery carnival costumes, their faces painted in assorted colours and wiggling to mega-bass sounds of reggae, hip-hop, afrobeat and calypso music blasted from mobile sound systems, a flotilla of trucks loaded with steel-drummers churning out music from tins, drums and pots.

Oh, what a crowd! And what a scene! Not since "Brother Moses" led the Jews out of Egypt in the biblical Exodus has there been any such "movement of Jah people" united by the spirit of fun and social solidarity. If you listen to Bob Marley's classic song "Exodus" you will hear him sing about the "movement of Jah people." We were just moving and moving, in this ocean of humanity. Here, it was easy to get lost. So, father and children had to hold on tightly to each other so that we are not swept away by the surging human tide.

Nothing, and I mean nothing, prepared me for the Notting Hill Carnival. Instantly, my mind went to my late editor, Dele Giwa in our days at the Sunday Concord. This was the kind of story he sent you out to capture in its entirety, in all its amazing colours and sounds for the Sunday Concord Magazine pull out which required extensive, depth reporting and skilful writing.

#### Dimgba Igwe Anniversary

I am writing this column on September 6, another anniversary of my friend and brother Dimgba Igwe who was killed on Saturday, September 6, 2014 while jogging to keep fit on the street of Lagos around Okota where we live. Two years after and it's like yesterday. I was in this same place Ipswich when the bad news via a phone call came,

## Nothing like Notting Hill Carnival

hitting me like a bullet and knocking me down and out. It was like the end of the world. I never knew I could live without my twin brother. But I thank God who has been faithful and has helped me to carry on without him. Among the array of books I bought this summer holiday are three religious books: The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis, The Secret Life of a Pastor by Michael A. Milton and The Lion Prayer Collection compiled by Mary Batchelor. These are books I would normally have bought for Dimgba Igwe but now that he is not around, I will have to read the books with the aim of improving my spirituality. I really needed to get closer and closer to my God, hoping that one day I will get close to my friend in heaven. My son Taiwo on seeing those three religious books was impressed. "Uncle Dimgba would be very proud and happy to see you are interested in such books," he remarked.

Back to my story, the first Sunday Concord Magazine story I collaborated in writing and reporting with Dimgba Igwe was in Abeokuta where we had gone to report the grand 50th birthday celebration of our legendary publisher and statesman Chief MKO Abiola, who was also killed unfortunately.

It's so sad to think that three of the most influential people in my life were all killed. They all died painful, agonizing deaths. They didn't live long enough to experience old age. Sad. Very, very sad. But then, as it is said, it's not how long you live but what impact you made in your life that matters. **Dele Giwa** died through a letter bomb sent him. Abiola died, incarcerated and poisoned to death after winning an election to be the President of Nigeria but was not allowed to enter Aso Rock. Dimgba Igwe was jogging just as I jog every day when he was knocked down and killed. My prayer is that none of you my dearly beloved readers would die such painful, untimely deaths in this dangerous country of ours. It's not my portion. And it's not your portion either.

If he had not been killed, Dimgba and I would surely have been holidaying and covering or watching the Notting Hill Carnival together. London is one city he loves so much, if only to buy his books and suits there. At the Notting Hill Carnival, I can imagine Pastor Igwe's shock at the sight of fleshy women in bikinis, exposing their vast mammary glands which come in different sizes: the small, medium, big and oversize breasts. He would have pleaded "the blood of Jesus" several times and chastised me for bringing him to such an "iniquity place." And I would have reminded him that he is first and foremost a **journalist** before a pastor.

Yes, nothing like Notting Hill Carnival. Forget the cold statistics of 454 people arrested for criminal activities during the carnival, 8 policemen rushed to hospital, one or two people stabbed, including a young musician who had just released his debut album but was stabbed in the wrist while attempting to protect his Rolex watch. He survived the attack, thanks to the police who gave him first aid and rushed him to hospital. From the way some women dangled their boobs so brazenly, it's a miracle no rape case was reported.

A total of 7,000 policemen were sent out to police the carnival. Mobile toilets were stationed in strategic points to attend to those who wanted to obey the call of nature. Even with that, I saw some people urinating freely on people's doorsteps, something of abnormality in a disciplined city like London. I saw some dead-drunk men and women, lying in stupor on some street corners. I saw policemen leading away arrested drug-peddlers. I saw some white Londoners who had locked their doors but were hailing the passing carnival people from the heights of their secured windows. Some had deserted their homes to stay with friends or check into hotels because they could not stand the hurly-burly of the carnival. I saw people queuing to buy and eating Caribbean foods freshly prepared and sold along the carnival route. I saw the thick smoke and smelled the aroma of Jamaican chicken barbecues and fried rice as they engulfed the air, arousing the appetite of the hungry dancers who had been dancing for hours. I saw people proudly carrying their national flags, including the Nigerian flag. The Notting Hill story continues next week! Till then, enjoy today's football classic: The war of the two Manchester powerful rivals and their equally powerful and rival coaches Jose Mourinho and Pep Guardiola. And in the evening, Gennady Golovkin faces Kell Brook, both undefeated champions. Have a blissful Saturday.

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/364/1228/27/147347836998.jpg>

**Load-Date:** September 10, 2016

Nothing like Notting Hill Carnival

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## Of Mines, Miners and Minefields [column]

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 23, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 1013 words

**Byline:** Tony Momoh

### **Body**

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Believe me when I tell you that I did not think of mines when I set out to comment on the increasing unacceptable targeting of journalists outside due process, and the new dimension it took at a venue where justice is to be accessed by those who complain about the absence of due process.

But the more I thought about what journalists have been through worldwide and especially in this country, the more I recall the mindless killing of those who have a responsibility to monitor governance, the more the words mines, mining and minefield pop up in my day consciousness.

Let us look at the facts, but for now, ignore the pictures that stay glued in my mind and would not even fade. On May 3 which marked the World Press Freedom Day, Nigerian journalists organised a demonstration against the killing of journalists which has been so consistent as to lead to no other conclusion than that battle lines are being drawn by those who may have decided that this country must remain the jungle it had been reduced to, a place where you may look but may not see, or if you see, where you may not say what you see, or even report it for others to know what had been seen.

The stakes seem to have been raised. If it is something you chanced on but is not for public consumption, you are told to keep their secrets secret. Once upon a time, the Official Secrets Act would frighten you to keep your pen dry. But in the times we are in now, when anything that is transmitted from one place to another is right there on the information superhighway, there is no hiding place for any secret.

And those whose business it is to tell what is happening and live on doing so, are the ones that are becoming more endangered. According to Reporters Without Borders, an advocacy group, 11 journalists have been killed and 164 kidnapped so far in 2010.

And here in Nigeria, the National President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Malam Garba Mohammed on May 3 led his colleagues on a march to protest the harm that has been visited on journalists as a routine.

A letter was delivered to the President through Lagos State Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN) and to the Inspector-General of Police through Lagos State Police Commissioner, Barrister Marvel Akpoyibo. The protesters wore black T-shirts on which were embossed questions that demanded answers no one seems to be able to provide in the polity.

## Of Mines, Miners and Minefields [column]

They also carried placards that prayed, that cursed, that pleaded for the anger of the gods. Look at these: "God, protect us from the wicked enemies of progress." "The killers of our colleagues are yet to be found! Why?" "We want justice to prevail!" "**Dele Giwa**, Bagauda, Agbroko, Bayo Ohu, Edo Ugbagwu... your killers will never know peace!"

"State of Blood: Who killed Bayo Ohu, Abayomi Ogundeleji, Godwin Agbroko, **Dele Giwa**, Omololu Falobi, Edo Sule Ugbagwu? " These are questions that have been asked, that are being asked, that will be asked until the answers emerge.

For, one day the answers will emerge! But more urgent is what do we do to ensure that those who do their jobs are safe, are protected? As the questions are being asked, a report in the May 18 issue of Daily Independent upped the stakes. It was not the killing of a **journalist** this time, but the alleged arrest of a **journalist** who was not fast enough to get out of a court where a magistrate had ordered the expulsion of pressmen.

I will give the magistrate the benefit of the doubt, but will tell the story as it was told so that we can see for ourselves that some people just do not know that the media in Nigeria have the constitutional right to perform oversight functions on the three organs of government on behalf of the people. The report said that a Guardian reporter was ordered handcuffed; he was cuffed, but had to be released on the intervention of a lawyer in court.

The magistrate had said he would be detained and produced the next day to answer to a charge of contempt on the face of the court. I say I am scandalised by this report not because it may not be true but that some judges have refused or failed to look at the constitution and accept to be bound strictly by what it says.

Chapter two of the Constitution imposes duties which all organs of government must perform. The courts are told to keep away from that chapter but the media is told to monitor what organs of government do on behalf of the people.

Where any public duty is performed therefore, the media cannot be kept away without strong reasons. The emotional grouse of a magistrate is not and cannot be enough reason to ask journalists not to cover a court proceeding.

So, while public office holders in other lands are opening up their affairs for the people to know better how they are governed, we are shutting the doors here, threatening those who monitor governance to keep off, even having them bumped off.

The country we look up to for what we say we are doing with democracy is the United States whose Freedom of Information Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 4, 1966 and went into effect the following year.

The Act has been amended ever since, and just last Monday, on May 17, President Barak Obama signed legislation intended to promote free press around the world. This was the climax of a bipartisan measure inspired by the murder in Pakistan of Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal reporter, shortly after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act requires the State Department to expand its scrutiny of media restrictions and intimidation as part of its annual review of human rights in each country. Among other things, the department will be required to determine whether foreign governments participate in or condone violations of press freedom. What will they find when they come knocking at our door?

They will discover that instead of an open field, we have mined the whole area of manifesting life, especially the political area involving office-holding where we have taken everyone hostage, including journalists who must collude in the rape of the polity. Or die!

Of Mines, Miners and Minefields [column]

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We live in dangerous times in Nigeria –Awoyinfa



## We live in dangerous times in Nigeria –Awoyinfa

The Sun (Nigeria)

January 9, 2015 Friday

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**Length:** 520 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

### **Body**

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Former Managing Director of The Sun Publishing Limited, Mike Awoyinfa, yesterday regretted the growing insecurity that has drenched the nation in blood and tears.

By SAM OTTI

Former Managing Director of The Sun Publishing Limited, Mike Awoyinfa, yesterday regretted the growing insecurity that has drenched the nation in blood and tears.

He said the country needs a leader with the political will to tame vicious killings troubling the nation and reassure citizens of safety of their lives and property.

Awoyinfa stated this in Lagos during the commemoration ceremony of Simeon Olaosebikan Apata, founder of Apata Memorial Nursery, Primary and High School, Isolo, who was murdered by faceless hoodlums on January 8, 1995.

The ace journalist, who was the guest speaker at the event, frowned on incessant killings in the country and the failure of the law enforcement agencies to bring the culprits to book.

"You don't know how lucky you are to be alive in this New Year. This is a very dangerous country. This is a very, very difficult country, a country where you are on your own. This is a country where people kill others and they go scot-free," he said.

Recalling his colleague and business partner, Dimgba Igwe, who was mowed down by a hit-and-run driver on September 6, 2014 and the death of celebrated journalist, Dele Giwa through a letter bomb, Awoyinfa stressed

We live in dangerous times in Nigeria –Awoyinfa

that the failure to bring the perpetrators of these dastardly acts to book had eroded his confidence in the Nigeria Police.

He described September 6, 2014 as the darkest day of his life. Aside the shock of Igwe's death, he said the tragic incident also sapped his zeal of jogging to Apata Junction in Okota, which he and the deceased routinely did together during his lifetime.

Awoyinfa called for divine intervention to pull the nation back from the brink. He said the country needed a leader with integrity, who could address the several challenges facing the nation.

"We pray that God will give us a leader that Nigeria deserves. I am not a politician. I am only a Nigerian and I wish Nigeria the best. This is a very dangerous time in the country," he said.

He applauded the legacy of the late Apata, noting that his investment in the nation's education sector had yielded immense benefits. He described the school as a good platform for learning and urged students of the school to efficiently utilise the opportunity given to them.

Awoyinfa said the power of education elevated him to his current position, having successfully edited the defunct Weekend Concord and later becoming the Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of The Sun, a tabloid newspaper that has become a national and international brand.

While welcoming parents and guests to the event, Ayodele Apata described his late father as a compassionate man, who attended to the needs of people around him. He expressed joy that his father's legacies had continued to flourish in the past 20 years under the care of his three wives.

Ayodele said his father left shoes too big to fill, while praising the resilience of his three wives, who had successfully managed the school to a citadel of excellence.

**Load-Date:** January 9, 2015

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## **Boko Haram Will Soon Be History, Says Borno Deputy Governor**

This Day (Lagos)

October 26, 2011 Wednesday

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**Length:** 460 words

**Byline:** Michael Olugbode

### **Body**

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Deputy Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Zannah Mustapha, Tuesday, said the state would soon reclaim its past glory as a haven of peace, going by the security threats posed by Boko Haram.

Mustapha, who stated this when the National President of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Alhaji Mohammed Garba, paid him a condolence visit over the death of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Maiduguri Network Centre cameraman, Mr. Zakariya Isa, said many of the group's leaders were currently behind bars and the little that were still at large, the security agencies would soon clamp on them.

Mustapha said it was sad that Isa was hacked down by the notorious sect, urging members of the public to report any security threat to security agencies.

He said there was no hiding place for Boko Haram members, stressing that those already arrested by security agencies would soon know their fate.

He commended security agencies for ensuring that peace returned to the state, while also assuring residents to go about their normal activities without fear or favour, as the long arm of the law would soon catch up with all of them.

Earlier, Garba had urged journalists to confine themselves with their "primary responsibilities" of informing and educating the general public, warning that other activities, which did not conform with the ethics of the profession could endanger their lives and media houses.

Garba said: "The death of this cameraman was unbelievable and shocking. I was completely demoralised with the news that Zakiraya Isa of NTA Maiduguri, was allegedly shot and killed at his Bulunkutu residence by suspected Boko Haram gunmen."

He appealed to the people of the state to allow journalists exercise their responsibilities of informing and educating the general public, without any threat to their lives and media houses in the country.

On the part of journalists, he said: "All of you here condoling our departed colleague should be very careful in discharging your respective responsibilities of informing and education the general public," adding that such responsibilities must be within the ethics of the profession of journalism.

### Boko Haram Will Soon Be History, Says Borno Deputy Governor

He commended the state government for the cash donation of N1million and 20 bags of rice and maize, 10 jerry cans of vegetable oil and a cow to the family members of the slain cameraman, praying that God should grant NTA and his family members the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

He, however, tasked security agencies to fish out the killers of the slain cameraman, saying it was sad that since the murder of **Dele Giwa** no case of killing of **journalist** has been resolved in the country.

The president also paid a condolence visit to the wives and children of Isa in Bulunkutu ward, where he donated a cash gift of N100, 000.

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2011

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## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

This Day

March 21, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 34172 words

### Body

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023

11:12pm

PDP's Fubara Wins Rivers Guber Election

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Mr Siminalayi Fubara of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the governorship election in Rivers state.

Prof Akpofure Rim-Rukeh, the State Returning Officer, made the declaration Monday night, after a long wait for the last local government area collation officer to announce his result from Ahoada West.

Fubara polled a total of 302,614 votes from all the 23 LGAs to defeat his closest opponent, Mr Tonye Cole of the All Progressives Congress (APC) who had 95,274 votes, while Senator Magnus Abe of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) scored 46,981 votes.

According to Prof Rim-Rukeh, the PDP gubernatorial candidate satisfied the requirements of the law to be declared winner of the March 18 governorship poll. He also declared that the Labour Party candidate, Mrs Beatrice Itubo scored 22,224 to occupy fourth position, NNPP scored 335 votes.

Prof Rim-Rukeh said the number of registered voters was 3,537,190, total number of accredited voters was 496,852, total number of rejected votes was 10,670, while the total votes cast were 494,604.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

However, at the end of the exercise, party agents signed the result sheets as declared.

10:52pm

#### APC's Alia Wins Benue Governorship Election

The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Fr. Hycinth Alia of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the governorship election in Benue.

The INEC Returning Officer, Prof. Farouk Kuta, who is also the Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology Minna, announced the result in Makurdi on Monday.

He said Alia won the election with 473,933 votes to defeat his closest rival, Titus Uba of the PDP who got 223,913 votes.

The returning officer said though election did not hold in Kwande Local Government Area, the difference in votes between Alia and the PDP candidate was 251,020 votes.

Kuta explained that the election in Kwande LGA would not substantially affect the final vote tally even if it was held.

He added that he took the decision to announce the result in line with Section 24(2) of the Electoral Act.(NAN)

10:43pm

#### INEC Declares APC's Uba Sani Winner of Kaduna Guber Election

By John Shiklam in Kaduna

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kaduna state has declared Senator Uba Sani of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the governorship election in the state.

INEC State Collation Officer for Gubernatorial Election (SCGE), Prof. Lawal Bilbis,

announced this at the INEC headquarters in Kaduna on Monday night.

He said the APC candidate polled 730,002 votes to defeat his closest opponent, Isah Ashiru of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who garnered 719,196 votes.

"Senator Uba Sani having scored the highest number of valid votes and met the requirements of the law, is hereby declared the winner and returned elected" Bilbis said.

He said the LP recorded 58,283 votes while the NNPP got 21,405.

Earlier in the day, there were wild jubilations in some parts of Kaduna metropolis following rumours that the PDP won the election.

According to Bilbis, details of the results are as follows:

No. of registered voters: 4,335,208.

No. of accredited voters- 1,581,662

APC- 730,002

PDP - 719,196

LP - 58,283

NNPP 21,405

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total valid votes cast: 1,546,747

Invalid votes: 19,114

Total votes cast: 1,565,861

10:39PM

Gov Zulum Reelected in Borno

The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Gov. Babagana Zulum of Borno as the winner of Saturday gubernatorial election.

The Returning Officer, Prof. Jude Rabo, while announcing the result, said Zulum of All Progressives Congress (APC) pulled 545, 542 votes to defeat his closest rival, Mohammed Jajari of People's Democratic Party (PDP) who got 82,147 votes.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Zulum was reelected on the platform of APC defeating other 11 contestants in the race.

NAN also reports that all the 28 House of Assembly seats in Borno were won by APC, with the incumbent Speaker of the assembly, Abdulkarim Lawan ( APC-Guzamala) who is the longest serving speaker winning for the fifth time.(NAN)

10:23pm

Zamfara PDP Accuses IG of Deploying Special Police Team to Rig Poll

The Zamfara State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has alleged that the Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba has deployed a team of special forces to aid rigging of the Zamfara governorship election.

The Peoples Democratic Party in a statement Monday in Gusau through the Dauda Lawal Media Office accused the Inspector General of allegedly conniving with Governor Bello Matawalle to rig the governorship election in his favor.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced the results of 11 local governments out of 14 local government areas of the state.

"As it stands, we have won nine local governments while the APC won two local governments. We are waiting for the official announcement of three local government areas: Kauran Namoda, Maradun, and Birnin Magaji", it said.

The party further said: from the announced results by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), it was winning with a wide margin.

PDP said: "Our major concern is the interference of the Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba. We raised the alarm on election day that there was no police presence across the state. It was a plot by the Zamfara state commissioner of police to aid the ruling APC in manipulating the process.

"Our verified sources have confirmed to us that the Inspector General of Police has deployed a team of special forces to Zamfara. They were flown to Sokoto from Abuja. We have learned that they are on their way coming into Zamfara to cause chaos and create tension in the state capital."

It called on INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmoud Yakubu, to call the Zamfara State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) to order, adding "We have lost confidence in him."

"Zamfara State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) is intentionally delaying the process of the announcement of the result, giving the governor room for manipulation.

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"All collated results from 14 local government areas are ready and in the state collation center. We don't know why they are delaying the process.

"The president, security agencies, and international observers should pay close attention to the process in Zamfara state," PDP said.

6:21pm

#### PDP's Oborevwori Wins Delta Guber Poll

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Chief Sheriff Oborevwori of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the March 18 governorship election in Delta.

The State INEC Collation Officer, Prof. Onuwari Georgewill, the Vice Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt, made the declaration on Monday in Asaba.

Georgewill said that Oborevwori polled a total of 360,234 votes to defeat his closest opponent, Sen. Ovie Omo-Agege of the All Progressive Party (APC) who scored 240,229 votes.

"Sheriff Oborevwori having satisfied the requirements of the law is hereby declared the winner of the governorship election and returned elected," he said.

Georgewill said that Mr Kennedy Pela of the Labour Party came third with 48,027 votes, while Mr Great Ogboru of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) came fourth with 11,021 votes.

He said the number of registered voters was 3,221,687, while the total number of accredited voters was 710,829.

Georgewill added that the total number of rejected votes was 15,384 and the total votes cast was 687,121.

A breakdown of the results on local government basis, as announced by the local government Collation Officers, showed that Oborevwori won in 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs), while Omo-Agege won in four out of the 25 LGAs of the state.

Oborevwori won in Ika North East; Aniocha North; Ndokwa East; Ika South; Patani; Sapele; Aniocha South; Uvwie; Okpe; Bomadi; Ethiope East; Oshimili North; Warri South; and Oshimili South.

He also won in Isoko North; Ethiope West; Isoko South; Ukwani; Ndokwa West; Warri North; Burutu; and Warri South West.

Omo-Agege won in Udu, Uvwie, Ughelli South and Ughelli North.(NAN)

6:02pm

#### Kwarans Voted for Progress, Says Abdulrazaq

Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has said the overwhelming victory that the All Progressives Congress (APC) recorded in Saturday's polls underscored the desire of the citizens to continue along the path of positive progress Kwara has recorded over the past three years.

"This victory is truly humbling, and we give all glory to God who has made this happen. It speaks to our people's understanding of our history, their appreciation of the progress made between yesterday and today, and their commitment to a greater tomorrow. It reflects the wishes of Kwarans at home and in diaspora to sustain the gains of the past three and a half years. It means they appreciate our modest efforts to improve the lot of our state.

"My profound appreciation goes to all the stakeholders for the truly pan-Kwara mandate: young or old, men and women, traditional and religious institutions, civil servants, private sector players, thoughts leaders, political leaders, market men and women, artisans, the media, students, and our young ones who energised our communities with that sweet, creative chant of Maa se lo.

"For me, the victory is a call to consolidate on and further spread the gains of the past three and a half years and do much more for the people. I pledge to recommit myself to this. Together, we will build a Kwara whose politics will be

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anchored on giving equitable opportunities to all, expanding the state's economic base, and delivering dividends of democracy to the citizenry in an atmosphere of peace and respect for the dignity of the human person.

"I dedicate this election victory to God and to the people of our state — in the north, south, and central. They have shown once again that power resides with the people. Finally, I commend the peaceful conduct of the election, and especially congratulate the security agencies, the electoral umpire, and the political elite for jointly making Kwara polls the most peaceful in Nigeria," the governor said.

5:51pm

APC's Umar Bago Wins Niger Guber Election

\* PDP Campaign Spokesman Quits Politics

By Laleye Dipo in Minna

All Progressives Congress candidate in Saturday's governorship election in Niger state Alhaji Umar Mohammed Bago has been declared the winner of the contest.

Bago, a member of the House of Representatives polled 469,896 votes to defeat his closest challenger Alhaji Isah Liman Kantigi of the Peoples Democratic who scored 387,476 votes.

The Labour Party candidate Mr Joshua Bawa recorded 3,415 votes and the New Nigerian Political Party candidate Alhaji Ibrahim Sokodeke 3378 votes.

With his victory announced by the INEC returning officer, Professor Clement Allawa, Deputy Vice Chancellor University of Abuja, Bago will become the 7th Civilian governor of the state after Alhaji Mohammed Awwal Ibrahim, Alhaji Musa Mohammed Inuwa, Engineer Abdullahi Abdul Kure, Dr Muazu Babangida Aliyu and current Governor Abubakar Sani Bello.

Meanwhile, the Director of Communications of the Isah Liman Kantigi Campaign Organisation Alhaji Mohammed Yahaya Usman on Sunday quit politics.

Yahaya Usman in a statement made available to THISDAY said he took the action for personal reasons.

The statement reads: "Either way it goes I have come full circle, I suspend my membership of partisan politics, I am now neutral.

"I wish to focus on developing businesses with my social life with everyone

"Those very close to me know about this plan long ago

"I wish everyone the best in life."

5:25pm

APC Leads in Kaduna Guber Election, Residents Await Result from 1 LG

\*Govt warns against violence amid growing tension

By John Shiklam in Kaduna

Senator Uba Sani, candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kaduna state is leading in the results of Saturday's governorship election so far declared by the Independent Nation Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kaduna.

Of the results announced in 22 out of the 23 Local Government Areas in the state, the APC is leading with over 12,000 votes in 10 LGA it won The PDP's candidate, Isah Asharu, trails behind even though he won in 12 LGAs

The APC won in **Giwa**, Ikara, Kauru, Sabon Gari

Kubau, Zaria, Kaduna North

Kaduna South, Igabi and Birnin Gwari LGAs.

The PDP won in 12 LGAs namely; Kaura, Sanga, Kajuru, Jaba, Makarfi, Jama'a, Zangon Kataf, Soba, Chikun, Kagarko, Kachia and Lere.

Result from the remaining one LGA - Kudan, the home of the PDP candidate was yet to be announced as INEC had adjourned collation and to 6pm.

Meanwhile, there is growing tension in Kaduna the state as residents anxiously await the outcome of the election.

The state government, in a statement on Monday, said security agencies had been put on "high alert", to crush any attempt to cause trouble.

The statement signed by Samuel Aruwan, Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, said the state government had received intelligence reports indicating plans by some individuals and groups to spread disaffection and instigate violence in Kaduna Metropolis and other major cities in the state.

Aruwan said "security agencies are conducting diligent investigations into these reports," warning that "individuals and groups found to be behind such activities will be vigorously prosecuted."

There has been growing tension in the state as residents await the outcome of Saturday's governorship election.

The statement reads: "Kaduna State Government hereby informs citizens that security agencies are on high alert to contain threats to law and order throughout the State.

"This development follows intelligence reports indicating plans by some individuals and groups to spread disaffection and instigate violence in Kaduna Metropolis and other major centres in the State.

"Security agencies are conducting diligent investigations into these reports. Individuals and groups found to be behind such activities will be vigorously prosecuted.

"It is important to reiterate that street protests remain strictly prohibited, to prevent any possible breakdown of law and order.

"Government appeals to citizens to volunteer information on any activity which may pose a threat to public peace, law and order via these help lines: 09034000060, 08170189999".

4:20pm

INEC Declares Otu of APC, C'River Governor-elect

Bassey Inyang in Calabar

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Cross River State, Prince Bassey Edet Otu, has been declared winner of the March 18 governorship election in the state.

The state Returning Officer for INEC, Prof. Teddy Charles of the Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State, who made the announcement on Monday afternoon at the INEC headquarters in Calabar, said the APC candidate polled 258,619 votes to emerge winner of the election.

He said Otu's closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Senator Sandy Onor, polled 179,636 votes.

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He said the votes recorded by other parties that sponsored candidates and participated in the governorship election are as follows: AA: 405; ADC: 1620; ADP: 902; APP: 340; LP : 5, 957; NRM: 441; PRP: 3,052; SDP: 628; YPP: 333.

The returning officer said the number of registered voters in the state stood at 1,766, 466; and total number of accredited voters was 466,294.

He said the total valid votes cast was 451, 933, and the number of rejected votes was 8923.

The returning officer said the total votes cast in the election was 460,856.

Prof. Charles said the total number of cancelled votes was 44,486, and therefore, less than 78,983, which is the margin of votes between the highest votes cast and the second highest number of votes cast.

The returning officer, therefore, declared Otu Bassey Edet of the APC as the winner of the election and governor-elect having satisfied the constitutional and other legal requirements to be so declared.

3:32pm

APC's Nwifuru Wins Ebonyi Guber Election

Benjamin Nworie in Abakaliki

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr Francis Nwifuru, as the winner of Ebonyi governorship election.

The Returning Officer and Vice-Chancellor of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Prof. Charles Igwe, announced that Nwifure scored 199,131 votes to defeat his closest challenger and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr Ifeanyi Odii, who polled 80,191 votes.

The candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA, Prof. Ben Odoh, came a distance third position with 52,189 votes.

Meanwhile, the declaration of Nwifuru as the winner of the governorship election has resulted in wide jubilation at the capital city, as supporters thronged the streets with musical instruments.

The governor-elect and Speaker of Ebonyi State House of Assembly, Nwifuru, dedicated his victory to God.

He said that he would strive to meet the needs of Ebonyi people and consolidate on the achievement of the present administration of David Umahi.

"This is a thoroughly deserved victory for Ebonyi people, for continuity and consolidation on the brilliant works of the present administration. We came on Divine Mandate and together, we shall all work to meet the needs of Ebonyi people, that is why our manifesto is themed 'The People's Charter of Needs'.

"During our campaigns, we laid before you, my dear people, what will be the essence of our administration and I make proud to say that we will not deter in fulfilling our promises to you.

"I thank very specially, all my fellow candidates from all other political parties, who went on this journey with me fervently in a bid to make the lives of our people better. We brought out the best in one another and I make bold to say, that we are all winners," Ebonyi governor-elect said.

2:08pm

INEC Suspends Collation of Governorship Results in Enugu

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

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The Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) has suspended the collation of results for the governorship election in Enugu State. Mmecmme

A breakdown of results collated Sunday shows that Peter MBA of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is leading in the race, having won nine out of the 17 local government areas in the state.

He is closely followed by the candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Chijioke Edeoga, who won eight of the local governments announced.

However, a winner is yet to be declared after INEC returning officer for the Enugu governorship election, Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, announced the suspension of the collation of results for Nkanu East and Nsukka Local Governments following an allegation of non-usage of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), gross irregularities and intimidation of voters.

In a statement in its official Twitter account on Monday, the National Commissioner and Chairman of Voter Education Committee of the commission, Festus Okoye, said that the decision to suspend the collation was taken after a review of the election.

"Reports from Enugu call for a review of the results for the governorship election from the two outstanding local government areas of Nsukka and Nkanu East," Okoye said in the statement.

"Consequently, the commission hereby suspends the collation of results in the two outstanding LGs which are yet to be collated. A review will be undertaken immediately before the process is concluded," he further stated.

The commission appealed for the understanding and patience of voters, parties and candidates in the affected state.

Meanwhile, supporters of the two leading candidates in the governorship race, including MBA of the PDP and Edeoga of the LP have been protesting outside the headquarters of the INEC since Monday morning.

While those of the PDP are calling on the INEC to declare MBA winner of the election, supporters of the LP candidate are alleging irregularities in the polls and insisting that the INEC must look at the results in their BVAS and follow what the electoral act says.

1:59pm

PDP Supporters Protest, Ask INEC to Declare MBA Winner of Enugu Guber Polls

...As LP supporters insist Electoral Act must be followed

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

Over 200 supporters of the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Enugu State, Peter MBA are currently protesting outside the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC in the state, following the delay in the announcement of their candidate as winner of the polls.

A breakdown of results collated announced Sunday shows that MBA is leading in the race, having won nine out of the 17 LGs in the state. He is closely followed by candidate of the Labour Party, LP) Chijioke Edeoga who won eight of the LGs announced.

However, a winner is yet to be declared after INEC returning officer for the Enugu governorship election, Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe announced suspension of the collation of results from Nkanu East, Enugu East and Nsukka LGs following an allegation of non-usage of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, (BVAS), gross irregularities and intimidation of voters.

At the time of this report, the collation of results are yet to resume, after the process was adjourned till this morning to allow for investigation into the allegations of irregularities in some areas.

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Some of the protesters who spoke to newsmen said INEC should declare Mba winner of the election because he won the highest number of votes announced so far.

"We wonder what is delaying the commission from declaring him the winner," they said. The Collation Center is not a tribunal. Whoever has grievances can go to court,".

Continuing, they said "INEC must be careful, the Resident Electoral Commissioner and the returning officer must also do the needful,".

"The people have made their choice,".

Meanwhile, supporters of the LP candidate are also protesting over the outcome of the election, insisting that INEC must look at the results in their BIVAS and follow what the electoral act says.

"Over voting is not allowed," they said, referring to the results from Nkanu and Enugu East.

1:50pm

#### INEC Suspends Further Collation of Governorship Election Results in Abia, Enugu

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has suspended the further collation of governorship election results in some parts of Abia and Enugu States.

The commission, however, assured that a review would be undertaken immediately before the process is concluded.

INEC National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, in a statement issued Monday said the Commission took the decision after its meeting held on Monday to review the conduct of the Governorship and State Assembly elections held last Saturday.

He said: "Arising from the meeting, the Commission took the decision to suspend forthwith further collation of the Governorship election results in some parts of Abia and Enugu States."

Okoye recalled that the commission's office in Obingwa Local Government Area was invaded by thugs on Sunday and its officials held hostage in relation to the collation of results from the Local Government Area.

Similarly, he said reports from Enugu State call for a review of the results for the governorship election from the two outstanding Local Government Areas of Nsukka and Nkanu East.

Okoye added: "Consequently, the Commission hereby suspends the collation of results in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State and the two outstanding Local Government Areas of Enugu State which are yet to be collated. A review will be undertaken immediately before the process is concluded."

The commission appealed for the understanding and patience of voters, parties and candidates in the affected States.

1:43pm

#### More Gubernatorial Election Results from Delta

With results declared for five more local government areas Monday, only two are outstanding.

The Delta State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Rev Monday Udoh, announced yesterday (Sunday) that supplementary election would be held today in certain wards in two local government areas due to the inability of INEC to conduct the exercise in those places owing to logistics challenges.

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The INEC-declared results, in addition to those for 18 local government areas yesterday, are as follow:

\*Ughelli North LGA

Registered voters - 223,083

Accredited voters - 55,130

APC - 34,955

LP - 1,438

PDP - 15,198

Valid votes - 53,232

Rejected votes - 1,453

Total votes cast - 54,685

\* Isoko South LGA

Registered voters - 140,822

Accredited voters - 38,902

APC - 15,954

LP - 492

PDP - 19,963

Valid votes - 38,109

Rejected votes - 528

Total votes cast - 38,637

Ukwaani LGA

Registered voters - 89658

Accredited voters -24,108

APC - 7,591

LP - 791

PDP - 14,640

Valid votes - 23,596

Rejected votes - 485

Total votes cast -24,081

Ndokwa West LGA

Registered voters - 104,754

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Accredited voters - 27,883

APC - 10,252

LP - 935

PDP - 15,539

Valid votes - 26,989

Rejected votes - 536

Total votes cast - 27,525

Warri North LGA

Registered voters - 110,363

Accredited voters - 15,494

APC - 4,165

LP - 205

PDP - 10,367

Valid votes - 15,139

Rejected votes - 355

Total votes cast - 15,494

1:17pm

Katsina PDP Rejects Guber Election Result, to Seek Redress in Court

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Katsina State has rejected the result of the March 18 governorship and state House of Assembly elections in the state.

The Director-General of the state PDP campaign council, Dr. Mustapha Muhammed Inuwa, who disclosed this Monday while briefing journalists, said the party will seek redress in court.

He said: "We have totally rejected the result of the governorship and state House of Assembly elections in Katsina State, and we will challenge the result in court in order to retrieve our mandate."

He alleged that the processes of the election were marred by irregularities and voter apathy, where intimidation and harassment of voters perceived not to cast their votes in favour of the APC were manhandled.

Inuwa added, however, that no amount of blackmail and intimidation would deter the opposition PDP in the state from reclaiming "its stolen mandate" and restore democracy in the state.

He claimed that the state government directed all workers, traditional and religious leaders to do all they could for APC to win the poll or lose their respective positions.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Sunday night declared Dr. Dikko Umar Radda of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the governorship poll in the state.

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According to the electoral umpire, the erstwhile director general of SMEDAN polled 859,892 votes to defeat the PDP candidate, Senator Yakubu Lado, who scored 486,620 votes.

The Returning Officer, Mu'azu Abubakar-Gusau, while announcing the result, said the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) candidate, Mr. Nura Khalil, got 8,263 votes, Imrana Jaafar Jino of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) secured 4,226 votes, while Ibrahim Abu-Musawa of the Labour Party (LP) secured 560 votes.

12:35pm

#### Plateau Governorship Election Result as Announced by INEC

JOS EAST

APC: 11852

PDP: 9290

BARKIN LADI

APC: 18,568

PDP: 32,119

BASSA

APC: 25,788

PDP: 29,135

LANGTANG SOUTH

APC: 12,437

PDP: 16,104

KANKE

APC: 35,436

PDP: 6,870

LANGTANG NORTH

APC: 20,756

PDP: 27,826

MIKANG

APC: 10,691

PDP: 12,027

PANKSHIN

APC: 28,827

PDP: 15,957

SHENDAM

APC: 30,815

PDP: 17,733

RIYOM

APC: 12,657

PDP: 18,647

WASE

APC: 35,011

PDP: 26,557

KANAM

APC: 48,710

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PDP: 28,706

MANGU

APC: 25,570

PDP: 77,279

BOKKOS

APC: 20,779

PDP: 26,529

JOS SOUTH

APC: 35,403

PDP: 84,103

JOS NORTH

APC: 83,170

PDP: 64,690

.QUAN'PAN

APC: 24,900

PDP: 31,727

#### SUMMARY OF FINAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED

APC: 481,370

PDP: 525,299

12:24pm

Guber Poll: Security Agencies on High Alert in Kaduna to Contain Threats to Law, Order

John Shiklam in Kaduna

The Kaduna State Government has warned that security agencies are "on high alert" to contain threats to law and order across the state.

The Commissioner for Internal Security, Samuel Aruwan, said this in a statement on Monday in Kaduna.

He said the state government had received intelligence reports indicating plans by some individuals and groups to spread disaffection and instigate violence in Kaduna metropolis and other major centres in the state.

Aruwan said: "Security agencies are conducting diligent investigations into these reports. Individuals and groups found to be behind such activities will be vigorously prosecuted."

There has been growing tension in the state as residents await the outcome of Saturday's governorship election.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday adjourned the collation of the governorship results to Monday by 12 noon after which the winner would be declared.

So far, results had been declared in 19 out of the 23 local government areas in the state with Uba Sani, the candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) leading Isah Ashiru of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with over 15,000 votes.

Aruwan's statement read: "Kaduna State Government hereby informs citizens that security agencies are on high alert to contain threats to law and order throughout the state.

"This development follows intelligence reports indicating plans by some individuals and groups to spread disaffection and instigate violence in Kaduna metropolis and other major centres in the state.

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"Security agencies are conducting diligent investigations into these reports. Individuals and groups found to be behind such activities will be vigorously prosecuted.

"It is important to reiterate that street protests remain strictly prohibited to prevent any possible breakdown of law and order.

"Government appeals to citizens to volunteer information on any activity which may pose a threat to public peace, law and order via these help lines: 09034000060, 08170189999."

11:38am

#### Kano Residents Defy Curfew, Celebrate NNPP's Victory

Kano residents in the metropolis on Monday took to the streets celebrating the victory of the New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP) candidates at the governorship and state assembly elections in spite of the curfew imposed by the state government.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that government imposed dawn-to-dusk curfew to avoid a breakdown of law and order following the tension generated from the collation of results of the governorship and state Assembly elections.

Abba Yusuf of NNPP defeated his closest rival, the state Deputy Governor, Alhaji Nasiru Gawuna of All Progressives Congress (APC).

Yusuf polled 1,019, 602 votes against Gawuna's 892,705.

The residents chanted victory songs and wielded placards with various inscriptions as they paraded in motorcades on the streets.

Some of the placards read: "Alhamdulillah Kano is for Kwankwaso" and "Support for Abba Gida-Gida for progress of the state," among others.

Displays by motorcyclists and tricyclists added colour to the celebrations.(NAN)

11:25am

#### Gov Mohammed Reelected in BauchiFrom Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Senator Bala Abdukadir Mohammed as winner of March 18 Governorship election in Bauchi State.

The Governor won 15 of the 20 local government councils in the state, scoring 525,280 votes.

His closest rival, Air Marshall Sadique Abubakar of the All Progressive Congress (APC), scored 432,272 votes while Senator Jika Haliru of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) got 60,496 votes to emerge a distant third.

The margin between PDP and APC is 93,003 votes.

Governor Mohammed (Kauran Bauchi) was declared re-elected by the State Returning Officer and Vice Chancellor, Federal University, Dutse, Professor Abdulaziz Sabo Mohammed on Monday.

The incumbent Governor recorded massive victory in 15 out of the 20 local government areas of the state.

Governor Mohammed won in Alkaleri, Bogoro Dass, Bauchi,Kirfi, Jama'are,Warji, Itas-Gadau, Dambam, Ganjuwa,Shira, Ningi,Toro, Tafawa Balewa and Zaki in results declared by INEC.

His closest competitor, Air Marshall Sadique Abubakar (rtd) of APC won five local government areas namely Giade, Darazo, Misau Katagum and Gamawa.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

## Bauchi Official Governorship Election Result:

## 1) JAMA'ARE LGA

APC - 11,865

PDP - 13,693

NNPP - 3,253

## 2) KIRFI LGA

APC - 11,631

PDP - 13,454

NNPP - 3,571

## 3) BOGORO LGA

APC - 10,436

PDP - 16,589

NNPP - 3,365

## 4) WARJI LGA

APC - 11,783

PDP - 20,416

NNPP - 1,812

## 5) GIADE LGA

APC - 18,023

PDP - 14,145

NNPP - 1,114

## 6) ITAS/GADAU LGA

APC - 16,206

PDP - 18,778

NNPP - 2,913

## 7) GAMAWA LGA

APC - 22,565

PDP - 21,558

NNPP - 1,841

## 8) DAMBAM LGA

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC - 11,325

PDP - 13,307

NNPP - 4,395

9)SHIRA LGA

APC - 21,644

PDP - 25,373

NNPP - 2,536

10)ZAKI LGA

APC - 19,637

PDP - 26,420

NNPP - 1,415

11)GANJUWA LGA

APC - 17,606

PDP - 20,924

NNPP - 7,387

12)DASS LGA

APC - 11,596

PDP - 14,471

13)DARAZO LGA

APC - 23,544

PDP - 19,736

NNPP - 3359

14)ALKALERI LGA

APC - 15,798

PDP - 34,387

NNPP - 2069

15)NINGI LGA

APC - 23,795

PDP - 29,515

NNPP - 4,178

16)TAFAWA BALEWA LGA

APC - 22,928

PDP - 35,100

NNPP - 3,166

17)MISAU LGA

APC - 26,448

PDP - 16,351

NNPP - 1,820

18)KATAGUM LGA

APC - 35,774

PDP - 25,218

NNPP - 2,376

19)TORO LGA

APC - 29,848

PDP - 65,456

NNPP - 3,634

20)BAUCHI LGA

APC - 69,850

PDP - 80,390

NNPP - 5,749

9:03am

Abiodun Thanks Ogun Electorate, Says Power Belongs to God

James Sowole in Abeokuta

Ogun State governor, Dapo Abiodun, has commended the people of the state for renewing his mandate for another term of four years, just as he remarked that "Power Belongs to God."

Abiodun described his victory as heart-warming, and a "further proof that no man can play God or stop what God has ordained"

The Governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Kunle Somorin on Sunday, said though the election was keenly contested, his reelection came to him as a sign of good faith and a vote of confidence in his Administration by the people, assuring that his second term would usher in more goodies of democracy.

He said his victory is a further challenge to deliver on the manifesto of the All Progressives Congress (APC), even as he promised that he would continue with the government of inclusiveness that has been the hallmark of his Administration in the last four years.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

While commending the people for conducting themselves in a peaceful manner during the polls, the governor equally lauded the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, the media and other relevant stakeholders for ensuring an atmosphere which enabled peaceful elections.

Abiodun also thanked the party leaders, stalwarts and members of the APC in the state, who worked assiduously for the party's victory, assuring them that he would continue to keep the flag of the party flying, by continuing to deliver good governance across the state.

The governor called on the opposition and well-meaning individuals in the state to join hands with him in order to move Ogun State to a higher pedestal.

He reiterated his Administration's commitment to principle of equity, fairness and justice, maintaining that his Administration would not be characterized by favouritism, nepotism and lopsidedness in situating developmental projects in all the four zones and three senatorial districts of the state.

According to Abiodun, in his second term, he "shall ensure the completion of several projects, aimed at improving the standard of living of the people and the economic prosperity of the state from the unparalleled success already recorded".

He promised to be inclusive participatory, transparent, accountable, fair and not develop any part of the state at the expense of the other, the statement concluded.

8:50am

#### Buni's Re-election Well Deserved Victory, Says Senate President

The Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, has congratulated the Governor of Yobe, Mai Mala Buni, on his re-election for a second term of four years.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Buni winner of the Saturday governorship election in Yobe State.

Lawan, in a statement on Monday in Abuja by his Special Adviser on Media, Ola Awoniyi, described the outcome of the poll as a well deserved victory for Buni and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"I heartily congratulate my dear friend and brother, the Governor of Yobe, Mai Mala Buni, on his re-election for a second term.

"I also congratulate our great party, the APC, on the renewal of our mandate to continue delivering progressive governance to our people across Yobe.

"For our governor and party, this is a well-deserved victory from a keenly contested poll," he said.

Lawn said the victory, above all, was for the good people of Yobe, who have freely renewed the mandate they gave in 2019.

"Fellow people of Yobe, you have again made a resounding statement of your full confidence in the leadership of Governor Mai Mala Buni.

"I can assure you that our governor will in the next four years remain on the same path of good governance for the progress of Yobe and the well-being of our people," Lawan stated.

He assured the governor that the people of Yobe would continue to support his mission to take the state to a greater height.

NAN reported that Buni won in all the 17 local government areas of the state with a total of 317,113 votes.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Sharif Abdulahi, came a distant second with a total score of 104,259

Announcing the results, at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office in Damaturu, the Returning Officer for the gubernatorial election in the state, Prof. Umar Pate, the VC of the Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, said accredited voters were 459,492.

He said out of the number, 444,567 were valid votes. (NAN)

8:25am

#### Zamfara PDP Alleges Plot to Manipulate Gov's LGA Election Result

Zamfara state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has alleged that the state governor, Bello Mohammed Matawalle, is plotting to manipulate the authentic results of his hometown, Maradun local government.

According to the PDP, the governor has been in touch with top officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in his bid to manipulate the result of the local government in his favor.

In a statement Monday in Gusau, the party through the Dauda Lawal Media office, noted that the governor was not willing to accept defeat.

The statement read: "Governor Matawalle thinks that it would be that easy for him to manipulate the result of his hometown, Maradun. We have confirmed from verified sources that the governor has been in touch with top INEC officials, forcing them to allocate fake figures in his favor."

"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has already uploaded results of 185 polling units out of the total 195 polling units of the local government.

"Results from eight wards have been completed on the INEC election results portal while awaiting the upload of 10 polling units in two wards.

"Even if the governor will succeed in forcing the returning officer of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the Maradun local government area to allocate illegal figures to him, there is no way they can erase or manipulate the over 90% results uploaded so far on the portal.

"He requested the INEC officials to add at least 50, 000 votes in his favor before announcing the result of the Maradun local government. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must exonerate itself from this unholy plot.

"As part of the clandestine move by the governor, he ordered the unlawful arrest of the PDP chairman of Maradun local government. Our party agents across wards were targeted and arrested.

"Abdulmutallib Sani and Nura Ibrahim were arrested in Janbako ward; Hamza Usman and Abdulhamid Bala were arrested in Maradun North local government; Sani Umar and Nura Hamisu were arrested in Damaga/Gama **Giwa** ward; Ibrahim Sulaiman and Saidu Garba were arrested in Dosara/Birnin Kaya ward; Yahaya Yusuf and Sani Moh'd were arrested in Maradun South.

"Also, Abubakar Jafar and Muhammad Abdulnasir were arrested in Faru Magami ward; Kamilu Lawal and Abdulrahman Tukur were arrested in Gora ward; Mustapha Yusuf and Lawali Kaya were arrested in Kaya ward; while Surajo Dan Galadima and Namadina Muh'd were arrested in Gidan Gogo ward.

"Our source also confirmed that the governor has left Gusau for Maradun local government this morning, to execute the plan of manipulating the result.

"We are calling on INEC to disown itself from this charade and investigate and punish all its officers who are complicit in this plot. We call on the security operatives to do the same."

8:17am

### Kano Imposes Dusk-to-dawn Curfew over Poll Results

The Kano State Government has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew to avoid a breakdown of law and order following tensions generated from the collation of results of the governorship and state Assembly elections.

The state Commissioner for Information and Internal Affairs, Malam Muhammad Garba, made the announcement in a statement on Monday.

He said the decision was to prevent hoodlums from causing chaos in the already tensed situation.

The commissioner called on people in the state to remain indoors as security agents would not spare anyone or group bent on causing trouble.

NAN reported that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had declared Abba Yusuf of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) winner of the Saturday's governorship election in the state after beating the Deputy Governor, Gawuna at the poll.

The results have generated tension in the state, prompting the government's proactive measure to avert chaos. (NAN)

8:04am

### INEC Declares NNPP's Abba Winner of Kano Election

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the candidate of New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP), Malam Abba Yusuf, as winner of the March 18 governorship election in Kano State.

Announcing the result on Monday in Kano, the state Returning Officer, Prof. Doko Ibrahim, the Vice-Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, said Yusuf polled 1,019,602 votes to clinch the seat.

Ibrahim said that Yusuf defeated his closest rival and incumbent Deputy Governor of the state, Malam Yusuf Gawuna, of the All Progressive Congress (APC), who scored 892,705 votes.

He said: "That I, Prof. Doko Ibrahim, declared that the election was contested by 18 candidates.

"Having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, Abba Kabiru Yusuf of the NNPP is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said. (NAN)

7:45am

### Abdullahi Sule Wins Nasarawa Governorship Election

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Governor Abdullahi Sule and candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the governorship election in Nasarawa State.

Prof Ishaya Tanko, the INEC State Collation Officer and Returning Officer, made the declaration in Lafia Monday at the Nasarawa State Collation Centre.

The INEC returning officer said that the APC candidate polled a total of 347,209 votes to defeat his closest opponent, David Ombugadu, the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who got 283, 016 votes.

The returning therefore, said: "Abdullahi Sule of APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes in the election is hereby declared winner and returned elected." (NAN)

7:38am

### INEC Declares NNPP's Abba Winner of Kano Guber Poll

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the candidate of New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP), Malam Abba Yusuf, as winner of the March 18 governorship election in Kano State.

Announcing the result in Kano Monday, the state Returning Officer, Prof. Doko Ibrahim, the Vice-Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, said Yusuf polled 1,019,602 votes to clinch the seat.

Ibrahim said that Yusuf defeated his closest rival and incumbent Deputy Governor of the state, Malam Yusuf Gawuna of the All Progressive Congress (APC), who scored 892,705 votes.

He said: "That I, Prof. Doko Ibrahim, declared that the election was contested by 18 candidates.

"Having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, Abba Kabiru Yusuf of the NNPP is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said. (NAN)

7:34am

#### PDP Wins 7 Assembly Seats Out of 11 in Bayelsa

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Bayelsa State has declared seven Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidates as winners out of the 11 constituencies so far announced in the just concluded state House of Assembly elections in the state.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that INEC announced 11 out of the 24 seats in the Bayelsa State House of Assembly.

The Returning Officer for Nembe Constituency 2, Dr John Chika, declared Douglas Samson of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the just concluded poll in the constituency.

He said that Samson polled 1,367 votes to defeat his closest rival, Mr West Alalibo of the PDP.

The Returning Officer for Nembe Constituency 1, Prof. Okechukwu Okeke, declared George Braah-Okigbanyo of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) as the winner of the House of Assembly poll.

He said Braah-Okigbanyo polled 2,928 votes to defeat his closest rival, Ben Ololo of the PDP.

The Returning Officer for Brass Constituency 3, Prof. Apuega Arikawai, declared Abraham Ingobere of the PDP as the winner of the poll.

He said Ingobere polled 5,973 votes to defeat his closest rival, Yousuo Oberiakuma of APC.

Also, the Returning Officer for Yenagoa Constituency 3, Dr. James Onukwu, declared Teddy Tombara of PDP as winner.

He said that Tombara polled 4,206 votes to clinch the seat.

The Returning Officer for Sagbama constituency 1, Dr. James Onukwu, declared Godbless Oyinke of the PDP as the winner.

He said Oyinke polled 9,633 votes to defeat others.

The Returning Officer for Sagbama Constituency 2, Dr. Jeremiah Samuel, declared Bernard Kenebai of the PDP as the winner.

He said Kenebai polled 5,780 votes to lead other contestants.

The Returning Officer for Yenagoa Constituency 1, Prof. Okechukwu Okeke, declared Amakoromo Waikumo of APGA as the winner.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

He said Waikumo polled 4,971 votes to defeat his closest rival of the PDP who scored 4,593 votes.

The Returning Officer for Ekeremor Constituency 1, Prof. Joy Okeke, declared Porri Tari of PDP as duly elected.

He said Tari polled 4,216 votes to defeat his closest rival of the APC, who scored 1,562 votes.

Also the Returning Officer for Kolokuma/Opokuma Constituency 1, Dr. Robert Ene, declared Werinipre Pamoh of the PDP as the winner.

He said Pamoh polled 7,536 votes to defeat his closest rival of APGA who scored 1,474 votes.

The Returning Officer for Kolokuma/Opokuma Constituency 2, Dr. Lasisi Raimi, declared Wisdom Fafi of the PDP as the winner.

He said Fafi polled 6,708 votes to defeat his closest rival Mr Isowo Priebi, APC, who scored 3,362 votes.

The Returning Officer for Brass Constituency 2, Prof. Hudron Kari, declared Omubo Timinyo of APC as the winner.

He said Timinyo polled 3,175 votes ahead of Mr Adigio Inangaebite of PDP, who had 1,342 votes. (NAN)

7:30am

#### INEC Declares Kebbi Guber Election Inconclusive

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Monday declared the gubernatorial election in Kebbi State as "inconclusive".

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the election was keenly contested by the two giant political parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The Collation and Returning Officer of the election, Prof. Yusuf Sa'idu of the Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, announced the position at the collation centre situated at INEC headquarters in Birnin Kebbi.

He said there were cancellations in 20 of the 21 local government areas of Kebbi State cutting across a number of Registration Areas (RAs) in different polling units.

Sa'idu said: "We aggregated the total number of collected PVCs in those polling units and it came to a total of 91,829.

"And when we checked the results, the two leading political parties in this contest, APC and PDP polled 388,258 and 342,980 votes respectively. When we looked at the difference, it stands at 45,278."

He noted that they had no option than to refer to the electoral laws on page 31 of the Electoral Act 2022, section 51 sub-sections two and three for guidance.

According to him, law reads: "Where the number of votes cast in an election in any polling unit exceeds the number of accredited voters in that polling unit, the presiding officer shall cancel the result of the election in that polling unit.

"Sub section three of section 51 also states that where the result of an election is cancelled in accordance with sub-section two, there shall be no return for the election until another poll has taken place in the affected polling unit.

"By virtue of this provisions and the powers vested in me as the collation and returning officer of 2023 gubernatorial election in Kebbi State, I, Prof. Yusuf Sa'idu of the Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, hereby declare the gubernatorial election in Kebbi State inconclusive." (NAN)

5:43 AM

You're Sore Losers, Ogun APC Tells Amosun, PDP

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The Ogun state chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has described the reported call by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for a rerun of the just concluded gubernatorial election in Ogun state as an indication that the PDP and one of its major promoters, former Governor of Ogun State, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, are "bunch of sore losers".

The APC through its State Publicity Secretary, Tunde Oladunjoye, in a statement released on Sunday in Abeokuta, said such a vile call, coming barely few minutes after the declaration of results by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and published by an Amosun-founded and funded rag sheet, could only have come from people who knew of their electoral loss, well ahead".

The statement reads further:

"It is unfortunate that we have to react to this baseless demand purportedly from PDP but intriguingly published by one of Amosun's lackeys even when major newspapers are yet to report or give details of the governorship election results.

"The just retired former political gladiators should first go back home and drink water and relax even as they lick their wounds. With their failure at the polls, it is still appearing to them as a dream because it is unbelievable to them that they could lose the election despite the humongous ill-gotten wealth and violence that the grandstanders displayed and deployed."

APC joined the governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, who was declared winner of the election, " to thank our people for keeping faith with our party, despite serious and devious financial temptation, we urge our supporters to be, just like our governor, magnanimous in victory, avoid provocation, and report any threat to peace to the nearest police station

4:22 AM

#### PDP Leads in Edo Assembly Poll

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won 12 seats out of the 19 constituency seats so far declared in the Edo House of Assembly elections conducted on March 18.

There are 24 seats in the Edo House of Assembly.

Results from five other constituencies - Egor, Etsako I, Etsako II, Oredo East and Ovia Southwest have yet to be announced.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has so far won six seats while Labour Party (LP) won one seat.

Meanwhile, Mr Marcus Onobun, Speaker of the Edo House of Assembly and candidate of the PDP has won in Esan West, Esan Central and Igueben Federal Constituency in the rescheduled election.

INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner in Edo, Mr Obo Efanga, said: "we had election into Esan Central/Esan West/Igueben Federal Constituency, which we could not conduct along with others on February 25.

"Of the 24 state assembly seats, declaration have been made in 19 constituencies; we are yet to get information from the five constituencies remaining.'

In the results declared so far, the PDP won in Akoko Edo I, Akoko Edo II, Esan Central, Esan North East II, Esan South East, and Igueben.

It also won in Ikpoba-Okha, Orhiomwon II, Ovia North East I, Ovia North East II, Owan West and Uhunmwonde.

The APC won in Esan North East I, Esan West, Etsako Central, Etsako East, Orhiomwon I and Owan East; while LP won in Oredo West. (NAN)

4:12AM

### Sanwo-Olu Reelected Governor in Lagos

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has been declared winner of Saturday's governorship election in Lagos state. He was declared winner by the INEC returning officer at 01.15am Monday.

The Governor won 19 of the 20 local government councils in the state, scoring 762,134 votes.

His closest rival Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the Labour Party, scored 312, 329 votes while Olajide Adediran of the PDP got 62,449 votes.

### APC's Radda Wins Katsina Governorship Election

03:58 AM

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Dr Dikko Umar-Radda of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the March 18 governorship election in Katsina State.

Announcing the result on Sunday in Katsina, the State Returning Officer, Prof. Muazu Abubakar-Gusau, the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University, Gusau, said Umar-Radda polled 859,892 votes to emerge the state governor-elect.

He said that Umar-Radda defeated his closet rival, Sen. Yakubu Lado-Danmarke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who scored 486,620 votes.

Abubakar-Gusau added that the election was contested by candidates from 13 political parties.

He said that the number of registered voters in the state was 3,516,719, while the number of accredited voters for the election was 1,399,291.

He added that the number of rejected votes was 20,579, while the total valid votes was 1,365,848 and the total votes cast was 1,386,427.

He said that the election was cancelled in 88 polling units due to some irregularities like violence and over voting.

"That I Prof. Muazu Abubakar-Gusau, declared that the election was contested by candidates.

"Having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, Dikko Umar-Radda of the APC is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said NAN

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023

10:50pm

### APC's Aliyu Wins Sokoto Guber Election

By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

The independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto as a Governor elect of Sokoto State.

Announcing the results at INEC collation centre on Sunday night, the returning officer and the Vice Chancellor Federal University Dutsinma Prof Armiyau Hamis said Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto of APC polled 453,661 votes to defeat his closest rival Mallam Saidu Umar of PDP who polled 404632.

From the results, APC governorship candidate won 17 local government areas out of 23 local government of the state while PDP won in 6 local governments.

Here are results

Binji LGA

APC: 13,410

PDP: 11,078

Wurno

APC: 17,350

PDP: 13,099

Yabo

APC: 14729

PDP: 12,014

Isa

APC: 13,632

PDP: 15,117

Gwadabawa

APC: 19,036

PDP: 16,652

Rabbah

APC: 12,759

PDP: 11,120

Tureta

APC: 9831

PDP: 10,045

Bodinga

APC: 18986

PDP: 16,440

Tangaza

APC: 16,254

PDP: 9705

Kware

APC: 18,644

PDP: 18,161

Silame

APC:9983

PDP:10,885

Denge-Shuni

APC: 22,690

PDP:18,506

Shagari

APC:14,264

PDP:13,893

Sabon-Birni

APC: 26,884

PDP: 20,680

Illela

APC: 23,484

PDP: 19,169

Gudu

APC: 12,118

PDP: 10,718

Gada

APC:19,969

PDP:18,434

Goronyo

APC:16,567

PDP:17,323

Sokoto South

APC:37,114

PDP:33,363

Sokoto North

APC:35,333

PDP; 33,190

KEBBE

APC;14,902

PDP:14,619

Tambuwal

APC 29489

PDP 32779

Wamakko

APC 36233

PDP 27642

9:00pm

Kano Guber: NNPP Leads in 13 LGAs, APC in 9

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Gubernatorial candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) in Kano State, Engineer Abba Kabiru Yusuf, is ahead of Dr Nasir Yusuf Gawuna, his rival of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 13 local government areas out of the 22 so far declared at the state collation center.

The APC also won 9 local governments so far declared at the collation center.

The local government areas are Rano, Rogo, Wudil, Karaye, kibiya, Minjibir, Gabasawa, Ajingi, Albasu, Gezawa, Garko, Tudunwada and Bunkure.

Also, the 9 local government areas won by APC are Shanono, Kunchi, Makoda, Dambatta, Warawa, Kabo, Bagwai, Takai and Tsanyawa.

Below are details:

RANO

ADP - 80

APC - 17,090

NNPP - 18,040

PDP - 225

PRP - 10

ROGO

APC - 11,112

ADP - 42

NNPP - 18,559

PDP - 124

MAKODA

APC - 15,006

ADP - 83

NNPP - 13,956

PDP - 101

KUNCHI

APC - 13,215

ADP - 62

NNPP - 10,674

PDP - 39

WUDIL

APC - 20,299

ADP - 276

NNPP - 21,740

PDP - 118

KARAYE

APC - 14,515

ADP - 63

NNPP - 15,838

PDP - 77

TSANYAWA

APC - 18,746

ADP - 78

NNPP - 16,769

PDP - 71

MINJIBIR

APC - 16,039

ADP - 148

NNPP - 17,575

PDP - 189

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ALBASU

APC - 16,959

ADP - 55

NNPP - 19,952

PDP - 293

GABASAWA

APC - 17,584

ADP - 91

NNPP - 19,507

PDP - 1,269

AJINGI

APC - 14,438

ADP - 306

NNPP - 15,422

PDP - 103

KABO

APC: 23599

NNPP: 16963

PDP: 2118

LP: 78

KIBIYA

APC: 13260

NNPP: 17157

PDP: 52

LP: 48

GEZAWA

APC: 19961

NNPP: 22077

PDP: 277

LP: 101

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SHANONO

APC: 17249

NNPP: 13650

PDP: 272

LP: 58

DAMBATTA

APC: 16995

NNPP: 9674

PDP: 1107

LP: 25

WARAWA

APC: 16296

NNPP: 14629

PDP: 201

LP: 76

Bunkure

APC 17156

NNPP 19277

Garko

APC 8485

NNPP 15839

Tudunwada

APC 24382

NNPP 27434

Takai

APC 25244

NNPP 23666

Bagwai

APC 21295

NNPP 17311

8:54pm

Gov Buni Reelected Yobe Governor

Michael Olugbode in Damaturu

Yobe State Governor, Hon. Mai Mala Buni of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has been returned re-elected. He was declared winner of the governorship election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday in Damaturu.

Announcing the result, Professor Umar Pate, the returning officer, said Buni of APC scored a total of 317,113 votes to defeat his closest opponent, Alhaji Sheriff Abdullahi of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that polled 104,259 votes.

Garba Umar of New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP) polled 14,246 votes to come third.

The returning officer after announcing the votes of the candidates, said: "I Professor Umar Pate hereby certify that Mai Mala Buni, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of the votes, is hereby declared winner of the election".

8:51pm

APC Leads in Sokoto Guber Election

Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

All Progressives Congress candidate in the Sokoto State Governorship election, Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto, is leading in the results announced for so far.

According to the results declared so far in twenty one local governments area of the state by the Independent National Electoral Commission in the state, the APC candidate is leading its closest rival Peoples Democratic Party candidate, Sa'idu Umar, in 17 LGAs. PDP leads in 3.

Meanwhile, before the collation was suspended to resume by 8pm later in the evening, only two local governments which includes Wamakko and Tambuwal are expected to complete the process.

The breakdown of the scores of the two parties are as follows

Binji LGA

APC: 13,410

PDP: 11,078

Wurno

APC: 17,350

PDP: 13,099

Yabo

APC: 14729

PDP: 12,014

Isa

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 13,632

PDP: 15,117

Gwadabawa

APC: 19,036

PDP; 16,652

Rabbah

APC; 12,759

PDP: 11,120

Tureta

APC: 9831

PDP: 10,045

Bodinga

APC: 18986

PDP: 16,440

Tangaza

APC: 16,254

PDP: 9705

Kware

APC: 18,644

PDP: 18,161

Silame

APC:9983

PDP:10,885

Denge-Shuni

APC: 22,690

PDP:18,506

Shagari

APC:14,264

PDP:13,893

Sabon-Birni

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 26,884

PDP: 20,680

Illela

APC: 23,484

PDP: 19,169

Gudu

APC: 12,118

PDP: 10,718

Gada

APC: 19,969

PDP: 18,434

Goronyo

APC: 16,567

PDP: 17,323

Sokoto South

APC: 37,114

PDP: 33,363

Sokoto North

APC: 35,333

PDP: 33,190

KEBBE

APC: 14,902

PDP: 14,619

8:00pm

APC Candidate, Dammodi, Wins Jigawa Guber Poll

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Dutse

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Alhaji Umar Namadi Dammodi of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the 2023 gubernatorial election in Jigawa State.

Announcing the result Sunday, the INEC Collation Officer in the state and the Vice-Chancellor of Federal University, Birnin Kebbi, Prof. Zayyanu Umar Birnin Kebbi, said Dammodi of the APC having scored the high votes of 618,449 emerged winner and the newly elected governor of Jigawa State.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

He explained that the total registered voters was 2,351,298, while the total accredited voters stood at 1,073,540, while the total votes cast were 1,052,793 votes.

The collation officer said the candidate of APC, Dammodi, scored 618,449 to beat his closest rivals of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Lamido Mustapha Sule, who scored 368,726 votes and Ibrahim Aminu Ringim of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) who pooled 37,156 votes.

"That Namadi Umar Alhaji of All Progressives Congress (APC) having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the higher votes is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said.

7:45pm

#### PDP in Early Lead in Zamfara Governorship Poll

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, is in early lead having won the three Local Government Areas declared so far at the collation centre in Gusua.

In Anka Local Government Area, PDP polled 17,116 votes against the APC which polled 10,156 votes while in Bukuyum Local Government Area, PDP polled 24,341 votes against APC's 10,321 votes.

In Zurmi Local Government Area, PDP polled 24,328 votes while the APC got 21,027 votes.

Zamfara has 14 local government areas.

The collation of results is expected to continue at about 8pm.

7:32pm

#### Gov AbdulRazaq, Mutawali of Ilorin Celebrate Victory.

Gov Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq and his brother, the Mutawalli of Ilorin, Dr Alimi AbdulRazaq, celebrating the Kwara governorship election victory Sunday.

Governor AbdulRazaq who contested on the platform of APC polled 226,956 votes to emerge as the winner of the election. His closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) Shuaibu Yaman Abdullahi got 123,118 votes while Hakeem Lawal of the Social Democratic Party, (SDP) scored 17,321.

6:55pm

#### Gov Abiodun Reelected in Ogun

#### James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Governor Dapo Abiodun, candidate of the All Progressives Congress, as the winner of Saturday's Governorship Election in Ogun State.

The results declared by the State Returning Officer for the election, Professor Kayode Adebowale, showed that Abiodun scored 276,298 votes while his closest rival, Hon Ladipupo Adebuto of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), scored 262,383 just as the second runner up, Biyi Otegbeye of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), scored 94,754 votes.

The results, also showed that Abiodun won in 12 local governments while Adebuto, won in eight local government areas.

However, the PDP has submitted a petition, to the INEC, asking the commission, to order a rerun in some polling units where results, were cancelled due to non functioning of BVAS and violence.

6:54pm

Gov AbdulRazaq Reelected in Kwara

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Kwara state governor, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq as the winner of the 2023 governorship election in the state.

Governor AbdulRazaq who contested on the platform of APC polled 226,956 votes to emerge as the winner of the election and reelected for second term in office.

His closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) Shuaibu Yaman Abdullahi got 123,118 votes while Hakeem Lawal of the Social Democratic Party, (SDP) scored 17,321.

The governor won all the 16 local government areas of the state in the election results declared by the INEC Returning officer for the polls, Professor Isaac Itodo, the

Vice Chancellor, University of Markurdi, Benue state.

The INEC had on Saturday night started th3 announcement of the 2023 governorship election results with three local government areas with the governor clearing the three local government areas of Ekiti, Isin and Offa.

At the resumed collation of the election results on Sunday morning, which lasted till evening the APC governor also won in additional 13 local government areas.

See the full Kwara governorship election results:

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area.

Number of registered voters -97,945

Accredited voters -24,115

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes -584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such votes in the two PUs were cancelled.

APC -14,696

PDP -6,705

SDP -1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43,944

Accredited voters -11,942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

5. Oyun local government.

Reg voters 61672

Accredited voters 16533

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to

violent crisis

8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP - 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

13. Kaiama local government area

Registered voters 87,871

Accredited voters 22,440

APC -14,431

PDP -6,297

Total Valid votes -21,773

Rejected votes -660

Total votes cast -22,433

14. Edu local government

Registered voters: 112160

Accredited voters: 42991

APC -22,458

PDP -17,378

Total Valid votes -41,331

Rejected vote -998

Total votes cast-42,329

15. Baruten local government

Registered voters -149,573

Accredited voters -38,637

APC -28,060

PDP -7,987

SDP -1492

Total Valid votes -37,873

Rejected votes -627

Total votes cast -38,500

16. Ilorin West local government area

Registered voters -273,635

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accredited voters -85,736

APC -46,468

PDP -32,372

Total Valid votes -83,758

Rejected vote -1,978

Total votes cast -85,736

Cancellation on ground of over- voting in three PUs

6:40pm

Updated Results of Governorship Election in Delta State

\*Ika North-East LGA

Registered voters - 131,945

Accredited voters - 34,807

APC - 4,733

LP - 1,990

PDP - 26,760

Valid votes - 33,807

Rejected votes - 918

Total votes cast - 34,725

\*Aniocha North LGA

Registered voters - 89,010

Accredited voters - 16,846ph

APC - 4,386

LP - 1,883

PDP - 8,938

Valid votes - 16,316

Rejected votes - 530

Total votes cast -16,846

\*Ndokwa East LGA

Registered voters - 86,208

Accredited voters - 20,434

APC - 9,044

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP - 251

PDP - 10,146

Valid votes - 19,843

Rejected votes - 485

Total votes cast - 20,328

\*Ika South LGA

Registered voters — 100,599

Accredited voters - 27,800

APC - 6,790

LP - 4,495

PDP - 15,283

Valid votes - 27,149

Rejected votes - 651

Total votes cast - 27,800

\*Patani LGA

Registered voters - 49,385

Accredited voters - 11,421

APC - 4,743

LP - 85

PDP - 6,069

Valid votes - 11,183

Rejected votes - 238

Total votes cast - 11,421

\*Udu LGA

Registered voters - 143,769

Accredited voters - 26,908

APC - 13,154

LP - 1,886

PDP - 9,746

Valid votes - 26,141

Rejected votes - 575

Total votes cast - 26,716

\*Sapele LGA

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Registered voters - 145,024

Accredited voters - 30,983

APC - 12,090

LP - 1,458

PDP - 15,217

Valid votes - 29,815

Rejected votes - 957

Total votes cast - 30,772

\*Aniocha South LGA

Registered voters - 100,424

Accredited voters - 21,149

APC - 4,622

LP - 5,107

PDP - 10,032

Valid votes - 20,468

Rejected votes - 603

Total votes cast - 21,071

\*Uvwie LGA

Registered voters - 191,215

Accredited voters - 31,188

APC - 12,389

LP - 6,340

PDP - 9,776

Valid votes - 30,263

Rejected votes - 925

Total votes cast - 31,188

\*Okpe LGA

Registered voters - 117,111

Accredited voters - 25,724

APC - 8,679

LP - 1,155

PDP - 14,544

Valid votes - 25,027

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes - 691

Total votes cast - 25,718

\*Bomadi LGA

Registered voters - 103,261

Accredited voters - 17,946

APC - 4,728

LP - 100

PDP - 12,340

Valid votes - 17,559

Rejected votes - 379

Total votes cast - 17,939

\*Ethiope East LGA

Registered voters - 115,003

Accredited voters - 30,466

APC - 11,600

APGA - 2,214

LP - 350

PDP - 13,030

Valid votes - 27,814

Rejected votes - 805

Total votes cast - 28,619

\*Warri South LGA

Registered voters - 187,140

Accredited voters - 32,959

APC - 11,569

LP - 3,743

PDP - 15,299

Valid votes - 31,768

Rejected votes - 982

Total votes cast - 32,750

6:38pm

Zamfara PDP Alleges APC Holding INEC Officials Hostage in Some Collation Centers

The Zamfara state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has accused the state government and ruling All Progressives Congress of threatening INEC officials in some local government areas of the state.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The party said that all the results uploaded virtually had shown that PDP won by landslide.

PDP in a statement issued Sunday in Gusau by the Dauda Lawal Media Office alleged that the state government was not happy with the outcome of the governorship election because it was not in its favor.

The Media office raised the alarm that there were serious issues at the moment at Bakura, Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi, Zurmi, and Bungudu.

"It is clear that our governorship candidate, Dauda Lawal is coasting to victory in more than 80% of results so far uploaded on the INEC portal.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission has uploaded 2839 polling units out of the 3529 polling units in Zamfara State.

"But the information coming to us is that the state government is holding officials of the INEC hostage in the Bakura local government area, intending to disrupt and manipulate the remaining 5 polling units out of the 189 polling units yet to be uploaded.

"In Kauran Namoda, Senator Sahabi Ya'u Kaura (allegedly) ambushed the collation center with thugs and police in his effort to disrupt the collation process. Two people were shot dead by the police accompanying the senator. INEC has uploaded 246 polling units out of 261 polling units of the local government.

"Our major concern is the Shinkafi local government area where only 4 polling units were uploaded out of the 172 polling units of the local government area. We have learned that the state government is plotting to disrupt and manipulate the collation process in their favor.

"There is a serious concern in Birnin Magaji and Zurmi local governments. The state government is hellbent to manipulate some of the results, with the help of some compromised INEC staff and some security agents.

"We frown at the ongoing disruptions of collation of election results and violence across Zamfara as reports from our men and women on the field indicate infliction of violence and assault on PDP agents and representatives."

6:17pm

#### INEC Releases More Results from Kaduna Governorship Election

By John Shiklam

INEC has announced the result of the Kaduna governorship election in four more LGAs.

So far, the PDP has won in eight of the 11 LGAs so far released while the APC won three LGA.

The Collation of results from the remaining 12 LGAs will continue at 8:15pm.

The results are as follows

JAMA'A LGA

Registered voters, 173, 846

Accredited voters - 490

APC- 19,920

LP 6017

PDP 28, 963

Total valid votes - 55,798

Rejected votes - 574

Total votes- 56, 372

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ZANGON KATAF LGA

Registered, 175,145

Accredited voters 53, 142

APC 11,448

LP -7377

NNPP 184

Pdp 33, 185

Total valid votes 52, 609

Rejected votes 533

Total votes cast 53,142

KAURU LGA

Registered voters - 132,827

Accredited voters - 58,311

APC- 26,915

LP - 3,461

NNPP- 455

PDP - 26,342

Total valid votes 57,789

Rejected votes - 493

Total votes cast - 58,282

SOBA LGA

Registered voters - 158,086

Accredited voters - 61,480

APC - 27, 235

LP - 457

NNPP - 335

PDP - 30, 874

Total valid votes, 59,406

Rejected votes - 981

Total votes cast - 60,441

5:29pm

APC in Early Lead in Niger Governorship Poll

By Laleye Dipo in Minna

The All Progressives Congress APC candidate in Saturday's Governorship election Alhaji Umar Mohammed Bago may be coasting to victory going by the results so far announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission in Minna

Of the 11 local government areas result ls collated, Bago is leading his closest opponent Isah Luman Kantigi of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

Bago won in 9 of the 11 local government areas declared while Kantigi is victorious in only 2 LGAs.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The NNPP and the Labour Party are trailing in that order.

The collated results are as follows:

TAFA LG

APC 12,520

PDP 12,082

NNPP 11

LP 206

GURARA LG

APC 14,520

PDP 11,506

LP 176

NNPP14

PAIKORO LG

APC 21,855

PDP 15,780

LP 106

NNPP 192

MUNYA LG

APC 8,644

PDP 10,208

LP 21

NNPP 13

BOSSO LG

APC 24,794

PDP 20,251

LP 211

SULEJA LG

APC 18,261

PDP 15,551

LP 1,664

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

KATCHA LG

APC 17,037

PDP 16,495

LP 3

EDATI LG

APC 9,225

PDP 16,559

LP

BIDA LG

APC 27,778

PDP 22,846

LP 87

NNPP 687

CHACHANGA LG

APC 34,231

PDP 27,989

LP 323

NNPP 144

LAPAI LG

APC 21,795

PDP 18,041

LP 16

NNPP 18

More results are to be collated later in the day.

5:26pm

Sanwo-Olu Coasting Home to Victory

Segun James

The Independent National Electoral Commission has released the results of the Lagos gubernatorial and House of Assembly poll with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the All Progressives Congress coasting home to victory.

Sanwo-olu won in all the 18 local government areas so far declared.

Here is a breakdown of the results

LAGOS ISLAND

Prof Simeon Oladipo - Collation Officer

Registered voters 200848

Accredited voters - 41626

APC - 37760

LP - 1317

PDP - 1783

Total valid votes - 41234

Rejected votes - 389

Total votes cast - 41623

APAPA

Prof. James Akanmu - Collation Officer

Registered voters - 196950

Accredited voters - 28867

APC - 21007

LP - 4157

PDP - 2487

Total valid votes - 28322

Rejected votes - 513

Total votes cast - 28835

EPE

Registered voters - 160124

Accredited voters - 35103

APC - 29614

LP - 1515

PDP - 3272

Total valid votes - 34790

Rejected votes - 313

Total votes cast - 35103

AGEGE

Prof. Sunday Adeyemo Collation Officer

Registered voters - 365885

Accredited voters - 48998

APC - 35845

LP - 8486

PDP - 3176

Total valid votes - 48284

Rejected votes - 680

Total votes cast - 48964

AJEROMI IFELODUN

PRrof J.A. Adewara

Registered voters - 394918

Accredited voters - 64230

APC - 39798

LP - 19821

PDP - 2607

Total valid votes - 63200

Rejected votes - 1037

Total votes cast - 64230

IKEJA

Prof Mohd Olawale - CO

Registered voters - 339879

Accredited voters - 51199

APC - 32273

LP - 15174

PDP - 1616

Total valid votes - 49899

Rejected votes - 686

Total votes cast - 50585

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Cancellation at 3 units

Collected PVcs for Ikeja 299, 909

MUSHIN

PROF Abimbola Sowemimo - CO

Registered voters - 394463

Accredited voters - 70028

APC - 52249

LP - 11759

PDP - 4006

Total valid votes - 68952

Rejected votes - 959

Total votes cast - 69911

3 cancellations owing to over voting two units and one disruption

Total Pvcs collected 364192

SURULERE

Prof. Owolabi Kuye CO

Registered voters - 401846

Accredited voters - 75798

APC - 42451

LP - 28069

PDP - 2200

Total valid votes - 74001

Rejected votes - 990

Total votes cast - 74991

Cancellations at 8 polling units

Total PVCs collected in Surulere - 357326

IBEJU LEKKI

Prof.

Registered voters - 134496

Accredited voters - 27480

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC - 19369

LP - 3785

PDP - 3189

Total valid votes - 26580

Rejected votes - 899

Total votes cast - 27479

Cancellation at 2 polling units Lakowe and Abijo due to disruption and burning of BVAS machines and ballot boxes at Lakowe

Community primary school Abijo, ballot papers and boxes burnt.

Total PVCs at Ibeju Lekki 124149

IFAKO IJAIYE

Prof Lukman Adams

Registered voters - 399938

Accredited voters - 55322

APC - 38682

LP - 13020

PDP - 2262

Total valid votes - 54783

Rejected votes - 539

Total votes cast - 55322

Cancellation at a ward due to over voting

Total collected PVCs 321182

BADAGRY

Prof. Tender Adeoye - CO

Registered voters - 227914

Accredited voters - 53462

APC - 41482

LP - 4863

PDP - 5472

Total valid votes - 52612

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes - 818

Total votes cast - 53430

LAGOS MAINLAND

Registered voters - 253546

Accredited voters - 39836

APC - 26021

LP - 9999

PDP - 2362

Total valid votes - 39084

Rejected votes - 751

Total votes cast - 39835

Cancellation at 3 polling units, Epeledo2 and Owaya 1 due to disruption and snatching of ballot boxes

Total PVCs in Lagos Mainland - 215200

ALIMOSHO

Prof. Hamid Sulaiman

Registered voters - 850557

Accredited voters - 132579

APC - 83631

LP - 37136

PDP - 7872

Total valid votes - 130524

Rejected votes - 1892

Total votes cast - 132416

Cancellation at two polling units due to disruption and over voting

Total PVCs in Alimosho -

OJO

Prof Sunday Adebayo CO

Registered voters - 329799

Accredited voters - 58969

APC - 30797

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP - 19027

PDP - 3889

Total valid votes - 54450

Rejected votes - 910

Total votes cast - 55360

Cancellation at 43 polling units of 7 wards due to over voting, disruption as a result ballot snatching

Total PVCs in Ojo - 273899

IKORODU

Prof Taiwo Adewunmi CO

Registered voters - 388971

Accredited voters - 84103

APC - 64697

LP - 13207

PDP - 3797

Total valid votes - 82959

Rejected votes - 1130

Total votes cast - 84089

KOSOFE

Prof. Elupeju Akande

Registered voters - 481341

Accredited voters - 84123

APC - 49344

LP - 26123

PDP - 3537

Total valid votes - 81809

Rejected votes - 1460

Total votes cast - 83269

Cancellation at some units in Ikosi Ketu

OSHODI/ISOLO

Prof. Olujinmi Odunleye

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Registered voters - 477236

Accredited voters - 67210

APC - 36792

LP - 24948

PDP - 2515

Total valid votes - 65217

Rejected votes - 1658

Total votes cast - 66875

35 cancellations due to over voting and ballot box snatching

12009 pvc's collected and 35 Cancellations

Total Pvc's in Oshodi/Isolo - 442954

SHOMOLU

Prof. Abayomi Okanlawon

Registered voters - 316752

Accredited voters - 56397

APC - 36783

LP - 15096

PDP - 3130

Total valid votes - 55, 795

Rejected votes - 608

Total votes cast - 56393

Cancellations due to disruptions and snatching of ballot boxes.

4:41pm

PDP's Ashiru in Early Lead in Kaduna

By John Shiklam in Kaduna

The governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Kaduna state, Isah Ashiru, has won five of the seven Local Governments so far released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kaduna.

The results announced by the INEC returning officer at the commission's headquarters in Kaduna, on Sunday, shows that the PDP won in five LGAs while the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) won two.

Results in the remaining 16 LGAs were still being awaited .

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The results released on Sunday by the returning officer of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Lawal Bilbis of Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto shows that of the results released in seven Local Government Areas, the PDP won five while the APC won two.

The results are as follow.

1. KAURA LGA

APC: 7,748

LP: 12,950

NNPP: 618

PDP: 15,108

2. GIWA LGA

APC: 30,773

LP: 221

NNPP: 547

PDP: 28,869

3. SANGA LGA

APC: 12,338

LP: 2,135

NNPP: 457

PDP: 13,119

4. KAJURU LGA

APC: 8,271

LP: 1,773

NNPP:982

PDP: 23,125

5. JABA LGA

APC:7,564

LP: 2,871

NNPP: 174

PDP: 14,616

6. MAKARFI LGA

APC: 25,670

LP: 278

NNPP: 532

PDP: 26,128

7. IKARA LGA-

APC 29,066

PDP 28, 612

LP 692

NNPP 550

3:47pm

Breaking: Gov Makinde Reelected

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, has been declared the winner of the March 18 governorship election in the state.

He was declared the winner by the state Returning Officer and Vice Chancellor, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Prof. Adebayo BanireHe polled 568,756 votes defeating 15 other candidates

3:43pm

Heavy security as tension rises at the Jos North collation centre

3:36pm

Abiodun Coasting Home to Victory in Ogun

James Sowole in Abeokuta

Governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun, is coasting home to victory in the Saturday's Governorship Election in the Gateway State.

The results released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Sunday afternoon, showed that Abiodun was leading in 12 local governments while his close challenger, Ladi Adebutu of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was leading in seven states.

There are 20 local governments in Ogun State. The result of the Sagamu Local Government has not been declared.

3:33pm

APC Clears 23 Ekiti Assembly Seats, SDP Picks 2, INEC Declares 1 Constituency Poll Inconclusive

By Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

Twenty-three Candidates of All Progressives Congress in the Ekiti state Assembly election have been declared winners in 23 constituencies by Independent National Electoral commission INEC.

In a statement by the Ekiti State INEC, Head of voters Education and Publicity, Temitope Akanmu, the Resident Electoral Commissioner Ekiti State, Prof. Ayobami Salami, APC won twenty three seats out of the twenty six seats in the Assembly while Social Democratic Party, SDP won two.

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However, THISDAY gathered that Ido/Osi constituency one was declared inconclusive due to the disruption of the exercise by suspected hoodlums.

Confirming this, INEC said, "The election at Ido Osi State Constituency 1 is inconclusive. This is due to the fact that the margin of lead principle indicated a need for supplementary elections to be held in 3 Polling Units before a clear winner could emerge.

"This was borne out of violent disruption of the voting process in three polling units of PU 003, PU 012 and PU 014 all in Registration Area (Ward) 01."

The commission added that supplementary election would be conducted in the constituency before a winner could be announced.

Some of the candidates of the All progressives Congress APC who won their re-election bids include; the Deputy Speaker, Hakeem Jamiu, representing Irepodun/Ifeleodun Constituency II, Hon. Barr. Adeoye Aribasoye Ikole II, Hon. Femi Akindele, Irepodun/Ifeleodun 1, Hon. Femi Akindele, and Princess Teju Okunyiga of Gbonyin constituency.

However, candidates of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, in Ekiti East constituency one, Dele Ogunsakin and that of the Ise/ Orun constituency, Omotayo Babatunde won two seats in the Assembly to defeat their closest APC rivals.

2:43pm

The results of remaining 15 LGs in Oyo State as announced by INEC :

1) Ona-Ara Local Government

Accord: 1,212

APC: 5,510

PDP: 17,326

2) Ibadan Northwest Local Government

Accord: 1,291

APC: 5,947

PDP: 19007

3) Ibarapa East Local Government

Accord: 1,885

APC: 7094

PDP: 11,125

4) Afijio Local Government

Accord: 1,357

APC: 5,588

PDP: 13,139

5) Atiba Local Government

Accord: 1,113

APC: 7,484

PDP: 18,389

6) Orire Local Government

Accord: 1,895

APC: 9,216

PDP: 13,767

7) Ibadan Southwest Local Government

A: 2,270

APC: 9,491

PDP: 31,273

8) Oluyole Local Government

Accord: 1,386

APC: 6,592

PDP: 21,700

9) Atisbo Local Government

Accord: 1,188

APC: 6,955

PDP: 9,199

10) Saki East Local Government

Accord: 188

APC: 5,519

PDP: 8,374

11) Surulere Local Government

Accord: 271

APC: 8,882

PDP: 15,554

12) Itewiwaju Local Government

Accord: 2036

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APC: 4,597

PDP: 8034

13) Ogo Oluwa Local Government

Accord: 50

APC: 5,570

PDP: 10,930

14) Irepo Local Government

Accord: 388

APC: 9,785

PDP: 7,193

15) Olorunsogo Local Government

Accord: 998

APC: 4,851

PDP: 5,838

16) Ibadan Northeast Local Government

Accord: 1,564

APC: 8,486

PDP: 29,396

17) Ogbomosho South Local Government

Accord: 10

APC: 8,257

PDP: 17,693

18) Ibadan Southeast Local Government

Accord: 1,846

APC: 9,147

PDP: 23,585

19) Ibarapa North Local Government

Accord: 563

APC: 5,678

PDP: 10,845

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20) Ibarapa Central Local Government

Accord: 1,455

APC: 6,287

PDP: 10,491

21) Oyo West Local Government

Accord: 431

APC: 7,599

PDP: 15,084

22) Oyo East Local Government

Accord: 571

APC: 6,999

PDP: 15,751

23) Ogbomosho North Local Government

Accord: 562

APC: 10,661

PDP: 20,387

24) Ido Local Government

Accord: 822

APC: 7,865

PDP: 19,284

25) Kajola Local Government

Accord: 1,710

APC: 9,523

PDP: 13,562

26) Lagelu Local Government

Accord: 886

APC: 10,661

PDP: 19,104

27) Ibadan North Local Government

Accord: 2,120

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APC: 11,883

PDP: 39,658

28) Iseyin Local Government

Accord: 501

APC: 9,694

PDP: 25,740

29) Egbeda Local Government

Accord: 3072

APC: 7,377

PDP: 30,444

30) Saki West Local Government

Accord: 607

APC: 13,753

PDP: 17,452

31) Ore-lope Local Government

Accord: 1602

APC: 7077

PDP: 6,483

32) Iwajowa Local Government

Accord: 269

APC: 6,441

PDP: 9029

33) Akinyele Local Government

Accord: 1287

APC: 9,445

PDP: 28,920

2:23pm

Enugu Governorship Election Results as Announced by INEC

Ezeagu

PDP 7576

Labour Party 5949

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APC. 963

APGA 300

Oji River

PDP 7365

Labour Party 7747

APC. 1060

APGA 1060

IgboEze North

PDP 8738

Labour Party 9955

APC 541

APGA 250

Igbo Etiti

PDP 8959

Labour Party 11941

APC 939

APGA 1259

Udi

PDP 13633

Labour Party 10109

APC 1648

APGA 1734

Aninri

PDP 6520

Labour Party 3431

APC 906

APGA 498

2:21pm

Abia Governorship Election Results as Announced by INEC

UKWA EAST LG

Total Registered Voters 39,788; Accredited Voters 7,808

APC 560

APGA 646

LP 2,273

PDP 2,329

UMUNNEOCHI LG

APC 2,034

APGA 581

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP 5,940

PDP 3,198

UKWA WEST LG

Registered Voters 67,900; Accredited Voters 11,670

APC 1,209

APGA 830

LP 2,833

PDP 4,622

BENDE LG

Registered Voters 105,182 Accredited Voters 22,492

APC 2,143

APGA 947

ADP 2,733

LP 9,886

PDP 3,410

YPP 1,667

2:18pm

More Governorship Election Results from Delta

Ika South LGA

Registered voters - 100,599

Accredited voters - 27,800

Scores:

APC - 6,790

LP - 4,495

PDP - 15,283

Valid votes - 27,149

Rejected votes. 651

Total votes cast - 27,800

Total votes cast

Patani LGA

Registered Voters - 49,385

Accredited Voters - 11,421

Scores:

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC 4,743

LP - 85

PDP - 6,069

Valid votes - 19,843

Rejected votes - 238

Total votes cast - 11,421

2:01pm

**LAGOS GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION RESULTS**

**1. LAGOS ISLAND**

APC - 37,760

LP - 1,317

PDP - 1,783

**2. APAPA**

APC - 21,007

LP - 4,157

PDP - 2,487

**3. EPE**

APC - 29,614

LP - 1,517

PDP - 3,272

**4. AGEGE**

APC - 35,845

LP - 8,486

PDP - 3,176

**5. IKEJA**

APC - 32,273

LP - 15,174

PDP - 1,616

**6. MUSHIN**

APC - 52,249

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP - 11,759

PDP - 4,006

7. SURULERE

APC - 42,451

LP - 28,069

PDP - 2,200

8. IBEJU LEKKI

APC - 19,369

LP - 3,785

PDP - 3,189

9. AJEROMI

APC - 39,798

LP - 19,821

PDP - 2,607

10. IFAKO IJAIYE

APC - 38,682

LP - 13,020

PDP - 2,262

11. BADAGRY

APC - 41,482

LP - 4,863

PDP - 5,472

12. LAGOS MAINLAND

APC - 26,021

LP - 9,999

PDP - 2,362

1:32pm

PDP Wins 25 Osun Assembly Seats, APC Clinches 1

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Osun State has declared 25 candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as winners out of the 26 seats in the state's House of Assembly.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The commission also declared that the All Progressives Congress (APC) won only Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency, which is the local government of Mr Gboyega Oyetola, the former governor of the state.

The INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Dr. Mutiu Agboke, released the results to newsmen on Sunday at the commission's headquarters in Osogbo.

Agboke explained why the result of the Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency could not be announced by the returning officers on Saturday, saying a decision could not be reached on the winner by the Returning Officer at that time.

He added that Section 65 of the Electoral Act gives the power of "reviewing" to INEC, adding that: "It is that power of review that the commission explored in solving the issue."

"Just like the Returning Officer said, it took us several hours before finding a solution."

Earlier, the Returning Officer for Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency, Dr. Akanmu Alex, had declared Mr Popoola Olufemi of APC as winner of the election.

Alex of Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, while announcing the result amidst tight security, said Olufemi scored 15,594, while his closest contender, Aina Adesina of PDP scored 14,817 votes.

He said: "Popoola Olufemi of the APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law is declared winner of Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency at the concluded Osun House of Assembly Election."

Alex explained that he could not announce the winner of the election on Saturday because there were two issues that affected the total votes scored by the two leading candidates.

He said there was ballot box snatching at a polling unit in Egbeda College Road Unit 16, adding that the results of Ada 2, Unit 5 was in contention.

Alex said he had to review the situation and incidents within INEC guidelines and consulted widely through the night before he was sure of announcing the result.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the REC had to mobilise additional security officials to the collation centre at Iragbiji town before the result could be announced.

The 25 state constituencies won by PDP are: Ifelodun, Ifedayo, Irepodun/Orolu, Odo-Otin, Olorunda, Osogbo, Atakumosa East and West, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Obokun, Oriade, Ayedaade, Ayedire, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Irewole/Isokan, Iwo, Ola-Oluwa and Ejigbo. (NAN)

1:23pm

AbdulRazaq Wins in 12 Out of 16 LGs in Kwara

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Kwara State Governor and All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate in Saturday's election, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has been declared winner in 12 out of 16 local government areas of the state so far declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

AbdulRazaq defeated Alhaji Shuaib Yaman Abdullahi of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidate, Alhaji Hakeem Oladimeji Lawal and the New Nigeria's Peoples Party (NNPP) candidate, Prof. Shuaib Oba Abdulraheem.

The local government councils so far won by the APC gubernatorial candidate are Asa, Ekiti, Offa, Oyun, Irepodun and Isin.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Others include Oke-Ero, Ilorin South, Ilorin East, Patigi, Ifelodun and Moro Local Governments of the state.

The four local governments' results yet to be announced are Baruten, Edu, Kaiama, and Ilorin West Local Government Areas.

Those announced are:

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area

Number of registered voters 97,945

Accredited voters 24,115II

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes 584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such two votes were cancelled.

APC 14,696

PDP 6,705

SDP 1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43,944

Accredited voters -11,942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

5. Oyun

Reg voters 61,672

Accredited voters 16,533

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to

violent crisis

8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP - 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

01:09pm

Governorship Election Results in Katsina State as Announced by INEC

1.MUSAWA LGA

Registered voters : 84,131

Accredited Voters: 35, 979

APC: 24,632

PDP: 10,118

NNPP: 580

PRP: 16

2.SANDAMU LGA

Registered voters: 74,399

Accredited Voters: 31,877

APC: 21,055

PDP: 10,641

NNPP: 01

PRP: 03

3.BAURE LGA

Registered Voters: 11,3640

Accredited Voters: 52,678

APC: 32,802

PDP: 17,888

NNPP: 62

PRP: 12

4.DUTSI LGA

Registered Voters: 64,743

Accredited Voters: 24,298

APC: 15,631

PDP: 8,419

NNPP:10

PRP: 10

DANDUME LGA

Registered Voters: 97,406

Accredited Voters: 41,071

APC: 23,710

PDP: 14,792

NNPP: 220

PRP: 146

BATAGARAWA LGA

Registered Voters: 100,069

Accredited Voters: 41,301

APC: 26,326

PDP: 13,510

NNPP: 212

PRP: 81

INGAWA LGA

Registered voters: 85,957

Accredited voters: 36,034

APC: 22,080

PDP: 12,255

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

NNPP: 209

PRP: 217

BINDAWA LGA

Registered voters: 88,793

Accredited voters: 42,922

APC: 28,997

PDP: 12,165

NNPP: 957

PRP: 47

KAITA LGA

Registered voters: 76,526

Accredited voters: 35,568

APC: 24,121

PDP: 9,824

NNPP: 53

PRP: 20

10 MAI'ADUA LGA

Registered voters: 88,617

Accredited voters: 407,68

APC: 28,436

PDP: 11,506

NNPP: 68

PRP: 10

11 ZANGO LGA

Registered voters: 73,235

Accredited voters: 30,659

APC: 19,757

PDP: 10,477

NNPP: 04

PRP: 14

RIMI LGA

Registered voters: 95,642

Accredited voters: 43,188

APC: 28,202

PDP: 13,823

NNPP: 397

PRP: 37

KUSADA LGA

Registered voters: 61,313

Accredited voters: 25,602

APC: 13,750

PDP: 11,151

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

NNPP: 05

PRP: 17

14 MANI LGA

Registered voters: 114, 440

Accredited voters: 47,718

APC: 29,678

PDP: 16,180

NNPP: 231

PRP: 28

15: SAFANA LGA

Registered voters: 83,882

Accredited voters: 26,879

APC: 15,417

PDP: 10,460

NNPP: 09

PRP: 53

16. FUNTUA LGA

Registered voters: 147,391

Accredited voters: 53,353

APC: 31,924

PDP: 19,849

NNPP: 314

PRP: 218

17. DAURA LGA

Registered voters: 97,136

Accredited voters: 38,186

APC: 26,548

PDP: 10,689

NNPP: 78

PRP: 27

18. MASHI LGA

Registered voters: 100,191

Accredited voters: 38,756

APC: 28,793

PDP: 8,896

NNPP: 74

PRP:11

#### 19. BATSARI LGA

Registered voters: 106,951

Accredited voters: 31,535

APC: 20,053

PDP: 10,247

NNPP: 239

PRP: 158

#### 20. JIBIA LGA

Registered voters: 98,311

Accredited voters: 35,844

APC: 21,216

PDP: 13,259

NNPP: 22

PRP: 34

#### 21. KANKIA LGA

Registered voters: 78,224

Accredited voters: 35,156

APC: 18,249

PDP: 14,830

NNPP: 16

PRP: 22

#### 22. CHARANCHI LGA

Registered voters: 73,766

Accredited voters: 30,695

APC: 20,782

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP: 7,539

NNPP: 66

PRP: 11

12:54pm

More Governorship Election Results in Ogun State as Declared by INEC

1. ODEDA LGA

Registered voters: 94,048

Accredited Voters: 23,975

APC: 11,089

PDP: 8,050

NNPP: 31

ADC: 3,651

Total valid votes: 23,349

Rejected votes: 626

Total votes cast: 23,975

2. EGBADO NORTH LGA

Registered voters: 130,063

Accredited Voters: 41,016

APC: 15,331

PDP: 11,627

NNPP: 64

ADC: 12,190

Total valid votes: 39,908

Rejected votes: 1,031

Total votes cast: 41,011

3. EGBADO SOUTH LG

Registered voters: 133,001

Accredited Voters: 34,213

APC: 15,047

PDP: 10,913

NNPP: 75

ADC: 6,435

Total valid votes: 33,064

Rejected votes: 1,149

Total votes cast: 34,213

#### 4. EWEKORO LG

Registered voters: 94,681

Accredited Voters: 20,415

APC: 8,192

PDP: 7,449

NNPP: 60

ADC: 3,881

Total valid votes: 19,902

Rejected votes: 511

Total votes cast: 20,413

#### 5. ABEOKUTA SOUTH LG

Registered voters: 242,151

Accredited Voters: 55,718

APC: 19,689

PDP: 24,175

NNPP: 99

ADC: 9,264

Total valid votes: 54,139

Rejected votes: 1,579

Total votes cast: 55,718

#### 6. IJEBU NORTH LG

Registered voters: 133,122

Accredited Voters: 38,340

APC: 18,815

PDP: 15,904

NNPP: 22

ADC: 2,393

Total valid votes: 37,478

Rejected votes: 848

Total votes cast: 38,326

#### 7. IKENNE LG

Registered voters: 68,613

Accredited Voters: 23,564

APC: 9,125

PDP: 12,472

NNPP: 09

ADC: 336

Total valid votes: 22,069

Rejected votes: 392

Total votes cast: 22,461

10 polling units were cancelled due to violence and disruption of elections.

#### 8. IJEBU NORTH-EAST LG

Registered voters: 52,457

Accredited Voters: 14,687

APC: 5,408

PDP: 7,086

NNPP: 27

ADC: 1,448

Total valid votes: 14,102

Rejected votes: 357

Total votes cast: 14,459

Ballot paper snatching at ward 6, unit 2. The result was cancelled.

#### 9. IJEBU-ODE LG

Registered voters: 90,760

Accredited Voters: 25,730

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 12,907

PDP: 10,714

NNPP: 36

ADC: 1,348

Total valid votes: 25,257

Rejected votes: 473

Total votes cast: 25,730

10. ABEOKUTA NORTH

Registered voters: 167,753

Accredited Voters: 37,553

APC: 14,294

PDP: 12,622

NNPP: 34

ADC: 9,143

Total valid votes: 36,521

Rejected votes: 1,018

Total votes cast: 37,539

Three units in Ward 6 were cancelled due violence.

11. IJEBU EAST LG  
Registered voters: 77,171 Accredited Voters: 21,896

APC: 77,171 PDP: 11,242 NNPP: 45 ADC: 18,885

Total valid votes: 21,352 Rejected votes: 542 Total votes cast: 21,894

There was cancellation in unit 6, ward 9 due to violence.

12. REMO NORTH LG

Registered voters: 48,886 Accredited Voters: 13,187

APC: 4,306 PDP: 8,177 NNPP: 06 ADC: 327

Total valid votes: 129,39 Rejected votes: 248 Total votes cast: 13,187

Cancellation in four wards in seven polling units due to BVAS malfunction and violence.

13. IPOKIA LG

Registered voters: 136,281 Accredited Voters: 45,035

APC: 21,338 PDP: 19,189 NNPP: 46 ADC: 1,897

Total valid votes: 43,707 Rejected votes: 1,328 Total votes cast: 45035

14. ODOGBOLU LG

Registered voters: 95,530 Accredited Voters: 24,041

APC: 9,143 PDP: 12,963 NNPP: 10 ADC: 1,281

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total valid votes: 23,608Rejected votes: 429Total votes cast: 24,037

There cancellations in 14 polling units due violence and refusal to use BVAS.

15. OGUN WATERSIDE LG

Registered voters: 52,359Accredited Voters: 17,345

APC: 5,878PDP: 7,716NNPP: 56ADC: 2,575

Total valid votes: 16,888Rejected votes: 456Total votes cast: 17,344

Cancellation in two wards due to violence and destruction of sensitive, non materials and difficult terrain due to hyacinth.

16. IMEKO AFON

ADC: 6,124

APC: 9,591

PDP : 6,981

17 ADO-ODO/OTA

ADC: 12,174

APC: 39,006

PDP : 31,022

18. OBAFEMI OWODE

ADC: 5,105

APC: 15,466

PDP: 11,004

12:49pm

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Peoples Democratic Party has won the seven local government areas announced so far by the Independent National Electoral Commission in Saturday's governorship election in Rivers State.

The seven local government areas won by the party include Ikwerre, where All Progressives Congress chieftain and former Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi, hails from.

See details:

Ogu/Bolo LGA

PDP 7103

APC 1524

SDP 310

Accord 121

Opobo/Nkoro LGA

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PDP 11538

APC 1426

SDP 159

LP 10

Tai LGA

PDP 9276

SDP 508

APC 295

LP 13

Gokana LGA

PDP 17455

SDP 13840

APC 7410

LP 97

Eleme LGA

PDP 8414

APC 2662

SDP 2251

LP 544

Ikwerre LGA

PDP 13716

APC 7503

SDP 1447

LP 895

Oyigbo LGA

PDP 9886

APC 2793

LP 2793

SDP 796

12:37pm

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC Wins 22 Out of 26 House of Assembly Seats in Ondo

Fidelis David in Akure

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has won majority seats in the Ondo State House of Assembly election held on Saturday.

In the results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the state, the APC won 22 seats out of the 26 constituencies across the 18 council areas of the state, while the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won the remaining four seats.

Ondo is one of the eight states where governorship election did not hold on Saturday because the incumbent Governor, Mr Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN), will complete his second term in office in 2024.

The results declared showed clearly that Saturday's election was a two-horse race and a straight battle between APC and PDP across the 3,933 polling units and 203 political wards across the council areas of the state.

The APC won 22 and lost two seats in Akoko Southwest, one seat in Akoko Northwest, and one seat in Akure South LGA.

In the same vein, four out of eight serving members of the state Assembly who sought reelection suffered defeat in the election.

They include Tomide Akinribido (Ondo West 1 PDP); Favour Tomomewo (Ilaje 2, ADC); Hon. Taofeeq Muhammed (Akoko Northwest 2, APC) and Toluwani Borokini (Akure South1, APC).

However, four other incumbent lawmakers were reelected. They include Oluwole Emmanuel Ogunmolasuyi (Owo 1 APC/Majority Leader); Oladiji Olamide (Ondo east APC); Ololade Gbegudu (Okitipupa 11, APC); and Abayomi Akinruntan (Ilaje 1, APC) who is returning for the third term.

Three female lawmakers will be part of the 10th Assembly as the female APC candidates won in Owo 1, Idanre and Ilaje 2 constituencies.

In 2019, the APC won 23 seats in the Assembly, the opposition PDP won only two seats, Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) got the remaining one seat, while the ruling APC lost the state to the opposition PDP during the Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Also in 2019, Favour Tomomewo of Ilaje constituency 2 was the only female candidate, compared to 2023 where three females won the election.

Meanwhile, a total of 208 candidates from 19 political parties contested the Assembly election to represent the 26 constituencies across the council areas.

12:36pm

Governorship Election Results in Delta State as Declared by INEC

Ika North-East LGA

Registered voters - 131,945

Accredited voters - 34,807

APC - 4,733

LP - 1,990

PDP - 26,760

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Valid votes - 33,807

Rejected votes - 918

Total votes cast - 34,725

Aniocha North LGA

Registered voters - 89,010

Accredited voters - 16,846

APC - 4,386

LP - 1,883

PDP - 8,938

Valid votes - 16,316

Rejected votes - 530

Total votes cast - 16,846

Ndokwa East LGA

Registered voters - 86,208

Accredited voters - 20,434

APC - 9,044

LP - 251

PDP - 10,146

Valid votes - 19,843

Rejected votes - 485

Total votes cast - 20,328

12:25pm

Kwara Governorship Election Results as announced by INEC

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area

Number of registered voters 97,945

Accredited voters 24,115II

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes 584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such two votes were cancelled.

APC 14,696

PDP 6,705

SDP 1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43944

Accredited voters -11942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

5. Oyun

Reg voters 61672

Accredited voters 16533

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

#### 6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

#### 7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to violent crisis

#### 8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP - 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

12:15pm

Bauchi State Governorship Election Result: Shira local government Governorship results:

1) Tsaffi Ward:

APC =1844

PDP=2173

NNPP 103.

2) Beli Gagidba Ward:

APC= 2121

PDP=2363

NNPP=264.

3) Kulbori ward:

APC= 1260

PDP=1354

NNPP= 138.

4) Bakal/Bagua ward:

APC= 2632

PDP= 3705

NNPP=213

5) Zubo ward:

APC= 1076

PDP=1311

NNPP=167.

6) Tumfafi Ward:

APC= 917

PDP=893

NNPP=84.

7) Faggo Ward:

APC= 3797

PDP=2848

NNPP 193.

These are the seven wards out of eleven in Shira Local government area that have submitted their results so far.

12:13pm

PDP's Makinde Wins 17 LGs, Awaits Result from 1 Council

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State is coasting home to victory as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has won in 17 out of the 18 local government announced so far by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The governor, who is seeking reelection is contesting against a three-term Senator, Teslim Folarin of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and former Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Chief Adebayo Adelabu of Accord, among other contestants.

Below are the results as announced by INEC.

1) Ona-Ara LG

Accord: 1,212

APC: 5,510

PDP: 17,326

2) Ibadan Northwest LG

Accord: 1,291

APC: 5,947

PDP: 19007

3) Ibarapa East LG

Accord: 1,885

APC: 7094

PDP: 11,125

4) Afijio LG

Accord: 1,357

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 5,588

PDP: 13,139

5) Atiba LG

Accord: 1,113

APC: 7,484

PDP: 18,389

6) Oriire LG

Accord: 1,895

APC: 9,216

PDP: 13,767

7) Ibadan Southwest LG

A: 2,270

APC: 9,491

PDP: 31,273

8) Oluyole LG

Accord: 1,386

APC: 6,592

PDP: 21,700

9) Atisbo LG

Accord: 1,188

APC: 6,955

PDP: 9,199

10) Saki East LG

Accord: 188

APC: 5,519

PDP: 8,374

11) Surulere LG

Accord: 271

APC: 8,882

PDP: 15,554

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

12) Itewiwaju LG

Accord: 2036

APC: 4,597

PDP: 8034

13) Ogo Oluwa LG

Accord: 50

APC: 5,570

PDP: 10,930

14) Irepo LG

Accord: 388

APC: 9,785

PDP: 7,193

15) Olorunsogo LG

Accord: 998

APC: 4,851

PDP: 5,838

16) Ibadan Northeast LG

Accord: 1,564

APC: 8,486

PDP: 29,396

17) Ogbomosho South LG

Accord: 10

APC: 8,257

PDP: 17,693

18) Ibadan Southeast LG

Accord: 1,846

APC: 9,147

PDP: 23,585

12:01pm

Ogun Governorship Election Result As released this morning by INEC

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

ODEDA

APC 11098 Winner

PDP 8050

ADC 3651

EGBADO NORTH

APC 15331

PDP 11627

ADC 12190

EGBADO SOUTH LG

ADC: 6,435

APC: 15,047

PDP: 10,913

ABK SOUTH LG

ADC: 9,264

APC: 19,689

PDP: 24,175

11:12am

BENUE DECIDES 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION Results for 7 Local Governments

Ukum

APC 28,503

PDP 9,418

Logo

APC 15,574

PDP 16,385

Agatu

APC 7,482

PDP 9,934

Gwer west

APC 10,747

PDP 13,609

Ohimini

APC 7233

PDP 6,785

Gwer East

APC 20,083

PDP 12,085

Buruku

APC 43,569

PDP 7061

Total APC 133,191

PDP 75,277

APC leading with 57,914 votes

8:45am

#### Embrace Peace, Accept Poll Outcome, Lagos APC Tells LP's Rhodes-Vivour

The All Progressives Peoples Congress in Lagos State says alleged threats by Labour Party's (LP) governorship flag-bearer, Mr Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, at Saturday's election shows the candidate's lack of sportsmanship.

APC's Publicity Secretary in the state, Mr Seye Oladejo, while reacting to alleged threats by Rhodes-Vivour in a statement on Saturday, said that the ruling party had no reason to be violent.

"The attention of the APC has been drawn to a statement made by LP's governorship candidate Mr Gbadebo Chinedu Rhodes-Vivour on Saturday's elections.

"He accused INEC and the police of provoking Lagosians' and warning that if tonight Lagos State catches fire, it is not our fault".

"He says `a lot of places are still under attack by thugs and hooligans of the APC.

"This scaremongering is typical of bad losers who lack the spirit of sportsmanship,' Oladejo stated.

According to him, security agencies should note Rhodes-Vivour's threat.

"Should there be any breakdown of law and order in any part of our state, law enforcement agencies should know who to grab - Mr Rhodes-Vivour,' he added.

Oladejo also stated that the APC was also compiling reports of how its supporters were harassed and attacked during the exercise, saying "some of the reports are really scary.'

"Now the LP candidate is playing the victim. This old trick won't work; discerning Lagosians know they are all lies deployed to attract sympathy.

"Our party has no need to be violent because we are sure of the glittering credentials of our governorship candidate, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu who will never be associated with violence.

"We advise LP and its candidate to embrace peace instead of threatening to bring down the roof on everybody. It won't work,' Oladejo stressed.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that violent attacks by hoodlums disrupted the governorship and House of Assembly elections in parts of Lagos State on Saturday.

Rhodes-Vivour had earlier alleged that an agent of his party at the polls in the state had been shot dead.

The LP candidate, who said the election process was fraught with voter intimidation and suppression, alleged that INEC and the police were complicit in the killing.

Addressing Lagos residents in a video recorded at the LP's Situation Room, Rhodes-Vivour accused the electoral body and the security agencies of provoking the people. (NAN)

8:05am

#### PDP Wins Ede North Constituency in Osun

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Mr Babajide Kofoworola, the PDP candidate for Ede North State Constituency, winner of the Osun State House of Assembly election.

The Returning Officer, Prof. Popoola Bayode of the Obafemi Awolowo University, declared Kofoworola winner having polled the highest number votes.

Kofoworola polled 17,530 votes to defeat his closest rivalry in the the All Progressive Congress (APC), Mr Abdulquadri Suleiman , who came second with a total vote of 9,010 .

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Labour party came third with just 13 votes . (NAN)

7:22am

PDP Wins Ede South Constituency in Osun

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared PDP's Olayiwola Olalekan winner of Ede South State Constituency seat in Osun.

INEC Returning Officer Muritala Monsuru declared Olalekan winner of the Saturday poll after collating the votes from all the wards.

Olalekan polled 14,468 votes to defeat his APC rival, Mr Raji Sijuade, who got 5,204 votes. (NAN)

7:06am

PDP Wins Kaura Constituency in Kaduna

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Mr Yusuf Mugu of the Peoples' Democratic Party as winner in Kaura State Constituency of Kaduna State.

Returning Officer in charge of the State Assembly election in the Constituency, Dr Yusuf Abubakar of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, announced that Mugu polled 14,085 to defeat four other contestants.

He said that Mr Afan Tandad of Labour Party came second with a total of 12,737 votes, while Mr Sunday Nehemiah of the All Progressive Congress came third with 8,715 votes.

The Returning Officer said Mr Isaac Gandu of the New Nigerian People's Party trailed behind with 1,121 votes.

Abubakar explained that a total of 37,260 voters were accredited out of the 101,275 total registered voters in the local government, of which 37,247 cast their votes. (NAN)

6:55am

APC Wins Somolu Constituency 2 in Lagos

INEC on Sunday declared Mr Samuel Apata of the APC as the winner of Lagos State House of Assembly Constituency 2 seat in Somolu.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Governorship and House of Assembly elections were held nationwide on Saturday.

Prof. Issac Olasunkanmi Olusola, the Returning Officer for the Somolu Constituency 2, who declared the results at about 5.05 a.m. at INEC Collation Centre in Somolu, said that Mr Samuel Apata secured 21, 220 votes to beat his closest opponent, Mr Olusegun Fatai of the Labour Party (LP), who got 9, 664 votes.

According to him, 10 political parties contested for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 2 seat.

The returning officer said that the election was contested and the candidates recorded the following votes.

Shobamowo Gbolahan Joseph, Accord scored 33 votes, Koledoye Johnson Ade, AA scored 19 votes, Ishola Rauf Shina, AAC scored 23 votes, Olaiya Ibrahim, ADP scored 66 votes, Adewole Dare Jerry, BP scored 48 votes, Olusegun Fatai, LP scored 9, 664 votes, Baale Taoreed Oladipo, NNPP scored 44 votes, Ajayi Ayodeji Johnson, PDP scored 3, 925 votes and Salami Basiru, SDP scored 22 votes.

Olusola said, "I, Prof. Issac Olasunkanmi Olusola, hereby certify that I am the returning officer for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 2 election held on the 18th day of March, 2023 that the election was contested."

He said that Apata, having scored the highest votes at the election, won the House of Assembly election for the Somolu Constituency 2.

"Samuel Apata of APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law, has scored the highest number of votes; he is hereby declared the winner and returned elected on 19th March, 2023," Olusola said. (NAN)

6:32am

### APC Candidate Wins Somolu Constituency 1 in Lagos

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Mr Abiodun Orekoya of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the Lagos State House of Assembly Constituency 1 seat in Somolu.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Governorship and House of Assembly elections were held nationwide in Nigeria on Saturday.

Dr Waziri Adisa, the Returning Officer for Somolu Constituency 1, declared the results at about 4.50 a.m. at INEC Collation Centre in Somolu.

He said that Orekoya secured 14, 256 votes to beat his closest opponent, Mr Adelana Adesegun-Adewale of the Labour Party, who got 4, 865 votes.

According to him, nine political parties contested for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 1 seat.

The Returning Officer added that Shittu Adedola-Olukorede of PDP scored 1,078, Awofodu Oluwabor-Oluwaseye of AA, 62 votes, Ayodele Gbenga-Johnson of AAC, 4 votes, and Olaleye Ezekiel-Oyefemi of ADC, 70 votes.

Others are Adeniyi Kolade of ADP, 37 votes, Ezitonye Peace Uzoma of BP, 21 votes, Gabriel Temitope-Dosunmu of NNPP scored 24 votes, and Awodeji Abdul of SDP had 1 vote.

"Abiodun Orekoya of APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, is hereby declared the winner and returned elected," Adisa said. (NAN)

5:45am

### INEC Announces Sunday for Commencement of Result Collation in Cross River

INEC has declared the collation centre for the governorship and state house of assembly elections opened.

Declaring the event open, late on Saturday at the INEC Secretariat in Calabar, Prof Gabriel Yomere, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Cross River, thanked all who were present.

Yomere also used the opportunity to introduce Prof. Teddy Adies, State Returning Officer for the election.

On his part, Adies said the collation of results at the state level was after each of the results had been announced at the Local Government level.

The returning officer, who is from the Federal University Otueke, asked if any LGA was ready with their result and since none was ready, he postponed the collation to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

He said by then, many results would have come in for the collation to fully commence

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that members of Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in Cross River witnessed the event. (NAN)

5:10am

### INEC Fixes Sunday for Suspended Asari-Toru LG Election

The INEC in Rivers, on Saturday said that the Commission was ready to conduct the election of Asari-Toru Local Government Area and the ward 14 of Degema Local Government Area on Sunday.

The INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Dr. Johnson Alalibo, disclosed this in a statement by Mrs Geraldine Ekeleme, the Public Relations Officer of INEC, in Port Harcourt.

Alalibo stated that election could not hold in the LGAs due to the voters' resistance of deployed election officials and materials for the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections.

Alalibo said that the electorate and other stakeholders demanded to see the ward collation officer before they would allow the election to commence in Asari-Toru LGA.

He said that voters at ward 14 in Degema LGA equally demanded that the supervising Presiding Officer (SPO) must come to the Registration Area Centre with collation sheets, thereby disallowing the election to hold in the area.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The REC said that the Commission had decided to conduct the election at the areas on Sunday, standing on the premise and relying on section 24 of the Electoral Act 2022. (NAN)

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2023

10:16pm

#### EFCC Arrests 65 Suspects over Alleged Voter Inducement

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Saturday arrested 65 persons in 28 states over alleged voter inducement during the governorship and Houses of Assembly elections.

This is contained in a statement issued by its spokesman, Mr Wilson Uwujieren.

Uwujieren stated that 20 of the suspects were arrested in Kwara, while 13 suspects were arrested in Kaduna State.

He added that 12 suspects were arrested in Rivers; four suspects each were arrested in Akwa Ibom and Cross River, while others were arrested in Gombe, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger States.

"Those arrested in Kaduna State were 10 males and three females. They were apprehended by EFCC operatives either working on intelligence reports or were chanced upon during monitoring.

"A suspect allegedly involved in vote buying was nabbed at School Road, Ungwan Rimi in Kaduna. The suspect, who initially resisted arrest, is however in custody pending the conclusion of investigation.

"Also in Kaduna, a team arrested a suspect with voter coupons, which he confessed would be used to trace and pay those who voted for his party,' Uwujieren stated.

He added that the EFCC team monitoring voting around Local Education Authority School, Kabala Doki in Kaduna also arrested two suspects for vote buying.

The EFCC spokesperson noted that upon arrest, N67,500, a list containing names of voters, their PVC numbers and bank accounts details were recovered from the suspects.

He stated also that investigation showed that the major modus operandi of the suspects was to give cash, transfer money, coupons or send recharge cards to eligible voters to induce them.

Uwujieren said a search of their persons and phones showed that most of them had transferred money into bank accounts of some voters on the lists recovered from them.

"Some of the items recovered from the suspects were voter cards, monies, lists containing names and accounts details of voters and telephone recharge cards,' he stressed. (NAN)

9:16pm

#### No Security Threat in Zamfara, APC Plotting to Disrupt Poll Result Collation, PDP Alleges

Zamfara State PDP Candidate, Dauda Lawal has alleged that the state government was hell-bent on disrupting the process of result collation.

Lawal in a statement by his media office Saturday in Gusau stated that the state government had perfected plans to issue a fake security threat in some local government areas of the state.

He said: "The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is in an early lead in the results so far collated from polling units across the state.

"There was a massive turnout of voters, and the results coming out indicates that PDP is comfortably winning.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"Elections were held successfully in all local government areas, but we learned that the governor is mobilizing thugs intending to disrupt the process.

"We have uncovered that they want to disrupt the collation process in Shinkafi, Zurmi, Birnin Magaji, Anka, and Kauran Namoda local government areas.

"We call on the security agencies in the country, INEC, and International Organisations to consider Zamfara as a flashpoint area and beam searchlight on it to monitor, and supervise the collation of results."

9:11pm

#### Zamfara PDP Guber Candidate Wins Polling Unit

The Peoples Democratic Party Governorship Candidate in Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, has won his GRA II Health Centre polling unit, Madawaki, Gusau scoring 384 votes.

His closest rival and incumbent Governor Bello Mutawalle of All Progressives Congress polled 82 votes.

6:37pm

#### El-Rufai Decries Voter Intimidation, Low Voter Turnout

##### John Shiklam in Kaduna

The Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, has decried voter intimidation in Saturday's governorship and state assembly elections in the southern part of the state.

He also lamented the low turnout of voters across the state.

The governor said although the election was generally peaceful across the state, he received reports of voter intimidation in Southern Kaduna.

Speaking in an interview with journalists shortly after casting his vote, El-Rufai commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for improving on the election process.

"Generally speaking, the process has been peaceful and smooth except in a few places in Southern Kaduna where we got a report of voter intimidation.

"People are being asked to vote for one party or go back home," he said.

The governor said security agencies were on top of the situation.

"We anticipated some level of violence but by the grace of God, there was no report because security was put in place in response to that intelligence," he added.

He said the All Progressives Congress (APC) was optimistic of a positive outcome of the election.

Also speaking in an interview after casting his vote at his LEA Kawo pulling unit, the APC governorship candidate, Senator Uba Sani, alleged that the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was conniving with INEC officials to intimidate voters and thumb print ballot papers.

According to Sani, voters in Zaria and Kajuru were being intimidated while ballot papers were being thumb printed.

Many residents of Kaduna metropolis did not turn come out to vote.

In places like Barnawa, Sabon Tasha, Narayi, Kakuri, Kigo Road, Angwan Sarki, Angwan Megero, among several places, voter turnout was low.

6:25pm

C'River APC Guber Candidate Lauds INEC on Peaceful Polls

One killed in Ogoja, four buses burnt in Odukpani

Bassey Inyang in Calabar

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Cross River State, Prince Bassey Otu, has given high marks to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over the conduct of Saturday's governorship and state House of Assembly elections in the state.

Speaking with journalists in his country home in Adiabo Okurikan, Odukpani Local Government Area, Otu said from feelers reaching him from the field, the elections were generally peaceful, and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machine were largely functional.

Out, who voted in Efut Ward in the area, said: \*Yes, I have full confidence in the BVAS. If you want to look at the election INEC have been conducting over the years, right from 1999 till date, even at bye-election, you'll see that somehow they live up their game.

"People must not forget where we are coming from, and the type of greed that has been injected into politics. The fact that our economy is very bad and people are looking at election probably as the only way out, as a result of that, it becomes a total war and at times INEC is at the receiving end.

"INEC must also be given the benefit of doubt to continue to make sure that they perfect all their arrangements. There were issues with the BVAS but I don't think that those issues should be key issues in giving judgement that BVAS is not working. I want to believe that INEC will continue to scale up with technology and everything to ensure that BVAS will deliver to the benefit of Nigerians.

"I don't think there's a lot of challenge with the BVAS, I went there was no delay. I was captured and the tick came out and I voted so I believe that moving forward they'll continue to make sure that things are added that will make it completely fine."

The election in the state was generally peaceful except for few incidences of violence that occurred hours before the commencement of voting.

In Ikoneto, Odukpani Local Government Area, four buses in the convoy of a top member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were burnt beyond recognition and an SUV vehicle vandalised by people suspected to be youths of the community.

Also in Ogoja, a member of the APC, whose name was given as Joe, was allegedly shot and killed by a soldier when he allegedly attempted to tamper with the electioneering.

The police authorities in the state confirmed that they got a report that one person was shot dead by the police in Ogoja.

6:10pm

INEC Postpones Governorship, Assembly Elections in 10 Polling Units in VGC

Segun James

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has postponed Saturday's governorship and state assembly elections in 10 polling units in Victoria Garden City (VGC), Lekki.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner, Lagos state, Segun Agbaje made the announcement when he addressed reporters at VGC.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

According to him, corps members deployed as ad hoc staff on Saturday were hesitant to enter the VGC estate as they alleged that they were held hostage in the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Agbaje said the commission's ad hoc staff set up voting materials in front of the estate on Saturday but the estate residents claimed that hoodlums might disrupt the process, so they did not feel secure and could not cast their votes.

He said the situation was difficult for security agents to contain hence he and his team had to come to the area.

"We have eight polling units here with 6,024 registered voters and out of which 5,624 people have their PVCs," he stated, adding that two other polling units at the estate's main gate were also affected. "Eight here (in the estate) and two outside," he noted.

"After due consultation and further directive from the national headquarters that we should remobilise here tomorrow (Sunday) morning by 08:30am to conduct the elections, by 08:30am tomorrow (Sunday), we will reconvene here."

5:59pm

Three Suspected Ballot Box Snatchers Killed, as Voter Apathy Mar Election in Delta

\*INEC workers, NYSC members scared off polling centres

\*Gunmen ambush INEC staff, snatch voting materials in Bomadi

\*Delta REC hints at early release of election results

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

The governorship and state legislative elections were generally peaceful across Delta State with the BVAS machines reportedly working seamlessly at practically all polling centres across the state but there was serious low turnout of voters with a few cases of violence reported.

Two young men were shot dead by military personnel at Mosogar in Ethiope West Local Government Area as they allegedly tried to flee a polling unit with snatched ballot boxes while one of two persons who disrupted the polling exercise at Utagaba-Uno in Ndokwa West Local Government Area was also reportedly killed.

THISDAY also learnt that unidentified persons ambushed and snatched voting materials from INEC officials early on Saturday in Tuomo area in Bomadi Local Government Area.

However, Delta State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, was accredited and cast his vote at Polling Unit 17 at Eghoma Primary School, Owa-Alero in Ika North-East Local Government Area of Delta State.

He voted at about 9.50am alongside his wife, Dame Edith and their daughter, who is also the candidate of the PDP for the Delta State House of Assembly in the election.

Okowa, who was impressed with the smooth running of the process and working BVAS machines, appealed to the people to put behind them the disappointment over the failure of INEC in the previous election to keep its promise to upload the BVAS results.

The governor, who is the vice-presidential candidate of the PDP, said, "I have played my part in shaping the future of our great state. If you have a PVC, you should too!"

Nonetheless, Okowa also commended the security personnel for enduring that the process in the area was hitch-free and hoped that INEC would sustain the smooth process and upload the election results with the BVAS machines without delay.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The PDP governorship candidate, Hon Sheriff Oborevwori, was accredited and cast his vote at about 11.am at his polling unit in Osubi, Okpe Local Government Area while the APC flag-bearer, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, was accredited about the same and voted at about 11.05am his unit in Orogun, Ughelli North Local Area of the state.

There were conflicting reports of disruption of election process at Evwreni in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, hometown of the 2015 governorship candidate of the Labour Party and a founding member of the APC, O'tega Emerhor.

While a serving member of the State Executive Council was alleged to have led thugs to attack the polling centre and destroyed voting materials in some of the polling units in the community, another account alleged that the APC chieftain had masterminded the disruptive attack witnessed in the community on election day.

There was yet no independent confirmation of those behind the violence at polling units in Evwreni community at the time of filing this report even as the security personnel deployed in the community were apparently unable to stop the disruption or arrest the suspected thugs.

However, some NYSC members serving as INEC adhoc staff and others on election duty reportedly sustained injuries while at least three BVAS machines were also reportedly smashed.

Consequently, INEC recorded an unusual shortage of manpower in several places, including parts of Ethiope East and Amai in Ukwani where voting could not take place at all in at least 16 units as the people refused participate because only about five INEC officials had arrived with voting materials just one or two units.

In a swift reaction to the incident, the Delta State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Monday Udoh, berated the people for "taking the law into their hands" and preventing the few INEC officials from conducting any voting in the community.

He admitted that INEC in the state has been hit by shortage of manpower.

Udoh, who lamented the voter apathy that characterized the entire electoral process on Saturday, noted that the people ought to cooperate with the INEC personal that came since the Electoral Act 2022 had provided for continuation of voting the following day where voting could not take place due to inability of INEC to conduct election as scheduled.

Nevertheless, the Delta REC commended the relatively peaceful nature of the election and hinted at early collation and declaration of the governorship and state House of assembly results owing to the fact that there was very low turnout of voters, so that the electoral officers would have relatively less used ballots to compute the results.

THISDAY learnt that the drop in the number of INEC adhoc staff may not be unconnected with the harassment some of them, especially NYSC members, were subjected during the presidential and House of Assembly election on 25th February.

Many corps-members simply opted out of the election duty due to threat of violence, beside the reported delay in the payment of their special duty allowance, alongside policemen deployed to INEC for the general election.

5:28pm

#### LP Guber Candidate Loses Polling Unit to Sanwo-Olu

The Labour Party candidate in the Lagos State governorship election, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, has lost his polling unit to the incumbent, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Rhodes-Vivour polled 18 votes while Sanwo-Olu won with 29 votes.

Another contestant in the election, the Peoples Democratic Party's Olajide Adeniran, popularly known as Jandor, polled two votes.

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One vote was counted as void at polling unit 01 at Oshifila Street, Anifowoshe, Ikeja.

In the House of Assembly election at the polling unit, the APC polled 34, LP 15, while PDP polled one vote.

5:33pm

Sanwo-Olu Wins Polling Unit

Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the ruling All Progressives Congress, has won his Polling Unit (Unit 006, Ward E3, Eiyekole, Lagos Island).

The APC also won the Assembly election in the polling unit.

GOVERNORSHIP:

APC - 121

PDP - 01

LP - 02

Accord - 02

ASSEMBLY:

APC - 120

PDP - 03

LP - 02

Accord - 01

5:10pm

Lai Mohammed Delivers Polling Unit for AbdulRazaq

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed Saturday delivered his polling unit 006 Oro Ward 2 in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State with 174 votes in the governorship election.

The main opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party came second with 22 votes while the Social Democratic Party polled 16 votes.

Labour Party didn't record any vote.

There were 750 registered voters in the ward but 226 voters were accredited.

5:07pm

INEC Confirms Kidnap, Release of 19 Ad hoc Staff in Imo

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Saturday, confirmed the kidnap of 19 members of its ad hoc staff while on their way to conduct the House of Assembly election in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo.

INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner for Imo, Prof. Sylvia Agu disclosed this in a statement on Saturday in Owerri.

The News Agency of Nigeria NAN) gathered that they were, however, released following intervention by security agents but election materials including BVAS machines are still missing.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Agu said: "The attention of the commission has been drawn to a report from Ugbelle Registration Area (06) in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo state where thugs carted away all electoral materials and took our staff hostage for some hours during the March 18 House of Assembly election.

"The security forces were informed and a rescue operation was mounted.

"Presently, all ad hoc staff on hostage have been rescued but no trace of the election materials.

"While the commission remains grateful to the security operatives, it condemns such acts of thuggery, intimidation and disenfranchisement of voters and urge the public to continue to have confidence in the electoral process," Agu stated.

The REC said a full statement on the matter will be issued later. (NAN)

4:56pm

#### Thugs Destroy Election Materials in Ebonyi community, Police Confirm

Some Political thugs have destroyed electoral materials including the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machine and other sensitive materials in Omege Ward, Ezza North Local Government Area of the state.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Omege ward is the polling unit of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) Gubernatorial candidate, Prof. Bernard Odoh.

The thugs also injured some voters at the polling unit.

SP Onome Onovwakpoye, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ebonyi Command, who confirmed the incident said the electoral materials were initially destroyed.

According to Onovwakpoye, yes, some sensitive materials were destroyed but later resent to the affected Polling Unit and election conducted in the area.

An electorate, who refused to mention his name said suspected thugs came into the polling unit and started shooting sporadically.

"No fewer than three persons were shot. They have been taken to the hospital," he said. (NAN)

4:50pm

#### Pandemonium as thugs scatter ballot boxes in Lagos

Some unidentified thugs on Saturday in Lagos chased voters away from polling units, as they attempted to steal ballot boxes.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent, who was at Ward F3 Polling Unit 13, Ago Palace Way, Lagos, watched with surprise as some thugs suddenly started chasing voters away with the aim of snatching ballot boxes.

The people ran for safety as the thugs continued to throw chairs and spray some chemical at them.

NAN reports that the incident was ongoing when armed policemen swung into action and arrested one of the thugs while others fled.

Voting, however, resumed as normalcy was restored by the policemen. (NAN)

4:45pm

#### ICPC Deploys 400 Operatives to Prevent Vote-buying

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) on Saturday said it deployed 400 officers and operatives to prevent vote buying in governorship and Houses of Assembly elections.

The ICPC Spokesperson, Mrs Azuka Ogugua, said in a statement in Abuja that the officer were already operating at the various wards and polling units.

Azuka, said that the chairman of ICPC, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, addressed the election monitoring teams before their deployment.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

She quoted Owasanoye as saying that "Our participation in the election monitoring is a call to an exceptional national duty.

"Our relevance is neither an after-thought nor happenstance but arose from the recognition of our contribution to national development through the implementation of our enforcement and preventive mandates in combating corruption and associated ills.

"Our importance led to the commission being made a member of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) which comprises our sister agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Military, Police, Department of State Security and other security agencies.

"It has the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Office of National Security Adviser as co-chairs. All these agencies will monitor the elections."

Owasanoye urged the officers to follow the ICPC guidelines for election monitoring and also comply with the ICCES code of conduct and rules of engagement for security personnel on election duty.

The ICPC boss also counseled the monitoring teams to act with discipline and integrity and directed them to put their body cameras to effective use.

Azuka said the reports from field operations by the Election Monitoring Teams had been sent to the ICPC Situation Room at the Headquarters.

"A vote-buyer at the Ba Sarki Polling Unit 002 central capital of Adamawa State fled on sighting the ICPC monitoring team.

"Voting was observed to be going on smoothly in the Surulere area of Lagos State and some other locations in the State.

"ICPC Election Monitoring Teams in Enugu State observed voter apathy at the polling units as only a few voters were on ground, " she said.

She said that ICPC Election Monitoring Teams were also monitoring the election along with some international observers in some polling units in other states.

She recalled that the anti-corruption agency had on February 25 arrested nine vote-buyers in Osun, Ondo, Borno, Akwa Ibom and Sokoto States during the Presidential and National Assembly elections. (NAN)

4:43pm

#### Masked Thugs Storm Lagos Polling Units, Chase Voters Away

Masked thugs on Saturday invaded some polling units at Ward D, Igando/Ikotun, Lagos State, and chased away voters in queue.

The thugs chased away the voters with sticks and knives at the polling units located at Ijegun Community School.

The polling units include 096, 116, 281, 094, 095 and 084.

A News Agency of Nigeria correspondent, who monitored elections in the area, reports that the thugs came to the polling units on motorcycles.

They went from one polling unit to another chasing them away.

The attack compelled some voters to jump the school's fence for safety.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Also at Polling Unit 227 located at Awonisi Gate on Ijegamo Road, the thugs also beat up a lady who tried to take their picture.

They allegedly took her phones and her automated teller machine cards.

They also beat up and wounded a man who attempted to challenge them.

The voters, including accredited ones, did not return to the polling units as at press time even after the thugs left.

NAN reports that few police personnel were at area but were not armed.

One of them told NAN later that they couldn't do anything because they were not armed.

He, however, said that a patrol team had been called.

A police patrol team arrived at the scene later.

One of the team members said on condition of anonymity, " Why did they call us after the crisis has died down? They should have called earlier."

NAN had reported that voting was abruptly stopped at Unit 078, Ward F5, Okeafa, Ilamose Estate, Oshodi-Isolo Constituency 2, Lagos State, as thugs chased voters away with bottles and stones at about 10.52 a.m.

NAN equally reported that thugs chased voters away and attempted to steal ballot boxes at Ward F3, Polling Unit 13, on Ago Palace Way, Okota, Lagos State.

Voters ran for safety as the thugs threw chairs and poured some a chemical substance on them. (NAN)

4:39pm

Abdusalam Urges Contestants to Accept Polls Outcome in Good Faith

Laleye Dipo in Minna

A former military Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, has charged candidates who contested the governorship and House of Assembly elections to accept the results in good faith.

Abubakar made the plea shortly after casting his ballot at the uphill polling unit on Saturday.

The former Nigerian leader, who is also the Chairman of the National Peace Committee, said so far, the elections seems to free and fair.

"So far from what I have seen, everything is going on smoothly. I was captured within a minute. I hope everything goes peacefully," he said.

Commenting on the poor voter turnout, the former head of state said he could not confirm emphatically since he had not gone round to see things for himself.

"I have not gone round but it should be expected because people get tired to vote. I hope it will be peaceful throughout," he said.

The Niger State Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello, also speaking after casting his vote in Kontagora, described the process as peaceful and orderly, adding that the process was very seamless.

Bello commended the electorate for turning out to exercise their franchise, adding that he believes the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates will emerge victorious.

The governor's wife, Dr Amina Sani Bello, also cast her vote in Kontagora.

4:19pm

Polls: NSCDC Arrests Thugs in Enugu

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

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The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has confirmed the arrest of scores of suspected thugs in the Nsukka axis of Enugu State.

The spokesman of the Enugu State Command of the corps, Danny Iwuchukwu, who confirmed the arrest, said that it was carried out in the early hours of Saturday, the election day.

He said that the thugs, numbering over 100, were arrested by officers of the Nigerian Army providing security in the Nsukka axis after an intelligence tip-off at a popular hotel in Nsukka.

He noted that the thugs, who were arrested with AK47 rifles and other dangerous weapons, including axes, clubs and matchets have since been handed over to the Nigeria Police in Nsukka.

4:05pm

Thugs Attack Plateau Polling Unit, Destroy Ballot Papers, Voters Registers

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Some suspected thugs have attacked Pangpit polling unit in Mikang Local Government Area of Plateau state destroying the voters register and ballot boxes.

A voter at the polling unit, Mr. Joshua Kabiru confirmed the development, saying that trouble started when some party agents who observed that some voters were being guided before casting their votes started quarreling among themselves.

Kabiru said, "It was at about 11am on Saturday that the incident happened at the Pangpit polling unit in Mikang. Voting was just going on smoothly when we saw the party agents quarreling among themselves .From what I learnt, one of the party agents complained that some voters were not being given free hand to vote for candidates of their choice in the polling unit.

"Suddenly, some people came and attacked the polling unit. In the process, they destroyed some of the votes cast and also the voters register. They also tore some of the used ballot papers and some people sustained injuries but INEC officials were not among those who sustained injuries. It took the intervention of some security agents who were deployed to the polling unit to bring the situation under control. But before the security men arrived, those who perpetrated the act had fled the scene."

It was further gathered that following the incident, voting had been suspended in the area.

Spokesman for the Plateau state Police Command, Mr. Alabo Alfred said Senior police officers had been deployed to all the Local Government Areas to handle every security issue that may arise as a result of the on going governorship and state House of Assembly elections in the state.

4:00pm

Thugs Invade Polling Centre, Attempt to Snatch Ballot Boxes in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Some thugs, suspected to be armed, invaded Metu Memorial Primary School in Odoakpu area of Onitsha, Anambra State, Saturday, attempted to snatch some ballot boxes.

A voter, Mr Chibuzor Ekene, told journalists that the men invaded the polling centre with a tricycle, and attempted to snatch the ballot boxes.

He said the men were suspected to have been sponsored by one of the popular political party contesting in the House of Assembly election.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

He said: "They arrived and attempted to snatch and destroyed ballot boxes. The people were scared, and they ran away. They also attempted to snatch the phones of many voters."

"The bad boys left before security could arrive the scene. Voting stopped temporarily after the incident."

The Anambra State Police commissioner in charge of election duty, CP Aderemi Adeoye, confirmed the incident, saying that police operatives were able to confront the thugs, while they abandoned the act and fled.

3:53pm

One Killed, Another Arrested for Vote Buying in Niger

\* Thugs invade polling station in Busu

Laleye Dipo in Minna

A middle-aged man was shot and killed in Sauka-kahuta area of Minna, the Niger State capital, during Saturday's governorship and House of Assembly elections.

According to eyewitnesses, the man was shot when he and others were throwing stones at security operatives deployed in the area to ensure orderly conduct of the elections.

It was not known why the man and others threw stones at the security men, neither was it known which of the security operatives shot the man.

However, it was learnt that the police personnel, men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were among the team of security men posted to the area for the polls.

It was gathered that the remains of the man were taken away by his colleagues probably for burial.

THISDAY can also report that operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested the agent of one of the two leading political parties for alleged vote buying in the Sabongari area of Minna.

The agent was said to be giving some naira notes to voters to induce them to vote for his party when he was apprehended and taken away in an EFCC vehicle.

In Busu, Lavun Local Government of the state, thugs were reported to have invaded the Gbadagbadzu polling unit, destroyed the ballot boxes and scattering the votes already cast.

The thugs also injured three people who had cast their ballots and were waiting for the counting.

The presiding officers, according to reports, took to their heels for safety.

When contacted, the Niger State Police Command Public Relations Officer, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, promised to get back to THISDAY but did not do so until the time of filing this report.

3:40pm

APC National Chair Debunks Reports on Zoning of N'Assembly Positions

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Abdullahi Adamu, has described as fake the widely reported news that the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party had zoned the various leadership positions in the National Assembly.

Adamu made the clarification while addressing journalists after he cast his vote at his Keffi, Nasarawa State country home on Saturday.

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He was reacting to a news report that Senator Barau Jibrin was being favoured to emerge as the Senate President because the NWC of the APC had allegedly zoned the Senate Presidency to the North-west.

But Adamu wondered why politicians would be engaging in wishful thinking instead of awaiting the official pronouncement from the party.

He said: "The report about the zoning arrangements for the 10th National Assembly is fake news. We have not done any zoning."

"I have said it times without number since Monday. I am still saying the same thing. No zoning has been established yet and agreed to."

"No zoning has been made public. Anybody who is saying anything is a rumour. It's a wishful rumour."

Also in a statement titled 'APC Yet To Zone Key 10th National Assembly Positions', signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, on Saturday, the party described stories of the zoning of leadership positions as false and misleading.

Morka said: "The attention of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has been drawn to a report circulating on social media on purported zoning of key positions of the incoming 10th National Assembly. The report is false and misleading and should be disregarded in its entirety."

"The party has not made any decision on zoning of positions or offices of the 10th Assembly."

"As soon as a decision is made on zoning, it will be made public through the party's official communications channel."

The misleading reports, which was published by major newspapers on Saturday, had claimed that the NWC of the APC had finally opted to zone the Senate Presidency position to the North-west geopolitical zone, making the "odds to clearly favour Senator Barau Jibrin".

The false report claimed that the decision on zoning was reached on Friday night by the leadership of the APC after consulting with the President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"The decision takes pre-eminence over earlier suggestions in some quarters to zone the position to the South," the debunked story further claimed.

3:38pm

Poor Turnout, Improper Configuration of BVAS Mar Election in Plateau

At Polling Unit 008 Dantako Ward, Miango.

INEC officials idle by 1:32pm, as only 70 voters from out of 840 registered voters turned up.

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Poor turnout of voters on Saturday characterized governorship elections in Plateau State with electorate accusing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of lacking integrity.

While some male adults were seen playing draft and other games under the trees in front of their houses, the youths took over the football pitches all over Jos town to while away time.

Some youths numbering over 30 at Dadin Kowa community Jos South Local Government Area of the state, who abandoned the voting exercise said blamed their actions on the outcome of the presidential election which they described as disappointing.

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One of them, who identified himself as John Datti said, " We came out in large en mass during the last presidential election hoping that our votes will count. But we were disappointed when INEC eventually announced the results which obviously did not reflect the voting pattern the votes of the people of the community.

"It shows that our votes did not count and that is why we decided to come out to the pitch to play football rather than going out to waste our time in the name of voting which may still not count at the end of the day."

Another youth, by name Sunday Igbigbi at Angwa Rukuba football pitch where they the youths also stages a football match, also corroborated Datti's position. They called on INEC to learn to respect the Nigerians and their votes.

Igbigbi said, "I can tell you that many Nigerians will not come out next time to vote at all if INEC's integrity remains questionable. So, it's up to INEC to use this last opportunity of governorship elections to save its face from shame.

At Polling Unit: 042 Tudun wada/Kabong Ward, Rukuba Road. Number of registered voters is 3144, accredited voters were just 500 in number.

Meanwhile, initial hitches were experienced at Rabin polling unit, Du when configured BVAS still carries February 25th, 2023 date when the Presidential polls held.

The Returning Officer said the error must have emanated during the configuration of the BVAS. He returned the BVAS for proper configuration.

3:06pm

Bode George Condemns Voter Suppression in Lagos

Segun James

As violence and voter suppression are reported in parts of Lagos during the ongoing governorship election, former national Deputy Chairman of the People's Democratic Party, Chief Olabode George, has described the election as a sham.

He faulted the conduct of the election, saying reports of snatching of ballot boxes, intimidation and harassments of voters is disappointing.

George made the remark after voting at his Cameron Road, Ikoyi, voting unit, insisting that the election was a sham.

He said, "The attitude of the APC is very disappointing. If you continue like this when things happen, don't complain.

He said where he voted was peaceful but the reports he had received so far showed, there were ballot snatching and harassments of voters.

He mentioned Surulere, Ikeja, Somolu, Oshodi and Kosofe as areas where voters suppression were allegedly committed.

"What is all this? They forget that the international community is watching. What kind of nation do we want to be in the eye of the comity of nations?

"What I found was a general voters' apathy. How would the outside world look at us because we can't exist alone. We will wait and see the final outcome.

"If this kind of attitude becomes a norm, it means we can't do simple things right," he added.

The PDP chieftain said the presence of military personnel should be to ensure that the process was orderly, saying "they are to ensure that people vote freely without any encumbrance."

2:54pm

### Zamfara PDP Cries out over Arrest, Harassment of Party Leaders

The People's Democratic Party, Zamfara State chapter, has decried the harassment and arrest of its members by the police.

The PDP, through its Publicity Secretary, raised the alarm following the arrest of some key members of the party by the police while elections are still in progress.

The PDP noted that the hatchet job by the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC) was targeted at frustrating the leaders of the party and as well threatening party members in order to ensure that the election process is not free and fair.

The party said: "It is unfortunate that the Zamfara State government is using the police to intimidate and harass members of the opposition across the state.

"There is nowhere in the country where party members are being harassed like this.

"Zamfara State government should stop intimidating our members. They have perfected so many evil plans to disrupt the process and suppress voters, but the people stood against them and their plans.

"Now they have resorted to the use of the police to arrest our leaders across the state. We are not in military era.

"We have confirmed so far that in Mafara LGA, our party leaders like Captain Mairiga and Alhaji Aliyu E.S were arrested this morning.

"While in Anka LGA, the police have arrested Mustapha Ibrahim Mayanci, Mustapha Ibrahim Danliti Mayanci, Abubakar Usman Mayanci, and Sama'ilila Mayanci among others.

"We call on the Inspector General of Police, the Director DSS, and international election observers to watch the happenings in Zamfara very closely.

"We are hopeful of winning the election in Zamfara, as our candidate Dauda Lawal is in the early lead from the results collated so far."

2:46pm

### Polls: Makinde, Wife Cast Votes in Ibadan

#### Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

Governor 'Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and his wife, Tamunominini, joined millions of voters in the state to cast their votes at the governorship and state House of Assembly elections.

The governor, who voted at Ward 11, Unit 01, Abayomi Iwo Road in Ibadan North East Local Government, said that he was impressed with the peaceful conduct of the election so far.

His wife, Tamunominini, voted at Unit 08 Army Barracks, Iwo Road, also in Ibadan North East Local Government of the state.

Makinde had arrived the voting point at 10:40 am, and cast his vote at about 10:48am.

He had earlier been verified and accredited with the BVAS machine.

The governor, while speaking with journalists after casting his ballot, described the voting process as peaceful and commended the security agencies for doing a good job.

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He called on the people to come out in good number to exercise their civic rights, urging those who were yet to cast their votes to be patient.

He expressed confidence that the people of the state would vote for him again.

According to him, "In my own unit here, everything is going peacefully. The INEC officials came early. You yourselves can see that people are out here exercising their civic rights, and from the security aspect, it has been so far so good.

"Let me also use this opportunity to tell people to come out. You know they were saying there will be security challenges, but as you can see, there are no security challenges. Our people are here voting peacefully.

"I believe our people will vote Omituntun 2.0."

2:32pm

#### Guber, Assembly Election Better Than Feb 25 Poll, Says Tambuwal

Gov. Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State has appreciated the general conduct of the March 18 Governorship and State Assembly elections in the state.

Tambuwal made the commendation shortly after he cast his vote at Community Girls' Secondary School, Tambuwal, in Sokoto on Saturday.

According to the governor, the exercise is truly and generally secure and free of rancor.

"There is a lot of improvement when compared with the Feb. 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should keep to its promise of ensuring all-inclusive election across the country.

"We were highly disappointed with the way INEC conducted the last elections in which the process experienced a lot of irregularities.

"Comparing with the current elections, the situation is highly different from the report we are receiving so far across the state," he said.

Tambuwal further added that if the situation was sustained to the end, the will of the people would truly prevail at the end of the exercise.

"The election materials arrived most of the polling units in time and so far no issue of BVAS malpractice.

"However, government needs to ensure the recruitment of more security personnel to address shortage of manpower in the country," he added. (NAN)

2:22pm

#### Residents Unleash Dogs on Thugs at Lagos Polling Units

\*Police shoot suspected thug

Rebecca Ejifoma

Ago Palace in Lagos is currently under tension as residents unleashed their dogs to chase away political thugs suspected to be loyal to the ruling All Progressive Party (APC),.

Also, police has shot one of the suspected thugs.

THISDAY gathered that the Ago Palace residents stood their ground to vote for the candidates of their choice.

While a police van filled with armed officers was seen driving off, the thug shot was left behind gasping for breath on the ground.

2:10pm

Former Osun Governor Gboyega Oyetola, casting his vote during the House of Assembly election, at his polling unit, Ward 01, unit 10, Boripe Local Government, Irágbíjí, Saturday

2:00pm

Osinbajo, Abiodun, Adebutu, Others Vote, Laud Process

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, the Governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and other stakeholders have commended the organisation and process of the ongoing Governorship and House of Assembly election in Ogun State, describing it as improvement on the February 25, presidential and National Assembly elections.

The stakeholders, spoke shortly after casting their votes at their various units in Ogun State.

Osinbajo, who voted at VP Unit 14 Ward 1, Ikenne Local Government, described the process as very excellent in his own unit.

He said, "My own polling booth here is excellent and i think everything is peaceful and the whole process has been conducted very well and i just hope and pray that this is how it is being carried out across the nation. It has been very pleasant experience that i was able to cast my votes and also so many of us have been able to cast our votes."

Governor Dapo Abiodun of the All Progressives Congress, APC, voted at his Unit 3 Ward 1 in Regun area of Iperu town few minutes after 11 am while Oladipupo Adebutu voted at 10.59am at Ward 5, polling unit 4, Wesley Primary School Iperu.

Iperu is the home town of governor Abiodun of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Adebutu, who is the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and main challenger of Gov. Abiodun in the governorship race.

Adebutu described the turnout of voters as impressive and expressed the hope that their expressed wishes would count at the end of the day.

Also, the Gubernatorial candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Ogun state, Biyi Otegbeye, voted at about 10:01am at the State hospital, Ilaro, Ward 1, Unit 1, in Egbado South Local Government area of the state.

Otegbeye while speaking with journalists, commended the electoral process, saying that, it is an improvement on what was obtained during the last presidential election.

"To the glory of God, everything looks peaceful. Everybody is orderly and I can see the excitement and enthusiasm on people to cast their votes.

"The electoral officers are on duty, they are cautious and everything seems to be going on smoothly at this particular time.

"What I can see at this stage is that it is much more better than what we experienced during the Presidential election.

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Otegbeye said he was however, optimistic of victory for himself and his party at the poll.

"I am expecting an overwhelming victory for myself and my party, the ADC", he added

Also speaking, the newly elected senator for Ogun West, Solomon Adeola, commended the Saturday's election process as a great improvement on the what obtained on February 25.

Meanwhile, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was conspicuously, absent at his Ward 6 Unit 22, Totoro Abeokuta North Local Government.

A media aide to the former president, Kehinde Akinyemi, said Obasanjo, has not been in Abeokuta, for over 10 days.

1:46pm

#### Sokoto PDP Guber Candidate Votes, Confident of Victory

The Governorship Candidate of PDP in Sokoto State, Mallam Saidu Umar has described the I governorship election as a seamless exercise. He made this known while exercising his franchise at Ubandoma Polling Unit 020, Sabon-titi, Kofar Atiku area of Sokoto.

Umar, while briefing newsmen immediately after casting his ballot, said "so far voting has been going on calmly, and peacefully in the area, and within the metropolitan areas."

Commenting on the recently held Presidential and National Assembly elections, Mallam Umar described today's leg of the election as relatively better than the previous one.

However, the PDP candidate said he remains upbeat about victory, when asked about his expectation at the end of the exercise.

"The PDP, God willing, is optimistic of victory in the election", he said

He called on eligible voters to come out and vote, and also safeguard their votes.

1:36pm

#### Soludo Lauds INEC for Early Commencement of Voting in Anambra

#### David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, has commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for early commencement of the voting process in the state.

Soludo gave the commendation shortly after voting at Polling Unit 002 Ovuiyi Umueze, Isuofia, Aguata Council Area at 11:30 am

"From the information available to me, I have sampled views across the state and it seems to be going on fairly well in terms of deployment of logistics and early commencement of election.

"I think there is a great improvement compared to the previous election in terms of the arrival and deployment of materials. It seems to be going on well, relatively peaceful," Soludo declared.

The governor, who expressed optimism that the will of the people will prevail, also said that the turnout of voters is low compared to the previous election and encouraged Anambra residents to step out and exercise their civic obligations by voting.

"Anyone who is in the queue before 2:00 pm, will be allowed to vote and your vote will count. We expect the finishing, collation and announcement of results to end with a flourish," the governor concluded.

1:35pm

Tambuwal Votes, Confident of PDP's Victory

By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal of Sokoto State has voted at his polling unit.

Tambuwal who voted at his 033 polling unit, Kofar Ajia Government Girls Day Secondary School, Tambuwal, a 11:30am was confident of the victory of PDP's candidate Sa'aidu Umar.

He maintained that last month's presidential and national assembly elections fell short of international electoral standard.

"Look at last election, no national assembly seat was declared in the state. How can 9 federal house of representatives and 3 senate seats be declared inconclusive?" he asked.

He noted that PDP was popular among the people of Sokoto state, stressing the people of the state will massively vote for the party.

He however commended INEC for improving on last election, noting that INEC officials arrived polling units early on Saturday compared to last election.

He urged I people of the state to come out en mass to cast their votes for the candidate of their choice, saying this election will define their future.

12:59pm

Emenike Votes, Confident of Victory, Lauds INEC for Improved Voting ProcessEmmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State, Ikechi Emenike, has expressed confidence in emerging victorious in the governorship contest.

"I'm confident of victory. You can see the mood of voters. We are looking forward to victory by the grace of God by tomorrow," he said.

Emenike, who cast his vote in polling unit 11 Umukabia Okpuala at exactly 10:13a.m, told journalists that he was happy with the arrangements put on ground by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as the voting process was going on smoothly.

"You can see that the BVAS is working well and I'm sure you can see that quite a lot of people are desirous to vote," he said.

He advised the electoral umpire "to ensure transparency and fairness to everybody".

Meanwhile, the governorship and state assembly election has shown remarkable improvement on the part of INEC as deployment of election materials was done on time.

In most polling units monitored at Umuahia North and Umuahia South Local Governments that make up the capital city, voting started on or before 9.00am.

However, the enthusiasm of voters which manifested in the huge turnout of voters very early on voting day during the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly polls was lacking this time around.

A senior citizen, Chief Orji Ukaonu, said that people have a sense of disappointment over the outcome of the presidential poll and it has dampened their enthusiasm for the governorship and state assembly elections.

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"People were driven by the enthusiasm generated by the candidacy of Peter Obi and they trooped out in large numbers to their polling units as early as 6.30am.

"But after the result was announced, people were disappointed and unhappy. You can see the effect today as electoral officers are telling ones waiting for voters instead of the other way around," he said.

But a party agent, who gave his name simply as Ukoha, said that it was expected that large number of voters would still turn out to vote "if they hear that the voting process is no more rigorous as it was during the presidential election".

12:55pm

Buhari Votes, Says APC Will Triumph in Governorship, Assembly Polls

.Asks electorate to vote according to their conscience

.Osinbajo lauds voting process

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has predicted victory for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Saturday's Governorship and State of Assembly elections across the country.

According to him, Nigerians know the party "means what it says, and says what it means.'

Speaking with newsmen on Saturday after casting his vote at Ward A, Sarkin Yara Polling Unit, 003 in his country home Daura in Katsina state, the President said "I am sure we are going to win, again'.

According to him: "Nigerians trust us because we mean what we say and say what we mean. We have maintained that trust. We told Nigerians that we will work for them, and we have done our best in education and health facilities, and Nigerians appreciate our efforts".

The President urged the electorate to follow their conscience in choosing right leaders, both state executives and legislatures, admonishing that the era of vote buying had been diminished.

"I am aware that the money is not there like before for people to sway voters, like they used to do. And if they bring out money now, the people should pocket it, and still vote their conscience,' he said.

President Buhari noted that he was not surprised at the results of the Presidential elections on February 25, 2023, which saw Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerging as President-elect, since the APC campaigns were thorough, and detailed.

The President noted that the APC followed the constitutional procedure for the entire electoral process, choosing a party Chairman, Sen. Abdullahi Adamu, who had served as a two-term Governor in Nasarawa State, and legislator in the Senate, with an experience that will secure the electoral value and relevance of the party.

On deepening of democratic culture and rising awareness among Nigerians, President Buhari said the media had played a major role in empowering people with information on their rights, and providing a platform for voters to challenge leaders on promises and records.

His words: "The media is doing very well in creating awareness and enabling the right conversation. You can hear the tough questions for leaders during interviews on TV, radio and other platforms, and the journalists always press for answers".

Meanwhile, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and his wife, Dolapo Osinbajo, on Saturday voted at the Egunrege Polling Unit 14, Ward 1 in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, expressing satisfaction with the conduct of the election.

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Osinbajo and his wife arrived the polling unit, got accredited and proceeded to cast their votes at exactly 10:34 am.

Speaking afterwards with journalists, the Vice President said "from here at my own polling unit, it is excellent. The whole process has been conducted very well and I just hope and pray that this is how it is being carried out across the nation.

"It has been a very pleasant experience. I am glad that I am able to cast my votes and so many others who want to cast their votes have been able to do so," he added.

12:53pm

Obi Votes, Laments Vote Buying, Apathy

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Mr Peter Obi, has voted at his Amatutu polling unit in Agulu, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Obi, who cast his vote at about 11.20am, lamented that Nigeria has returned to the era of transactional politics, saying that the ongoing election is witnessing vote buying.

Obi also lamented the low turnout of voters in the state.

He said this may be because the people have lost interest in the system.

12:36am

No Police Presence in Most Zamfara Polling Units, PDP Alleges

The Zamfara State Peoples Democratic Party has said that there is zero police presence in most of the polling units across the state.

The party in a statement through the Dauda Lawal Media Office, Saturday in Gusau, stated that elections were yet to commence in many polling units in the state.

The governorship elections were expected to commence early Saturday.

Though in some states, concerns heightened over alleged moves by governors to rig the elections by all means possible.

The statement read: "It is worrisome the situation in Zamfara State at the moment, because elections are yet to commence in most of the polling units across the state.

"The Police that is expected to provide security for INEC officials, election materials, and voters are nowhere to be found.

"The Zamfara State PDP is worried and believes that this is a plan by the state government to resort to extra-judicial means to compromise the process.

"There is already information of thugs attacking voters in Gummi, Zurmi, Bungudu, Mafara, and Shinkafi Local Government Areas.

"We call on the Inspector General of Police to call the Zamfara state commissioner of police to order. The police should be neutral, not partisan.

"It is only the security operatives that can thwart the plan to further compromise the electoral officers, thus making the falsification of results much easier than it was in the previous exercise."

12:20pm

Low Turnout as Enugu Residents Elect Gov, State Assembly Members

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

Residents of Enugu State appear to have lost hope and interest in the conduct of elections given the low turnout of voters that is currently being experienced at the ongoing governorship and state assembly elections.

This is unlike the last Presidential and National Assembly elections during which residents of the State trooped out in large numbers to vote, despite threats of sit at home.

Recall that in some polling units where voting materials did not arrive on time, voters waited for several hours just to exercise their rights.

However, while voting materials arrived on time today and voting commenced early enough, it was noticed in some of the polling units visited that the turnout was poor.

At the Central Primary School Ugwuaji and Afor Market Square Polling units, accreditation and voting started at 9am. But only a few voters turnout out. The story is the same across some polling units across the state.

It was also noticed that unlike in the last election when residents stayed back in their numbers to count their votes, most of them were leaving as soon as they cast their votes.

At the Central Primary School Ugwuaji and Afor Market Square, party agents who spoke to this reporter said that the low turnout being experienced was as a result of the outcome of the last presidential and national assembly election.

"The outcome of the presidential election, particularly, was not what the citizens expected, one of them said. " And that is why most of them have decided to stay back since their votes will not count,".

Some of those who voted in the last election but didn't turn up for the state elections also told this reporter that they had lost hope and trust in the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC to conduct free and fair polls.

As at the time of this report, voting was still ongoing and no violence has been recorded yet.

11:27am

Heavy Security as Voting Commences in Lagos

Segun James

Amidst heavy security, voting has commenced in Lagos.

The President -elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was one of the early voters as he voted at his Alausa, Ikeja polling unit at about 09.40 am.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has just voted.

THISDAY Correspondent, who visited Awolowo Way, Ikeja, Agege-Motor Road, Oshodi, Mushin and Lagos Island noticed heavy security presence, made up of men of the Nigerian Army at known flashpoints along the axis.

The soldiers were moving in armoured trucks.

11:23am

Tinubu Votes Amid Heavy Security

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President-elect, Sen. Bola Tinubu voted at 9.35 a.m. at Unit 085, Ward 03, Alausa, Ikeja amid tight security in the Governorship/National Assembly elections on Saturday.

Tinubu was accompanied by his wife, Oluremi and the Lagos Market leader, Chief Folashade Ojo.

Mr Dele Alake, his Media Spokesman, told journalists after he voted that the president-elect will not be able to grant interviews till later in the evening.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that barriers were used to demarcate the unit into sections and designated areas for voters, journalists and security operatives which is different from the previous situation.

NAN recalls that during the Presidential and National Assembly elections on Feb. 25, hundreds of journalists and party supporters struggled to capture Tinubu's arrival and voting.

INEC officials were early and had completely set up before 8 a.m.

At exactly 8.30 a.m., Miss Adebola Adeniyi, the Assistant Presiding Officer III, made announcement, showed empty ballot boxes and the BVAS Machine and read out the election guidelines.

She said 324 voters registered in the unit.

A combined team of Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, DSS, FRSC and Nigeria Immigration Service were on ground.

The heads of the various security organisations, including the commissioner of police inspected and patrolled the area before the arrival and departure of the president-elect. (NAN)

11:16am

#### Large Turnout, Tight Security as Plateau Goes to Poll

Electoral officers in most polling units across Plateau conducted peaceful accreditations of voters and voting amid huge turnout of voters on Saturday for the state governorship and House of Assembly elections.

However, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that voters' turnout was poor in Jos North Local Government when accreditations and voting had begun in other polling stations.

Some polling units in Kuguya, Bukuru and Dadin Kowa, in Jos-South began accreditations and votings immediately it was official time for the exercise.

The residents in Jos obeyed the restriction directive as most streets in the metropolis were deserted, no traffic and shops were locked up during the elections.

Most voters commended the officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for arriving in polling stations promptly.

Voting began as scheduled in polling units 028 (Gut), 024 (Shaka) and 017 (Air force Primary School) all in old Airport Road amid tight security

Polling units in Kuguya, Bukuru Lowcost and Dadinkowa were set up before 8 a.m. awaiting the official time of 8.30 a.m. to begin accreditations.

The Presiding Officer in charge of polling unit 032, in Bukuru Lowcost , Mr Okoi Nsa, said that he and his team arrived as early as 7.15 a.m. to set up the place.

Similarly, the Presiding Officer in charge of polling unit 048, Dadinkowa, Miss Blessing Edoh, said that she was at the station as early as 6.30 a.m. to forestall a repeat of the incidence that occurred during the presidential and national assembly elections.

In polling units 043 and 006 at Kuguya, Jos South, as the polling units were set and the officers in charge were seen addressing the electorate before the commencement of the voting exercise.

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Some of the electorate who spoke with NAN expressed satisfaction on the prompt arrival of the INEC officials, noting that this would enable the electorate to cast their votes within the stipulated time.

Mrs Garos Pam, an electorate, commended the INEC officials for coming out early as this has enabled her to cast her vote in good time.

Another voter, Mr Moses Bitrus, said that because the exercise commenced in time, he spent less than 10 minutes to cast his vote.

Miss Jummai Dalyop, said that the process this time was less cumbersome as compared to that of the presidential elections.

Another electorate, Mrs Joy Jacob said that this process would enable every eligible3 voter to cast their vote as the officials arrived early and the process was better.(NAN)

11:13am

#### Awka Records Poor Voters Turnout

Turnout of voters in most polling units in Awka and environs for the March 18 State House of assembly election was very low, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Correspondent of NAN who visited some polling units within Awka township reports that electoral officials arrived before 8a.m. in most of the units.

The polling units visited include Awka South Aroma 1, PU. 002, Aroma 2, 008, Aroma 3, PU.007, Amudo Hall 2, PU 009, Ukwuorji 5, PU. 006, and Ogbugbankwa PU. 011.

Also at Adabebe Amawbia Polling units 1 and 2 Polling, Agu Awka 09 polling units 005 and 0012, the turnout was low, there were presence of security operatives and party agents.

Pastor Emeka Okoli, a voter at Aroma Awka 1 told NAN that the poor turnout was due to the poor handling of the Feb. 25 presidential and national assembly elections.

"As you can see many people are not here now, by this time during the last election, more than 150 people were already here.

"For people to show up in their numbers in future elections, INEC must make sure they stick to the rules", he said.(NAN)

11:10am

#### APC, PDP Agents Kick as Materials Arrive Bauchi Ward Late

Agents of All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), on Saturday, decried late arrival of INEC officials and materials at Haruna Memorial Primary School ward 029,

The ward is in Alkaleri Local Government Area of Bauchi state.

Speaking with newsmen, Mouktar Gidado, the PDP observer at the polling unit said he arrived at the venue exactly at 8am when election materials should have arrived.

"However, I don't know why the materials arrived at 9:20am and voting has not yet commenced though the electoral officers are on ground now.

"I want to appeal to INEC that there should be a departure from late arrival of election materials. It is 9:30am and voters are still waiting", he said.

Gidado, who is also the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to Gov. Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State , said apart from the late arrival of election materials, everything was going on smoothly at the polling unit.

Also speaking, Abdullahi Gidado, the All Progressives Congress (APC) party agent at the polling unit, decried the late arrival of election materials.

He said some voters wanted to return home but he convinced them to stay.

"We have been waiting since 8am and they arrived at 9:20am. We hope that the election will commence soon as they have already set up the polling unit.

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"Apart from the fact that INEC officials arrived late, there is no other issue here," he said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that as at 10am, election had not commenced at the polling unit. (NAN)

11:08am

#### Voting Starts Early in Nasarawa

Election officials arrived early for the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections in Motor Park 001 and 002 Polling Units Gudi, Akwanga Local Government Area (LGA), Nasarawa State.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the polling units visited by its Correspondent, accreditation and voting began simultaneously at exactly 9:08am.

NAN also reports that Officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) arrived most polling units around 8:30am and set up the place for voting.

Security agencies such as Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps were present at the polling units to ensure security and to check vote buying. (NAN).

11:02am

#### Materials Arrive, Voting Commences Early In Eket

Electoral materials arrived early in polling units in some parts of Eket Local Government Area of the state for governorship and House Assembly elections.

Mr Solomon Daudo, Polling Officer said that electoral materials arrived at Unit 18 one of the wards in Ward 4 Urban, Primary School Atai Ndon at 7:20 a.m on Saturday

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Wards 4 Urban comprises five units which are units 3, 4, 17, 18 and 19.

Daudo said that everything was in place, as they were waiting for INEC authorisation to commence the election.

Mrs Dorothy Imoh, the polling officer said that electoral materials arrived polling units at 7:30 a.m.

She also that the security officers and party agents of different political parties were all on ground.

Mr Joseph Ekaette, Senior Polling Officer, (SPO) said electoral materials arrived Registration Area Technical Support (RATECH) centre Ikot Ibiok last night and distributed the materials before 7:30 a.m.

NAN reports that voting later commenced by 8:30 a.m. (NAN)

10:58am

#### Large Voter Turn-Out in Kano Amidst Tight Security

A huge turnout of voters is being witnessed in the Governorship and House of Assembly elections in Kano as people troop out to exercise their franchise.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that voters, especially in parts of Municipal and Nasarawa Local Government Areas thronged their polling units as early as 7 a.m.

The election personnel and materials also arrived as early as 8 a.m. to various polling centres especially at the Emir's Palace, Kwalli Police Station, School For Arabic Studies and the Old Kano State Library.

Other polling units that witnessed the development were those located in Gidan Makama Primary School, Unguwar Gini Comprehensive Health Centre, Magwan Primary School and Government Junior Secondary School, Race Course.

Similarly, security was tight in all the areas visited with military personnel, the Police, Civil Defence, FRSC and other operatives manning major streets and screening people as they approached the polling stations. There was also compliance to the order restricting movement of unauthorized vehicles in the city with the streets virtually deserted.

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Shops, shopping malls, restaurants and other places of human endeavour remained closed in compliance with the police order.

NAN also observed that voter turnout was impressive as people came out early to cast their votes under a conducive atmosphere. (NAN)

10:55am

#### Large Turnout of Voters in Mafa, Zulum's Hometown

There is large turnout of voters in Mafa, hometown of Gov. Babagana Zulum of Borno, as accreditation and voting in the March 18 governorship/state assembly elections start.

Mafa is the headquarters of Mafa Local Government Area of Borno, about 35km from Maiduguri.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent monitoring the exercise in Mafa, reports that accreditation and voting started on time in most polling units in the town.

Some of the voters who spoke to NAN said the turnout was unprecedented compared to the last election because of improved mobilisation.

Bulama Abubakar, said after casting his vote that "we trooped out to cast our votes in support of our son, Prof. Zulum because he is seeking reelection."

He commended the early arrival of officials and election materials at many polling units in the town which he said was a big improvement to the Feb. 25 presidential and National Assembly elections.

Also, Aisha Modu and Mustafa Lawan, said the large turnout was in solidarity for their son.

NAN correspondent who also monitored the exercise in Jere Local Government Area, however, reports that many voters were still waiting for arrival of officials and materials in some polling units in the area.

"It is already 9.30 a.m. but we are still waiting for the officials to come," said Abubakar Ibrahim, a voter at a polling unit in Mairi ward of Jere LGA. (NAN)

10:49am

#### Police Arrest Armed Thugs in Anambra

##### David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The Anambra State Police Command has arrested five persons suspected to be thugs, mobilized to disrupt elections in the state.

According to a short text message from the command's spokesperson, DSP Toochukwu Ikenga, the men were arrested in Ihiala, with four pump action rifles recovered from them.

Ikenga said: "Five armed thugs were arrested in Ihiala and four pump actions recovered."

CP Aderemi Adeoye, who is heading the command's personnel on election duty, was also quoted to have said that thuggery will not be allowed during the election.

10:09am

#### Go Out and Vote, Adeleke Calls on Osun Residents

##### Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

The Governor of Osun State, Senator Ademola Adeleke, has called on residents of the state to go out and cast their vote, assuring them of safety and security.

Speaking early Saturday morning at his country home in Ede, the governor said:

"You are still at home? Come out now and use your PVC as a democrat. It is safe outside. Exercise your right to vote and be voted for.

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"Don't be scared to abandon your right to vote. Security agencies are in top form to ensure that your vote and my vote count. I have issued relevant directives to service commanders to secure lives and properties as we all vote today.

"I need you good people of Osun State to vote massively. If you love democracy and good governance, stand up now and face your polling units."

10:03am

High Turn-out of Voters in Osogbo Metropolis

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

There is high turn-out of voters in the governorship and state Assembly elections in Osogbo metropolis in Osun State, while security personnel are also present to maintain law and order.

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state, Musbaudeed Ayodele Kusamotu, who spoke with THISDAY, urged the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure free and fair polls.

He advised voters to be mature in the course of the exercise and avoid trouble.

Voting is already in progress in some wards with security personnel on ground to provide adequate security for voters.

Some of the wards visited are wards 3 unit 8 in Osogbo Local Government, wards 3 unit 3 Agana in Olorunda Local Government, Ward 1 Ataoja A, unit, polling unit 3 and ward 4 Fagbewesa, Osogbo.

9:42am

Low Turnout of Voters in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

There is a low turnout of voters in Anambra State in 5oday Assembly election, compared to the large number of people that thronged polling centres for the Presidential election three weeks ago.

Polling centres visited in Awka, the state capital, showed near empty units as staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, sat idly.

At Aroma junction 1, polling unit 008, Awka South Local Government Area, as at 9:20pm, only six persons had been able to vote, despite the commencement of voting at 8:30am, and the swiftness of the BVAS machines.

A voter, Mrs Chika Ndu told our correspondent that: "People are not coming out because they feel their votes may not count because of what happened last three weeks.

"It will take a level of enlightenment for people to accept to come out, because they believe their votes will not count.

"I cannot believe that this same place where I found it difficult to cast my vote last three weeks, I can just come in and in less than three minutes, I had cast my vote."

Another respondent, a **journalist**, Mr Damian Egwuonwu, said: "I think it is early, people will still come out."

9:35am

Polling Units Open Early in Minna

\* Agents absent in centres visited

\* Poor voter turnout

#### Laleye Dipo in Minna

Officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC opened the various polling units in Minna the Niger state as early as 8am.

However party agents were absent at the polling units visited as at 8:45am, resulting in polling not commencing.

At Umoru Audi primary school, polling officials arrived at 8am to set up for the election with only about 10 voters around.

All party agents were absent at the unit, so polling could not start .

"We are waiting for the agents, even if we have one agent we will start, Aliyu, a polling official said.

In other areas, polling started at 8.30am but with few voters on the queue.

THISDAY observed non compliance with restriction of movements ordered by the police.

9:31am

#### Voting Commences in Anambra

#### David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Voting has started in Anambra State for the House of Assembly elections.

Polling centres visited by THISDAY within Awka, the state capital showed that as early as 8:30am, most of the centres visited had started voting.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner Mrs Elizabeth Agwu had in a press conference on Friday said that the commission was ready, and that voting would start early.

Observation also showed that the BVAS had been very swift in capturing voters.

8:47am

#### Accreditation, Voting Commence in Sokoto

#### By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

Voters in Sokoto State came out as early as 6am in to queue at polling units as they awaited the arrival of electoral officials.

Accreditation and voting commenced at 8am

at Gwiwa extension, behind Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, College of Administration .

A voter Murtala Yakubu told our correspondent that he was eager to elect who will pilot the affairs of the state for the next four years.

8:42am

#### INEC Disowns Fake ID for Security Personnel on Election Duty

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has distanced itself from a fake identify card for security personnel on election duty.

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The commission did this in a statement by its National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, in Abuja.

Okoye said INEC's attention had been drawn to an identity card for security personnel bearing the name and logo of the Commission with the inscription "Complete Access" boldly written in red at the bottom of it.

"We wish to state categorically that the identity card did not emanate from the Commission. Identity cards for security personnel on election duty were issued by the security agencies and not the Commission."

"Anyone bearing an identity card allegedly issued by the Commission for security personnel can only be on illegal duty. Such a person is liable to arrest and prosecution."

"The public is alerted to this diabolical action of some misdirected elements and to report any such person to the security agencies," Okoye said.(NAN)

7:03am

#### Tension As 28 States Elect Governors

- Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Oyo, Sokoto, Delta, Rivers, Benue, Plateau are battle grounds
- 993 state assembly seats also to be filled today
- INEC promises uploading of results from polling units to Result Viewing Portal real time

#### Ahamefula Ogbu

Voters in 28 states across Nigeria will today file out to elect governors who will run their affairs for the next four years, effective May 29.

There will also be voting into 993 state assembly seats across the 36 states of the federation in this rescheduled governorship and state houses of assembly elections.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), after a slipshod performance at the Presidential and National Assembly elections on February 25, largely due to failure to transmit and collate results electronically as assured, promised an improved performance today.

INEC's Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu vowed that today's polls will be free and fair.

Yakubu urged parties and candidates to speak to their agents and supporters to see the elections as a contest and not war and to "refrain from acts of violence that may mar the elections or compromise the security of our personnel, observers, the media and service providers."

By yesterday morning, INEC had concluded the distribution of sensitive materials for the governorship and house of assembly elections to all the wards.

#### INEC Promises to Upload Results Real Time

Yesterday, INEC gave an insight into how polling unit results will be transmitted during today's governorship elections.

The Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee of INEC, Festus Okoye, while speaking on Arise News said "the law as of today prescribes a dual mode of either transmission of results or transfer of results."

He said when polls closed at the level of the various units, the Presiding Officer who superintended the polling unit would enter the scores of the various political parties in form EC8A which is the polling unit level result.

"The PO will sign that particular result sheet and stamp it, the PU agent or party agent if available will also countersign and copies will be given to them and the police."

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"That original result is what will be scanned and uploaded to our INEC Result Viewing Portal for public viewing. Not only that, the accreditation data that has arisen from that polling unit will also be uploaded, but the physical result and the BVAS itself will also be taken to the Registration Area Collation centre," said Okoye.

According to him, the Collation Officer will have the benefit of seeing the original results and the BVAS itself and have the benefit of looking at the accreditation data as transmitted, and the result sheet as transmitted from the polling unit.

"That is the dual mode which the law has prescribed for the commission and that is the mode that we're going to use for the purpose of this election," said Okoye.

Speaking on real-time IREV delivery on Saturday, Okoye said results would be transmitted as soon as the polls closed from various polling units.

"The commission is determined to improve on its previous performance. What we have done is to learn valuable lessons from previous elections that we conducted, and we're going to put those lessons into our planning purposes and processes, and into our deployment purposes," Okoye said.

On INEC's readiness, he said, "In all the states of the federation, both the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System machines and all the sensitive election materials have left the Central Bank and the various state offices of the federation.

"We want to ensure that all polling units open on time. Secondly, we made sure that we reconfigured all the BVAS that will be used for this particular election in terms of making sure that the BVAS perform optimally and also making sure that some of the challenges we had in the previous elections do not reoccur."

#### Police Pledge Tight Security

The Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba, is deploying over 400,000 officers and men for today's operation.

Baba, who urged voters to come out and vote without fear, promised tight security.

He has also ordered the restriction of all forms of vehicular movement on roads, waterways, and other forms of transportation, from 12 am to 6 pm on Saturday in all states where elections will be conducted.

Baba said those on essential services such as officials of INEC, electoral observers, accredited media and observers, ambulances responding to medical emergencies, firefighters, amongst others are exempted from the restriction.

He noted that the directive excludes the Federal Capital Territory, as no election is being conducted therein.

The IGP reiterated the ban on all security aides to VIPs and escorts from accompanying their principals and politicians to polling booths and collation centres during the election.

State-established and owned security outfits/organizations, quasi-security units, and privately-owned guard and security outfits are also barred from participating in election security management.

The IGP has also extended additional human and logistic support to police commands and formations across the country for effective election security management today.

The additional support includes the deployment of personnel, operational vehicles, non-lethal weapons, personal protective equipment (body armour), and anti-riot equipment among others.

#### Gubernatorial Battlegrounds

Abia State

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

It's a three-horse race in God's own State. Incumbent Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of the PDP is pushing for his former Chief of Staff, Okey Ahiwe to succeed him.

This appears to be in danger because of Ikpeazu's poor performance in the last eight years.

The bad situation is at a boiling point in this state. Teachers and civil servants are owed backlog of salaries, pensioners not paid, tertiary institutions losing accreditation, and all forms of development arrested, while political office holders and their families flourish.

This anger of the masses has already claimed the ambition of the Ikpeazu who desired to retire to the Senate but was trounced at the polls.

The PDP has Alex Otti of the LP and Ikechi Emmenike of the APC to contend with. The LP has upset the apple cart in several states and Otti who is riding the crest of the euphoria appears set to clinch the prize in Abia State. Emmenike of the APC will no doubt give him a good fight. It's too close to call here.

#### Enugu State

The state parades an array of strong contestants with front runners being Peter Mbah of PDP, Chijioke Edeoga of Labour Party and Frank Nweke of APGA.

Mbah enjoys a broad spectrum of support from political bigwigs in the state and with the state treasury at his disposal, being the candidate of the sitting governor and the state being a PDP state for long, Mbah who also parades a personal war chest will give a good fight.

However, Edeoga of the Labour Party might ride on the back of the tsunami sweeping through the political space, added to the sympathy of having their senatorial candidate murdered, to clinch the coveted seat, especially as the Labour Party is wearing the messianic toga now.

Frank Nweke, who even some "Obidients" favour because of his past records, is also a strong contender which also makes the state a battleground, especially as the state is known for its violent disposition of some old politicians. Allegations of arms stockpiling is already rife and it will be a tough fight between PDP struggling to retain the state and LP/APGA bent on wresting it from them.

#### Kano State

This is an APC state with a gladiator in the person of Rabiu Kwankwaso that has moved to the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of APC, though none of them is on the ballot.

While Kwankwaso who swept the presidential ballot in Kano is supporting Abba Yusuf, Ganduje is backing Yusuf Gawuna.

The candidates of the governor and Kwankwaso are not only contesting but there is an ego war of who has the bragging rights over the state. Kano State is too close to call. The prize can go either way.

#### Benue State

There is a marked departure from the past as a Catholic Priest, Father Hyacinth Alia, contesting under the APC, survived all intrigues to hold on to the ticket, while Herman Hembe latching on to the Labour Party's acceptance to struggle to be elected governor to succeed Samuel Ortom, one of the G5 governors that bloodied the nose of their party over power shift to the South.

Ortom, who lost his senatorial election, would strive to ensure his candidate of the PDP, Titus Uba wins, so there won't be a double loss of his seat and that of his successor. Allegations of arming youths to steal mandates are rife in Benue. It's a three-horse race here and too close to call.

#### Ebonyi State

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Since Governor Dave Umahi moved over to the APC on account of complaints of inequity in PDP, Ebonyi was suddenly racked by spates of violence and the governor is one to ram through his wish on issues of interest.

So, it is expected that he may, against all odds, do everything he can to deliver Mr. Francis Nwifuru to succeed him.

Umahi however has Chief Francis Odii of the PDP to contend with in a predominantly PDP State before Umahi jumped ship.

On the shadows to spring surprises might be Labour Party's candidate, Chief Edward Nkwegu who is riding on the back of Peter Obi and his Obidients. As usual, violence will make or mar the outcome of the contest. Nwifuru of the APC may pick this ticket.

#### Rivers State

Old rivalries have been rekindled as former governor Rotimi Amaechi and incumbent Governor Nyesom Wike have squared up again with their support for candidates of their parties and brickbats are flying, often leaving issues to attack personalities.

Wike is pushing Similaye Fubara for his party, PDP, which he had campaigned vigorously against in the presidential election over the sharing of party positions, while Amaechi came back in full force leading the campaigns for APC, which fortune had dwindled with exit of many members over choice of candidates, with his candidate, Tonye Cole.

The presidential election saw a lot of violence when their direct interests were not at stake, and this signposts what will happen today. Candidates were attacked with dynamites and guns during campaigns so worse would be expected today as Wike will struggle to break the jinx of Rivers State governors not being able to determine their successors.

Senator Magnus Abe of Social Democratic Party (SDP) is also in the race and can make the contest to go anywhere.

#### Oyo State

It is going to be a straight battle between incumbent Seyi Makinde of PDP and Teslim Folarin of APC.

Makinde, being a G5 member that dared the party, is not enjoying the backing of some of Oyo PDP big wigs.

Even with being an incumbent, with some of the parties collapsing their structure for him, Makinde still does not have that edge. Folarin is looking good for the Oyo State governorship.

#### Plateau State

With Governor Simon Lalong's failure to grab his senatorial seat, his quest to determine who takes over from him has become a serious agenda.

So far, his candidate, Dr. Nantwe Yilwada of the APC has Caleb Muftwang of PDP and Yohanna Margif of Labour Party to slug it out with, given their performances during the presidential elections. Margif has been bogged down by court orders which were cleared a few days ago.

With the backing of the incumbent governor, APC will strive to retain the state which has been a core PDP state till Lalong took it to APC.

Also, the general acceptance of the Labour Party in Plateau and the performance of its presidential candidate in the last election may throw up some upsets in favour of the Labour Party. Muftwang looks determined to return Plateau to the PDP. But anything can still happen in Plateau State today.

#### Lagos State

The loss of Lagos by the APC to little known LP in the Presidential election threw up a gamut of variables which sent strategists hurrying back to the drawing board.

Whereas Lagos was seen as tug of war between the APC and their usual PDP, what could be a rib excised from PDP ended up causing an upset that has made the poster boy of Lagos, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to start losing sleep due to the possibility of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the LP upstaging him.

This factor has seen a flurry of activities in churches, football stunts and visits to places that ordinarily would not be contemplated.

Later statements by Rhodes-Vivour that he was going to open the account books of Lagos for people to see how funds of the state had been applied will definitely lead to a do or die contest. Moreso, when it comes with the threat that may smear reputations. The heat is already on in the state with threats of Oro cult and warnings to non-Yorubas not to rock the boat.

#### Delta State

As for Delta State, apart from being the sitting Governor, Ifeanyi Okowa was also Atiku's running mate, and the least expected from him was to deliver maximum votes in the Presidential election. However, he managed to garner 161,600 votes, trailing the LP by a distance.

Okowa will be fighting today to take his preferred candidate, Sheriff Oborevwori, to the Delta State Government House, Asaba.

Apart from the rising popularity of the Labour Party, Okowa also has the candidate of the APC and Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege to contend with.

With PDP chieftains, including the former governor of the state, James Ibori, and Senator James Manager both working at cross purposes with the Okowa administration, it would be interesting to see which of the parties have the last laugh today. It's a three-horse here.

#### Sokoto State

Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State may have won the North-west state for Atiku and his PDP in the February 25 presidential election. Yet, a dark cloud of uncertainty hangs over the governorship election. Today's voting will be a keenly contested poll between Saidu Umar of the PDP and the APC's Ahmad Aliyu. The race is too close to call in Sokoto State.

#### Kaduna State

In Kaduna State, Governor Nasir el-rufai will require a miracle to determine his successor.

El-rufai and the APC were badly trounced in the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections by the PDP, making today's election a tough one for his favoured Ubah Sani. Isah Ashiru of the PDP will give el-rufai's man a good run for his money. Victory can go either way. The race is too close to call in Kaduna State.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023



## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

This Day

March 20, 2023 Monday

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**Length:** 25756 words

### **Body**

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MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023

4:22 AM

PDP Leads in Edo Assembly Poll

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won 12 seats out of the 19 constituency seats so far declared in the Edo House of Assembly elections conducted on March 18.

There are 24 seats in the Edo House of Assembly.

Results from five other constituencies – Egor, Etsako I, Etsako II, Oredo East and Ovia Southwest have yet to be announced.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has so far won six seats while Labour Party (LP) won one seat.

Meanwhile, Mr Marcus Onobun, Speaker of the Edo House of Assembly and candidate of the PDP has won in Esan West, Esan Central and Igueben Federal Constituency in the rescheduled election.

INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner in Edo, Mr Obo Efanga, said: "we had election into Esan Central/Esan West/Igueben Federal Constituency, which we could not conduct along with others on February 25.

"Of the 24 state assembly seats, declaration have been made in 19 constituencies; we are yet to get information from the five constituencies remaining."

In the results declared so far, the PDP won in Akoko Edo I, Akoko Edo II, Esan Central, Esan North East II, Esan South East, and Igueben.

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It also won in Ikpoba-Okha, Orhiomwon II, Ovia North East I, Ovia North East II, Owan West and Uhunmwonde.

The APC won in Esan North East I, Esan West, Etsako Central, Etsako East, Orhiomwon I and Owan East; while LP won in Oredo West. (NAN)

4:12AM

**Sanwo-Olu Reelected Governor in Lago**

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has been declared winner of Saturday's governorship election in Lagos state. He was declared winner by the INEC returning officer at 01.15am Monday.

The Governor won 19 of the 20 local government councils in the state, scoring 762,134 votes.

His closest rival Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the Labour Party, scored 312, 329 votes while Olajide Adediran of the PDP got 62,449 votes.

**APC's Radda Wins Katsina Governorship Election**

03:58 AM

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Dr Dikko Umar-Radda of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the March 18 governorship election in Katsina State.

Announcing the result on Sunday in Katsina, the State Returning Officer, Prof. Muazu Abubakar-Gusau, the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University, Gusau, said Umar-Radda polled 859,892 votes to emerge the state governor-elect.

He said that Umar-Radda defeated his closet rival, Sen. Yakubu Lado-Danmarke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who scored 486,620 votes.

Abubakar-Gusau added that the election was contested by candidates from 13 political parties.

He said that the number of registered voters in the state was 3,516,719, while the number of accredited voters for the election was 1,399,291.

He added that the number of rejected votes was 20,579, while the total valid votes was 1,365,848 and the total votes cast was 1,386,427.

He said that the election was cancelled in 88 polling units due to some irregularities like violence and over voting.

"That I Prof. Muazu Abubakar-Gusau, declared that the election was contested by candidates.

"Having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, Dikko Umar-Radda of the APC is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said NAN

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023

10:50pm

**APC's Aliyu Wins Sokoto Guber Election**

By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

The independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto as a Governor elect of Sokoto State.

Announcing the results at INEC collation centre on Sunday night, the returning officer and the Vice Chancellor Federal University Dutsinma Prof Armiyau Hamis said Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto of APC polled 453,661 votes to defeat his closest rival Mallam Saidu Umar of PDP who polled 404632.

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From the results, APC governorship candidate won 17 local government areas out of 23 local government of the state while PDP won in 6 local governments.

Here are results

Binji LGA

APC: 13,410

PDP: 11,078

Wurno

APC: 17,350

PDP: 13,099

Yabo

APC: 14729

PDP: 12,014

Isa

APC: 13,632

PDP: 15,117

Gwadabawa

APC: 19,036

PDP: 16,652

Rabbah

APC: 12,759

PDP: 11,120

Tureta

APC: 9831

PDP: 10,045

Bodinga

APC: 18986

PDP: 16,440

Tangaza

APC: 16,254

PDP: 9705

Kware

APC: 18,644

PDP: 18,161

Silame

APC:9983

PDP:10,885

Denge-Shuni

APC: 22,690

PDP:18,506

Shagari

APC:14,264

PDP:13,893

Sabon-Birni

APC: 26,884

PDP: 20,680

Illela

APC: 23,484

PDP: 19,169

Gudu

APC: 12,118

PDP: 10,718

Gada

APC:19,969

PDP:18,434

Goronyo

APC:16,567

PDP:17,323

Sokoto South

APC:37,114

PDP:33,363

Sokoto North

APC:35,333

PDP; 33,190

KEBBE

APC;14,902

PDP:14,619

Tambuwal

APC 29489

PDP 32779

Wamakko

APC 36233

PDP 27642

9:00pm

Kano Guber: NNPP Leads in 13 LGAs, APC in 9

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Gubernatorial candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) in Kano State, Engineer Abba Kabiru Yusuf, is ahead of Dr Nasir Yusuf Gawuna, his rival of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 13 local government areas out of the 22 so far declared at the state collation center.

The APC also won 9 local governments so far declared at the collation center.

The local government areas are Rano, Rogo, Wudil, Karaye, kibiya, Minjibir, Gabasawa, Ajingi, Albasu, Gezawa, Garko, Tudunwada and Bunkure.

Also, the 9 local government areas won by APC are Shanono, Kunchi, Makoda, Dambatta, Warawa, Kabo, Bagwai, Takai and Tsanyawa.

Below are details:

RANO

ADP – 80

APC – 17,090

NNPP – 18,040

PDP – 225

PRP – 10

ROGO

APC – 11,112

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ADP – 42

NNPP – 18,559

PDP – 124

MAKODA

APC – 15,006

ADP – 83

NNPP – 13,956

PDP – 101

KUNCHI

APC – 13,215

ADP – 62

NNPP – 10,674

PDP – 39

WUDIL

APC – 20,299

ADP – 276

NNPP – 21,740

PDP – 118

KARAYE

APC – 14,515

ADP – 63

NNPP – 15,838

PDP – 77

TSANYAWA

APC – 18,746

ADP – 78

NNPP – 16,769

PDP – 71

MINJIBIR

APC – 16,039

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ADP – 148

NNPP – 17,575

PDP – 189

ALBASU

APC – 16,959

ADP – 55

NNPP – 19,952

PDP – 293

GABASAWA

APC – 17,584

ADP – 91

NNPP – 19,507

PDP – 1,269

AJINGI

APC – 14,438

ADP – 306

NNPP – 15,422

PDP – 103

KABO

APC: 23599

NNPP: 16963

PDP: 2118

LP: 78

KIBIYA

APC: 13260

NNPP: 17157

PDP: 52

LP: 48

GEZAWA

APC: 19961

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NNPP: 22077

PDP: 277

LP: 101

SHANONO

APC: 17249

NNPP: 13650

PDP: 272

LP: 58

DAMBATTA

APC: 16995

NNPP: 9674

PDP: 1107

LP: 25

WARAWA

APC: 16296

NNPP: 14629

PDP: 201

LP: 76

Bunkure

APC 17156

NNPP 19277

Garko

APC 8485

NNPP 15839

Tudunwada

APC 24382

NNPP 27434

Takai

APC 25244

NNPP 23666

Bagwai

APC 21295

NNPP 17311

8:54pm

Gov Buni Reelected Yobe Governor

Michael Olugbode in Damaturu

Yobe State Governor, Hon. Mai Mala Buni of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has been returned re-elected. He was declared winner of the governorship election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday in Damaturu.

Announcing the result, Professor Umar Pate, the returning officer, said Buni of APC scored a total of 317,113 votes to defeat his closest opponent, Alhaji Sheriff Abdullahi of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) that polled 104,259 votes.

Garba Umar of New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP) polled 14,246 votes to come third.

The returning officer after announcing the votes of the candidates, said: "I Professor Umar Pate hereby certify that Mai Mala Buni, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of the votes, is hereby declared winner of the election".

8:51pm

APC Leads in Sokoto Guber Election

Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

All Progressives Congress candidate in the Sokoto State Governorship election, Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto, is leading in the results announced for so far.

According to the results declared so far in twenty one local governments area of the state by the Independent National Electoral Commission in the state, the APC candidate is leading its closest rival Peoples Democratic Party candidate, Sa'idu Umar, in 17 LGAs. PDP leads in 3.

Meanwhile, before the collation was suspended to resume by 8pm later in the evening, only two local governments which includes Wamakko and Tambuwal are expected to complete the process.

The breakdown of the scores of the two parties are as follows

Binji LGA

APC: 13,410

PDP: 11,078

Wurno

APC: 17,350

PDP: 13,099

Yabo

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 14729

PDP: 12,014

Isa

APC: 13,632

PDP: 15,117

Gwadabawa

APC: 19,036

PDP; 16,652

Rabbah

APC; 12,759

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Tureta

APC: 9831

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Bodinga

APC: 18986

PDP: 16,440

Tangaza

APC: 16,254

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Kware

APC: 18,644

PDP: 18,161

Silame

APC:9983

PDP:10,885

Denge-Shuni

APC: 22,690

PDP:18,506

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Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC:14,264

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APC: 26,884

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APC: 23,484

PDP: 19,169

Gudu

APC: 12,118

PDP: 10,718

Gada

APC:19,969

PDP:18,434

Goronyo

APC:16,567

PDP:17,323

Sokoto South

APC:37,114

PDP:33,363

Sokoto North

APC:35,333

PDP; 33,190

KEBBE

APC;14,902

PDP:14,619

8:00pm

APC Candidate, Dammodi, Wins Jigawa Guber Poll

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Dutse

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The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Alhaji Umar Namadi Dammodi of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the 2023 gubernatorial election in Jigawa State.

Announcing the result Sunday, the INEC Collation Officer in the state and the Vice-Chancellor of Federal University, Birnin Kebbi, Prof. Zayyanu Umar Birnin Kebbi, said Dammodi of the APC having scored the high votes of 618,449 emerged winner and the newly elected governor of Jigawa State.

He explained that the total registered voters was 2,351,298, while the total accredited voters stood at 1,073,540, while the total votes cast were 1,052,793 votes.

The collation officer said the candidate of APC, Dammodi, scored 618,449 to beat his closest rivals of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Lamido Mustapha Sule, who scored 368,726 votes and Ibrahim Aminu Ringim of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) who pooled 37,156 votes.

"That Namadi Umar Alhaji of All Progressives Congress (APC) having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the higher votes is hereby declared winner and returned elected," he said.

7:45pm

#### PDP in Early Lead in Zamfara Governorship Poll

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, is in early lead having won the three Local Government Areas declared so far at the collation centre in Gusua.

In Anka Local Government Area, PDP polled 17,116 votes against the APC which polled 10,156 votes while in Bukuyum Local Government Area, PDP polled 24,341 votes against APC's 10,321 votes.

In Zurmi Local Government Area, PDP polled 24,328 votes while the APC got 21,027 votes.

Zamfara has 14 local government areas.

The collation of results is expected to continue at about 8pm.

7:32pm

#### Gov AbdulRazaq, Mutawali of Ilorin Celebrate Victory.

Gov Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq and his brother, the Mutawalli of Ilorin, Dr Alimi AbdulRazaq, celebrating the Kwara governorship election victory Sunday.

Governor AbdulRazaq who contested on the platform of APC polled 226,956 votes to emerge as the winner of the election. His closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) Shuaibu Yaman Abdullahi got 123,118 votes while Hakeem Lawal of the Social Democratic Party, (SDP) scored 17,321.

6:55pm

#### Gov Abiodun Reelected in Ogun

#### James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Governor Dapo Abiodun, candidate of the All Progressives Congress, as the winner of Saturday's Governorship Election in Ogun State.

The results declared by the State Returning Officer for the election, Professor Kayode Adebowale, showed that Abiodun scored 276,298 votes while his closest rival, Hon Ladipupo Adebutu of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), scored 262,383 just as the second runner up, Biyi Otegbeye of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), scored 94,754 votes.

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The results, also showed that Abiodun won in 12 local governments while Adebayo, won in eight local government areas.

However, the PDP has submitted a petition, to the INEC, asking the commission, to order a rerun in some polling units where results, were cancelled due to non functioning of BVAS and violence.

6:54pm

Gov AbdulRazaq Reelected in Kwara

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Kwara state governor, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq as the winner of the 2023 governorship election in the state.

Governor AbdulRazaq who contested on the platform of APC polled 226,956 votes to emerge as the winner of the election and reelected for second term in office.

His closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) Shuaibu Yaman Abdullahi got 123,118 votes while Hakeem Lawal of the Social Democratic Party, (SDP) scored 17,321.

The governor won all the 16 local government areas of the state in the election results declared by the INEC Returning officer for the polls, Professor Isaac Itodo, the

Vice Chancellor, University of Markurdi, Benue state.

The INEC had on Saturday night started th3 announcement of the 2023 governorship election results with three local government areas with the governor clearing the three local government areas of Ekiti, Isin and Offa.

At the resumed collation of the election results on Sunday morning, which lasted till evening the APC governor also won in additional 13 local government areas.

See the full Kwara governorship election results:

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area.

Number of registered voters -97,945

Accredited voters -24,115

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes -584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such votes in the two PUs were cancelled.

APC -14,696

PDP -6,705

SDP -1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43,944

Accredited voters -11,942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

5. Oyun local government.

Reg voters 61672

Accredited voters 16533

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to

violent crisis

8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP – 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

13. Kaiama local government area

Registered voters 87,871

Accredited voters 22,440

APC -14,431

PDP -6,297

Total Valid votes -21,773

Rejected votes -660

Total votes cast -22,433

14. Edu local government

Registered voters: 112160

Accredited voters: 42991

APC -22,458

PDP -17,378

Total Valid votes -41,331

Rejected vote -998

Total votes cast-42,329

15. Baruten local government

Registered voters -149,573

Accredited voters -38,637

APC -28,060

PDP -7,987

SDP -1492

Total Valid votes -37,873

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes -627

Total votes cast -38,500

16. Ilorin West local government area

Registered voters -273,635

Accredited voters -85,736

APC -46,468

PDP -32,372

Total Valid votes -83,758

Rejected vote -1,978

Total votes cast -85,736

Cancellation on ground of over- voting in three PUs

6:40pm

Updated Results of Governorship Election in Delta State

\*Ika North-East LGA

Registered voters – 131,945

Accredited voters – 34,807

APC – 4,733

LP – 1,990

PDP – 26,760

Valid votes – 33,807

Rejected votes – 918

Total votes cast – 34,725

\*Aniocha North LGA

Registered voters – 89,010

Accredited voters – 16,846ph

APC – 4,386

LP – 1,883

PDP – 8,938

Valid votes – 16,316

Rejected votes – 530

Total votes cast -16,846

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

\*Ndokwa East LGA

Registered voters – 86,208

Accredited voters – 20,434

APC – 9,044

LP – 251

PDP – 10,146

Valid votes – 19,843

Rejected votes – 485

Total votes cast – 20,328

\*Ika South LGA

Registered voters — 100,599

Accredited voters – 27,800

APC – 6,790

LP – 4,495

PDP – 15,283

Valid votes – 27,149

Rejected votes – 651

Total votes cast – 27,800

\*Patani LGA

Registered voters – 49,385

Accredited voters – 11,421

APC – 4,743

LP – 85

PDP – 6,069

Valid votes – 11,183

Rejected votes – 238

Total votes cast – 11,421

\*Udu LGA

Registered voters – 143,769

Accredited voters – 26,908

APC – 13,154

LP – 1,886

PDP – 9,746

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Valid votes – 26,141

Rejected votes – 575

Total votes cast – 26,716

\*Sapele LGA

Registered voters – 145,024

Accredited voters – 30,983

APC – 12,090

LP – 1,458

PDP – 15,217

Valid votes – 29,815

Rejected votes – 957

Total votes cast – 30,772

\*Aniocha South LGA

Registered voters – 100,424

Accredited voters – 21,149

APC – 4,622

LP – 5,107

PDP – 10,032

Valid votes – 20,468

Rejected votes – 603

Total votes cast – 21,071

\*Uvwie LGA

Registered voters – 191,215

Accredited voters – 31,188

APC – 12,389

LP – 6,340

PDP – 9,776

Valid votes – 30,263

Rejected votes – 925

Total votes cast – 31,188

\*Okpe LGA

Registered voters – 117,111

Accredited voters – 25,724

APC – 8,679

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP – 1,155

PDP – 14,544

Valid votes – 25,027

Rejected votes – 691

Total votes cast – 25,718

\*Bomadi LGA

Registered voters – 103,261

Accredited voters – 17,946

APC – 4,728

LP – 100

PDP – 12,340

Valid votes – 17,559

Rejected votes – 379

Total votes cast – 17,939

\*Ethiope East LGA

Registered voters – 115,003

Accredited voters – 30,466

APC – 11,600

APGA – 2,214

LP – 350

PDP – 13,030

Valid votes – 27,814

Rejected votes – 805

Total votes cast – 28,619

\*Warri South LGA

Registered voters – 187,140

Accredited voters – 32,959

APC – 11,569

LP – 3,743

PDP – 15,299

Valid votes – 31,768

Rejected votes – 982

Total votes cast – 32,750

6:38pm

### Zamfara PDP Alleges APC Holding INEC Officials Hostage in Some Collation Centers

The Zamfara state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has accused the state government and ruling All Progressives Congress of threatening INEC officials in some local government areas of the state.

The party said that all the results uploaded virtually had shown that PDP won by landslide.

PDP in a statement issued Sunday in Gusau by the Dauda Lawal Media Office alleged that the state government was not happy with the outcome of the governorship election because it was not in its favor.

The Media office raised the alarm that there were serious issues at the moment at Bakura, Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi, Zurmi, and Bungudu.

"It is clear that our governorship candidate, Dauda Lawal is coasting to victory in more than 80% of results so far uploaded on the INEC portal.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission has uploaded 2839 polling units out of the 3529 polling units in Zamfara State.

"But the information coming to us is that the state government is holding officials of the INEC hostage in the Bakura local government area, intending to disrupt and manipulate the remaining 5 polling units out of the 189 polling units yet to be uploaded.

"In Kauran Namoda, Senator Sahabi Ya'u Kaura (allegedly) ambushed the collation center with thugs and police in his effort to disrupt the collation process. Two people were shot dead by the police accompanying the senator. INEC has uploaded 246 polling units out of 261 polling units of the local government.

"Our major concern is the Shinkafi local government area where only 4 polling units were uploaded out of the 172 polling units of the local government area. We have learned that the state government is plotting to disrupt and manipulate the collation process in their favor.

"There is a serious concern in Birnin Magaji and Zurmi local governments. The state government is hellbent to manipulate some of the results, with the help of some compromised INEC staff and some security agents.

"We frown at the ongoing disruptions of collation of election results and violence across Zamfara as reports from our men and women on the field indicate infliction of violence and assault on PDP agents and representatives."

6:17pm

### INEC Releases More Results from Kaduna Governorship Election

By John Shiklam

INEC has announced the result of the Kaduna governorship election in four more LGAs.

So far, the PDP has won in eight of the 11 LGAs so far released while the APC won three LGA.

The Collation of results from the remaining 12 LGAs will continue at 8:15pm.

The results are as follows

JAMA'A LGA

Registered voters, 173, 846

Accredited voters – 490

APC- 19,920

LP 6017

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP 28, 963

Total valid votes – 55,798

Rejected votes – 574

Total votes- 56, 372

ZANGON KATAF LGA

Registered, 175,145

Accredited voters 53, 142

APC 11,448

LP -7377

NNPP 184

Pdp 33, 185

Total valid votes 52, 609

Rejected votes 533

Total votes cast 53,142

KAURU LGA

Registered voters – 132,827

Accredited voters – 58,311

APC- 26,915

LP – 3,461

NNPP- 455

PDP – 26,342

Total valid votes 57,789

Rejected votes – 493

Total votes cast – 58,282

SOBA LGA

Registered voters – 158,086

Accredited voters – 61,480

APC – 27, 235

LP – 457

NNPP – 335

PDP – 30, 874

Total valid votes, 59,406

Rejected votes – 981

Total votes cast – 60,441

5:29pm

APC in Early Lead in Niger Governorship Poll

By Laleye Dipo in Minna

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The All Progressives Congress APC candidate in Saturday's Governorship election Alhaji Umar Mohammed Bago may be coasting to victory going by the results so far announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission in Minna

Of the 11 local government areas result is collated, Bago is leading his closest opponent Isah Luman Kantigi of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

Bago won in 9 of the 11 local government areas declared while Kantigi is victorious in only 2 LGAs.

The NNPP and the Labour Party are trailing in that order.

The collated results are as follows:

TAFA LG

APC 12,520

PDP 12,082

NNPP 11

LP 206

GURARA LG

APC 14,520

PDP 11,506

LP 176

NNPP14

PAIKORO LG

APC 21,855

PDP 15,780

LP 106

NNPP 192

MUNYA LG

APC 8,644

PDP 10,208

LP 21

NNPP 13

BOSSO LG

APC 24,794

PDP 20,251

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP 211

SULEJA LG

APC 18,261

PDP 15,551

LP 1,664

KATCHA LG

APC 17,037

PDP 16,495

LP 3

EDATI LG

APC 9,225

PDP 16,559

LP

BIDA LG

APC 27,778

PDP 22,846

LP 87

NNPP 687

CHACHANGA LG

APC 34,231

PDP 27,989

LP 323

NNPP 144

LAPAI LG

APC 21,795

PDP 18,041

LP 16

NNPP 18

More results are to be collated later in the day.

5:26pm

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Sanwo-Olu Coasting Home to Victory

Segun James

The Independent National Electoral Commission has released the results of the Lagos gubernatorial and House of Assembly poll with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the All Progressives Congress coasting home to victory.

Sanwo-Olu won in all the 18 local government areas so far declared.

Here is a breakdown of the results

LAGOS ISLAND

Prof Simeon Oladipo – Collation Officer

Registered voters 200848

Accredited voters – 41626

APC – 37760

LP – 1317

PDP – 1783

Total valid votes – 41234

Rejected votes – 389

Total votes cast – 41623

APAPA

Prof. James Akanmu – Collation Officer

Registered voters – 196950

Accredited voters – 28867

APC – 21007

LP – 4157

PDP – 2487

Total valid votes – 28322

Rejected votes – 513

Total votes cast – 28835

EPE

Registered voters – 160124

Accredited voters – 35103

APC – 29614

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP – 1515

PDP – 3272

Total valid votes – 34790

Rejected votes – 313

Total votes cast – 35103

AGEGE

Prof. Sunday Adeyemo Collation Officer

Registered voters – 365885

Accredited voters – 48998

APC – 35845

LP – 8486

PDP – 3176

Total valid votes – 48284

Rejected votes – 680

Total votes cast – 48964

AJEROMI IFELODUN

PRrof J.A. Adewara

Registered voters – 394918

Accredited voters – 64230

APC – 39798

LP – 19821

PDP – 2607

Total valid votes – 63200

Rejected votes – 1037

Total votes cast – 64230

IKEJA

Prof Mohd Olawale – CO

Registered voters – 339879

Accredited voters – 51199

APC – 32273

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP – 15174

PDP – 1616

Total valid votes – 49899

Rejected votes – 686

Total votes cast – 50585

Cancellation at 3 units

Collected PVcs for Ikeja 299, 909

MUSHIN

PROF Abimbola Sowemimo – CO

Registered voters – 394463

Accredited voters – 70028

APC – 52249

LP – 11759

PDP – 4006

Total valid votes – 68952

Rejected votes – 959

Total votes cast – 69911

3 cancellations owing to over voting two units and one disruption

Total Pvcs collected 364192

SURULERE

Prof. Owolabi Kuye CO

Registered voters – 401846

Accredited voters – 75798

APC – 42451

LP – 28069

PDP – 2200

Total valid votes – 74001

Rejected votes – 990

Total votes cast – 74991

Cancellations at 8 polling units

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total PVCs collected in Surulere – 357326

**IBEJU LEKKI**

Prof.

Registered voters – 134496

Accredited voters – 27480

APC – 19369

LP – 3785

PDP – 3189

Total valid votes – 26580

Rejected votes – 899

Total votes cast – 27479

Cancellation at 2 polling units Lakowe and Abijo due to disruption and burning of BVAS machines and ballot boxes at Lakowe

Community primary school Abijo, ballot papers and boxes burnt.

Total PVCs at Ibeju Lekki124149

**IFAKO IJAIYE**

Prof Lukman Adams

Registered voters – 399938

Accredited voters – 55322

APC – 38682

LP – 13020

PDP – 2262

Total valid votes – 54783

Rejected votes – 539

Total votes cast – 55322

Cancellation at a ward due to over voting

Total collected PVCs 321182

**BADAGRY**

Prof. Tender Adeoye – CO

Registered voters – 227914

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accredited voters – 53462

APC – 41482

LP – 4863

PDP – 5472

Total valid votes – 52612

Rejected votes – 818

Total votes cast – 53430

LAGOS MAINLAND

Registered voters – 253546

Accredited voters – 39836

APC – 26021

LP – 9999

PDP – 2362

Total valid votes – 39084

Rejected votes – 751

Total votes cast – 39835

Cancellation at 3 polling units, Epeledo2 and Owaya 1 due to disruption and snatching of ballot boxes

Total PVCs in Lagos Mainland – 215200

ALIMOSHO

Prof. Hamid Sulaiman

Registered voters – 850557

Accredited voters – 132579

APC – 83631

LP – 37136

PDP – 7872

Total valid votes – 130524

Rejected votes – 1892

Total votes cast – 132416

Cancellation at two polling units due to disruption and over voting

Total PVCs in Alimosho –

OJO

Prof Sunday Adebusey CO

Registered voters – 329799

Accredited voters – 58969

APC – 30797

LP – 19027

PDP – 3889

Total valid votes – 54450

Rejected votes – 910

Total votes cast – 55360

Cancellation at 43 polling units of 7 wards due to over voting, disruption as a result ballot snatching

Total PVCs in Ojo – 273899

IKORODU

Prof Taiwo Adewunmi CO

Registered voters – 388971

Accredited voters – 84103

APC – 64697

LP – 13207

PDP – 3797

Total valid votes – 82959

Rejected votes – 1130

Total votes cast – 84089

KOSOFE

Prof. Elupeju Akande

Registered voters – 481341

Accredited voters – 84123

APC – 49344

LP – 26123

PDP – 3537

Total valid votes – 81809

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Rejected votes – 1460

Total votes cast – 83269

Cancellation at some units in Ikosi Ketu

OSHODI/ISOLO

Prof. Olujinmi Odunleye

Registered voters – 477236

Accredited voters – 67210

APC – 36792

LP – 24948

PDP – 2515

Total valid votes – 65217

Rejected votes – 1658

Total votes cast – 66875

35 cancellations due to over voting and ballot box snatching

12009 pvc's collected and 35 Cancellations

Total Pvc's in Oshodi/Isolo – 442954

SHOMOLU

Prof. Abayomi Okanlawon

Registered voters – 316752

Accredited voters – 56397

APC – 36783

LP – 15096

PDP – 3130

Total valid votes – 55, 795

Rejected votes – 608

Total votes cast – 56393

Cancellations due to disruptions and snatching of ballot boxes.

4:41pm

PDP's Ashiru in Early Lead in Kaduna

By John Shiklam in Kaduna

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Kaduna state, Isah Ashiru, has won five of the seven Local Governments so far released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kaduna.

The results announced by the INEC returning officer at the commission's headquarters in Kaduna, on Sunday, shows that the PDP won in five LGAs while the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) won two.

Results in the remaining 16 LGAs were still being awaited .

The results released on Sunday by the returning officer of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Lawal Bilbis of Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto shows that of the results released in seven Local Government Areas, the PDP won five while the APC won two.

The results are as follow.

1. KAURA LGA

APC: 7,748

LP: 12,950

NNPP: 618

PDP: 15,108

2. GIWA LGA

APC: 30,773

LP: 221

NNPP: 547

PDP: 28,869

3. SANGA LGA

APC: 12,338

LP: 2,135

NNPP: 457

PDP: 13,119

4. KAJURU LGA

APC: 8,271

LP: 1,773

NNPP:982

PDP: 23,125

5. JABA LGA

APC:7,564

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP: 2,871

NNPP: 174

PDP: 14,616

6. MAKARFI LGA

APC: 25,670

LP: 278

NNPP: 532

PDP: 26,128

7. IKARA LGA-

APC 29,066

PDP 28, 612

LP 692

NNPP 550

3:47pm

Breaking: Gov Makinde Reelected

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, has been declared the winner of the March 18 governorship election in the state.

He was declared the winner by the state Returning Officer and Vice Chancellor, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Prof. Adebayo Banire He polled 568,756 votes defeating 15 other candidates

3:43pm

Heavy security as tension rises at the Jos North collation centre

3:36pm

Abiodun Coasting Home to Victory in Ogun

James Sowole in Abeokuta

Governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun, is coasting home to victory in the Saturday's Governorship Election in the Gateway State.

The results released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Sunday afternoon, showed that Abiodun was leading in 12 local governments while his close challenger, Ladi Adebutu of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was leading in seven states.

There are 20 local governments in Ogun State. The result of the Sagamu Local Government has not been declared.

3:33pm

APC Clears 23 Ekiti Assembly Seats, SDP Picks 2, INEC Declares 1 Constituency Poll Inconclusive

By Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

Twenty-three Candidates of All Progressives Congress in the Ekiti state Assembly election have been declared winners in 23 constituencies by Independent National Electoral commission INEC.

In a statement by the Ekiti State INEC, Head of voters Education and Publicity, Temitope Akanmu, the Resident Electoral Commissioner Ekiti State, Prof. Ayobami Salami, APC won twenty three seats out of the twenty six seats in the Assembly while Social Democratic Party, SDP won two.

However, THISDAY gathered that Ido/Osi constituency one was declared inconclusive due to the disruption of the exercise by suspected hoodlums.

Confirming this, INEC said, "The election at Ido Osi State Constituency 1 is inconclusive. This is due to the fact that the margin of lead principle indicated a need for supplementary elections to be held in 3 Polling Units before a clear winner could emerge.

"This was borne out of violent disruption of the voting process in three polling units of PU 003, PU 012 and PU 014 all in Registration Area (Ward) 01."

The commission added that supplementary election would be conducted in the constituency before a winner could be announced.

Some of the candidates of the All progressives Congress APC who won their re-election bids include; the Deputy Speaker, Hakeem Jamiu, representing Irepodun/Ifeleodun Constituency II, Hon. Barr. Adeoye Aribasoye Ikole II, Hon. Femi Akindele, Irepodun/Ifeleodun 1, Hon. Femi Akindele, and Princess Teju Okunyiga of Gbonyin constituency.

However, candidates of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, in Ekiti East constituency one, Dele Ogunsakin and that of the Ise/ Orun constituency, Omotayo Babatunde won two seats in the Assembly to defeat their closest APC rivals.

2:43pm

The results of remaining 15 LGs in Oyo State as announced by INEC :

1) Ona-Ara Local Government

Accord: 1,212

APC: 5,510

PDP: 17,326

2) Ibadan Northwest Local Government

Accord: 1,291

APC: 5,947

PDP: 19007

3) Ibarapa East Local Government

Accord: 1,885

APC: 7094

PDP: 11,125

4) Afijio Local Government

Accord: 1,357

APC: 5,588

PDP: 13,139

5) Atiba Local Government

Accord: 1,113

APC: 7,484

PDP: 18,389

6) Orire Local Government

Accord: 1,895

APC: 9,216

PDP: 13,767

7) Ibadan Southwest Local Government

A: 2,270

APC: 9,491

PDP: 31,273

8) Oluyole Local Government

Accord: 1,386

APC: 6,592

PDP: 21,700

9) Atisbo Local Government

Accord: 1,188

APC: 6,955

PDP: 9,199

10) Saki East Local Government

Accord: 188

APC: 5,519

PDP: 8,374

11) Surulere Local Government

Accord: 271

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 8,882

PDP: 15,554

12) Itewiwaju Local Government

Accord: 2036

APC: 4,597

PDP: 8034

13) Ogo Oluwa Local Government

Accord: 50

APC: 5,570

PDP: 10,930

14) Irepo Local Government

Accord: 388

APC: 9,785

PDP: 7,193

15) Olorunsogo Local Government

Accord: 998

APC: 4,851

PDP: 5,838

16) Ibadan Northeast Local Government

Accord: 1,564

APC: 8,486

PDP: 29,396

17) Ogbomosho South Local Government

Accord: 10

APC: 8,257

PDP: 17,693

18) Ibadan Southeast Local Government

Accord: 1,846

APC: 9,147

PDP: 23,585

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

19) Ibarapa North Local Government

Accord: 563

APC: 5,678

PDP: 10,845

20) Ibarapa Central Local Government

Accord: 1,455

APC: 6,287

PDP: 10,491

21) Oyo West Local Government

Accord: 431

APC: 7,599

PDP: 15,084

22) Oyo East Local Government

Accord: 571

APC: 6,999

PDP: 15,751

23) Ogbomosho North Local Government

Accord: 562

APC: 10,661

PDP: 20,387

24) Ido Local Government

Accord: 822

APC: 7,865

PDP: 19,284

25) Kajola Local Government

Accord: 1,710

APC: 9,523

PDP: 13,562

26) Lagelu Local Government

Accord: 886

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC: 10,661

PDP: 19,104

27) Ibadan North Local Government

Accord: 2,120

APC: 11,883

PDP: 39,658

28) Iseyin Local Government

Accord: 501

APC: 9,694

PDP: 25,740

29) Egbedore Local Government

Accord: 3072

APC: 7,377

PDP: 30,444

30) Saki West Local Government

Accord: 607

APC: 13,753

PDP: 17,452

31) Orelope Local Government

Accord: 1602

APC: 7077

PDP: 6,483

32) Iwajowa Local Government

Accord: 269

APC: 6,441

PDP: 9029

33) Akinyele Local Government

Accord: 1287

APC: 9,445

PDP: 28,920

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

2:23pm

#### Enugu Governorship Election Results as Announced by INEC

Ezeagu

PDP 7576

Labour Party 5949

APC. 963

APGA 300

Oji River

PDP 7365

Labour Party 7747

APC. 1060

APGA 1060

IgboEze North

PDP 8738

Labour Party 9955

APC 541

APGA 250

Igbo Etiti

PDP 8959

Labour Party 11941

APC 939

APGA 1259

Udi

PDP 13633

Labour Party 10109

APC 1648

APGA 1734

Aninri

PDP 6520

Labour Party 3431

APC 906

APGA 498

2:21pm

#### Abia Governorship Election Results as Announced by INEC

UKWA EAST LG

Total Registered Voters 39,788; Accredited Voters 7,808

APC 560

APGA 646

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP 2,273

PDP 2,329

UMUNNEOCHI LG

APC 2,034

APGA 581

LP 5,940

PDP 3,198

UKWA WEST LG

Registered Voters 67,900; Accredited Voters 11,670

APC 1,209

APGA 830

LP 2,833

PDP 4,622

BENDE LG

Registered Voters 105,182 Accredited Voters 22,492

APC 2,143

APGA 947

ADP 2,733

LP 9,886

PDP 3,410

YPP 1,667

2:18pm

More Governorship Election Results from Delta

Ika South LGA

Registered voters – 100,599

Accredited voters – 27,800

Scores:

APC – 6,790

LP – 4,495

PDP – 15,283

Valid votes – 27,149

Rejected votes. 651

Total votes cast – 27,800

Total votes cast

Patani LGA

Registered Voters – 49,385

Accredited Voters – 11,421

Scores:

APC 4,743

LP – 85

PDP – 6,069

Valid votes – 19,843

Rejected votes – 238

Total votes cast – 11,421

2:01pm

#### LAGOS GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION RESULTS

##### 1. LAGOS ISLAND

APC – 37,760

LP – 1,317

PDP – 1,783

##### 2. APAPA

APC – 21,007

LP – 4,157

PDP – 2,487

##### 3. EPE

APC – 29,614

LP – 1,517

PDP – 3,272

##### 4. AGEGE

APC – 35,845

LP – 8,486

PDP – 3,176

##### 5. IKEJA

APC – 32,273

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

LP – 15,174

PDP – 1,616

6. MUSHIN

APC – 52,249

LP – 11,759

PDP – 4,006

7. SURULERE

APC – 42,451

LP – 28,069

PDP – 2,200

8. IBEJU LEKKI

APC – 19,369

LP – 3,785

PDP – 3,189

9. AJEROMI

APC – 39,798

LP – 19,821

PDP – 2,607

10. IFAKO IJAIYE

APC – 38,682

LP – 13,020

PDP – 2,262

11. BADAGRY

APC – 41,482

LP – 4,863

PDP – 5,472

12. LAGOS MAINLAND

APC – 26,021

LP – 9,999

PDP – 2,362

1:32pm

### PDP Wins 25 Osun Assembly Seats, APC Clinches 1

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Osun State has declared 25 candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as winners out of the 26 seats in the state's House of Assembly.

The commission also declared that the All Progressives Congress (APC) won only Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency, which is the local government of Mr Gboyega Oyetola, the former governor of the state.

The INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Dr. Mutiu Agboke, released the results to newsmen on Sunday at the commission's headquarters in Osogbo.

Agboke explained why the result of the Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency could not be announced by the returning officers on Saturday, saying a decision could not be reached on the winner by the Returning Officer at that time.

He added that Section 65 of the Electoral Act gives the power of "reviewing" to INEC, adding that: "It is that power of review that the commission explored in solving the issue."

"Just like the Returning Officer said, it took us several hours before finding a solution."

Earlier, the Returning Officer for Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency, Dr. Akanmu Alex, had declared Mr Popoola Olufemi of APC as winner of the election.

Alex of Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, while announcing the result amidst tight security, said Olufemi scored 15,594, while his closest contender, Aina Adesina of PDP scored 14,817 votes.

He said: "Popoola Olufemi of the APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law is declared winner of Boripe/Boluwaduro state constituency at the concluded Osun House of Assembly Election."

Alex explained that he could not announce the winner of the election on Saturday because there were two issues that affected the total votes scored by the two leading candidates.

He said there was ballot box snatching at a polling unit in Egbeda College Road Unit 16, adding that the results of Ada 2, Unit 5 was in contention.

Alex said he had to review the situation and incidents within INEC guidelines and consulted widely through the night before he was sure of announcing the result.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the REC had to mobilise additional security officials to the collation centre at Iragbiji town before the result could be announced.

The 25 state constituencies won by PDP are: Ifelodun, Ifedayo, Irepodun/Orolu, Odo-Otin, Olorunda, Osogbo, Atakumosa East and West, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Obokun, Oriade, Ayedaade, Ayedire, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Irewole/Isokan, Iwo, Ola-Oluwa and Ejigbo. (NAN)

1:23pm

### AbdulRazaq Wins in 12 Out of 16 LGs in Kwara

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Kwara State Governor and All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate in Saturday's election, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has been declared winner in 12 out of 16 local government areas of the state so far declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

AbdulRazaq defeated Alhaji Shuaib Yaman Abdullahi of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidate, Alhaji Hakeem Oladimeji Lawal and the New Nigeria's Peoples Party (NNPP) candidate, Prof. Shuaib Oba Abdulraheem.

The local government councils so far won by the APC gubernatorial candidate are Asa, Ekiti, Offa, Oyun, Irepodun and Isin.

Others include Oke-Ero, Ilorin South, Ilorin East, Patigi, Ifelodun and Moro Local Governments of the state.

The four local governments' results yet to be announced are Baruten, Edu, Kaiama, and Ilorin West Local Government Areas.

Those announced are:

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area

Number of registered voters 97,945

Accredited voters 24,115II

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes 584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such two votes were cancelled.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC 14,696

PDP 6,705

SDP 1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43,944

Accredited voters -11,942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

5. Oyun

Reg voters 61,672

Accredited voters 16,533

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to  
violent crisis

8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP – 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

#### 11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

#### 12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

01:09pm

Governorship Election Results in Katsina State as Announced by INEC

1.MUSAWA LGA

Registered voters : 84,131

Accredited Voters: 35, 979

APC: 24,632

PDP: 10,118

NNPP: 580

PRP: 16

## 2.SANDAMU LGA

Registered voters: 74,399

Accredited Voters: 31,877

APC: 21,055

PDP: 10,641

NNPP: 01

PRP: 03

## 3.BAURE LGA

Registered Voters: 11,3640

Accredited Voters: 52,678

APC: 32,802

PDP: 17,888

NNPP: 62

PRP: 12

## 4.DUTSI LGA

Registered Voters: 64,743

Accredited Voters: 24,298

APC: 15,631

PDP: 8,419

NNPP:10

PRP: 10

## DANDUME LGA

Registered Voters: 97,406

Accredited Voters: 41,071

APC: 23,710

PDP: 14,792

NNPP: 220

PRP: 146

## BATAGARAWA LGA

Registered Voters: 100,069

Accredited Voters: 41,301

APC: 26,326

PDP: 13,510

NNPP: 212

PRP: 81

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

**INGAWA LGA**

Registered voters: 85,957

Accredited voters: 36,034

APC: 22,080

PDP: 12,255

NNPP: 209

PRP: 217

**BINDAWA LGA**

Registered voters: 88,793

Accredited voters: 42,922

APC: 28,997

PDP: 12,165

NNPP: 957

PRP: 47

**KAITA LGA**

Registered voters: 76,526

Accredited voters: 35,568

APC: 24,121

PDP: 9,824

NNPP: 53

PRP: 20

**10 MAI'ADUA LGA**

Registered voters: 88,617

Accredited voters: 407,68

APC: 28,436

PDP: 11,506

NNPP: 68

PRP: 10

**11 ZANGO LGA**

Registered voters: 73,235

Accredited voters: 30,659

APC: 19,757

PDP: 10,477

NNPP: 04

PRP: 14

**RIMI LGA**

Registered voters: 95,642

Accredited voters: 43,188

APC: 28,202

PDP: 13,823

NNPP: 397

PRP: 37

**KUSADA LGA**

Registered voters: 61,313

Accredited voters: 25,602

APC: 13,750

PDP: 11,151

NNPP: 05

PRP: 17

**14 MANI LGA**

Registered voters: 114, 440

Accredited voters: 47,718

APC: 29,678

PDP: 16,180

NNPP: 231

PRP: 28

**15: SAFANA LGA**

Registered voters: 83,882

Accredited voters: 26,879

APC: 15,417

PDP: 10,460

NNPP: 09

PRP: 53

**16. FUNTUA LGA**

Registered voters: 147,391

Accredited voters: 53,353

APC: 31,924

PDP: 19,849

NNPP: 314

PRP: 218

**17. DAURA LGA**

Registered voters: 97,136

Accredited voters: 38,186

APC: 26,548

PDP: 10,689

NNPP: 78

PRP: 27

18. MASHI LGA

Registered voters: 100,191

Accredited voters: 38,756

APC: 28,793

PDP: 8,896

NNPP: 74

PRP: 11

19. BATSARI LGA

Registered voters: 106,951

Accredited voters: 31,535

APC: 20,053

PDP: 10,247

NNPP: 239

PRP: 158

20. JIBIA LGA

Registered voters: 98,311

Accredited voters: 35,844

APC: 21,216

PDP: 13,259

NNPP: 22

PRP: 34

21. KANKIA LGA

Registered voters: 78,224

Accredited voters: 35,156

APC: 18,249

PDP: 14,830

NNPP: 16

PRP: 22

22. CHARANCHI LGA

Registered voters: 73,766

Accredited voters: 30,695

APC: 20,782

PDP: 7,539

NNPP: 66

PRP: 11

12:54pm

More Governorship Election Results in Ogun State as Declared by INEC

1. ODEDA LGA

Registered voters: 94,048

Accredited Voters: 23,975

APC: 11,089

PDP: 8,050

NNPP: 31

ADC: 3,651

Total valid votes: 23,349

Rejected votes: 626

Total votes cast: 23,975

2. EGBADO NORTH LGA

Registered voters: 130,063

Accredited Voters: 41,016

APC: 15,331

PDP: 11,627

NNPP: 64

ADC: 12,190

Total valid votes: 39,908

Rejected votes: 1,031

Total votes cast: 41,011

3. EGBADO SOUTH LG

Registered voters: 133,001

Accredited Voters: 34,213

APC: 15,047

PDP: 10,913

NNPP: 75

ADC: 6,435

Total valid votes: 33,064

Rejected votes: 1,149

Total votes cast: 34,213

#### 4. EWEKORO LG

Registered voters: 94,681

Accredited Voters: 20,415

APC: 8,192

PDP: 7,449

NNPP: 60

ADC: 3,881

Total valid votes: 19,902

Rejected votes: 511

Total votes cast: 20,413

#### 5. ABEOKUTA SOUTH LG

Registered voters: 242,151

Accredited Voters: 55,718

APC: 19,689

PDP: 24,175

NNPP: 99

ADC: 9,264

Total valid votes: 54,139

Rejected votes: 1,579

Total votes cast: 55,718

#### 6. IJEBU NORTH LG

Registered voters: 133,122

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accredited Voters: 38,340

APC: 18,815

PDP: 15,904

NNPP: 22

ADC: 2,393

Total valid votes: 37,478

Rejected votes: 848

Total votes cast: 38,326

**7. IKENNE LG**

Registered voters: 68,613

Accredited Voters: 23,564

APC: 9,125

PDP: 12,472

NNPP: 09

ADC: 336

Total valid votes: 22,069

Rejected votes: 392

Total votes cast: 22,461

10 polling units were cancelled due to violence and disruption of elections.

**8. IJEBU NORTH-EAST LG**

Registered voters: 52,457

Accredited Voters: 14,687

APC: 5,408

PDP: 7,086

NNPP: 27

ADC: 1,448

Total valid votes: 14,102

Rejected votes: 357

Total votes cast: 14,459

Ballot paper snatching at ward 6, unit 2. The result was cancelled.

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

9. IJEBU-ODE LG

Registered voters: 90,760

Accredited Voters: 25,730

APC: 12,907

PDP: 10,714

NNPP: 36

ADC: 1,348

Total valid votes: 25,257

Rejected votes: 473

Total votes cast: 25,730

10. ABEOKUTA NORTH

Registered voters: 167,753

Accredited Voters: 37,553

APC: 14,294

PDP: 12,622

NNPP: 34

ADC: 9,143

Total valid votes: 36,521

Rejected votes: 1,018

Total votes cast: 37,539

Three units in Ward 6 were cancelled due violence.

11. IJEBU EAST LG  
Registered voters: 77,171

Accredited Voters: 21,896

APC: 77,171

PDP: 11,242

NNPP: 45

ADC: 18,885

Total valid votes: 21,352

Rejected votes: 542

Total votes cast: 21,894

There was cancellation in unit 6, ward 9 due to violence.

12. REMO NORTH LG

Registered voters: 48,886

Accredited Voters: 13,187

APC: 4,306

PDP: 8,177

NNPP: 06

ADC: 327

Total valid votes: 129,39

Rejected votes: 248

Total votes cast: 13,187

Cancellation in four wards in seven polling units due to BVAS malfunction and violence.

13. IPOKIA LG

Registered voters: 136,281

Accredited Voters: 45,035

APC: 21,338

PDP: 19,189

NNPP: 46

ADC: 1,897

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Total valid votes: 43,707Rejected votes: 1,328Total votes cast: 45035

14. ODOGBOLU LG

Registered voters: 95,530Accredited Voters: 24,041

APC: 9,143PDP: 12,963NNPP: 10ADC: 1,281

Total valid votes: 23,608Rejected votes: 429Total votes cast: 24,037

There cancellations in 14 polling units due violence and refusal to use BVAS.

15. OGUN WATERSIDE LG

Registered voters: 52,359Accredited Voters: 17,345

APC: 5,878PDP: 7,716NNPP: 56ADC: 2,575

Total valid votes: 16,888Rejected votes: 456Total votes cast: 17,344

Cancellation in two wards due to violence and destruction of sensitive, non materials and difficult terrain due to hyacinth.

16. IMEKO AFON

ADC: 6,124

APC: 9,591

PDP : 6,981

17 ADO-ODO/OTA

ADC: 12,174

APC: 39,006

PDP : 31,022

18. OBAFEMI OWODE

ADC: 5,105

APC: 15,466

PDP: 11,004

12:49pm

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Peoples Democratic Party has won the seven local government areas announced so far by the Independent National Electoral Commission in Saturday's governorship election in Rivers State.

The seven local government areas won by the party include Ikwerre, where All Progressives Congress chieftain and former Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi, hails from.

See details:

Ogu/Bolo LGA

PDP 7103

APC 1524

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

SDP 310  
Accord 121  
Opobo/Nkoro LGA  
PDP 11538  
APC 1426  
SDP 159  
LP 10  
Tai LGA  
PDP 9276  
SDP 508  
APC 295  
LP 13  
Gokana LGA  
PDP 17455  
SDP 13840  
APC 7410  
LP 97  
Eleme LGA  
PDP 8414  
APC 2662  
SDP 2251  
LP 544  
Ikwerre LGA  
PDP 13716  
APC 7503  
SDP 1447  
LP 895  
Oyigbo LGA  
PDP 9886  
APC 2793

LP 2793

SDP 796

12:37pm

APC Wins 22 Out of 26 House of Assembly Seats in Ondo

Fidelis David in Akure

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has won majority seats in the Ondo State House of Assembly election held on Saturday.

In the results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the state, the APC won 22 seats out of the 26 constituencies across the 18 council areas of the state, while the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won the remaining four seats.

Ondo is one of the eight states where governorship election did not hold on Saturday because the incumbent Governor, Mr Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN), will complete his second term in office in 2024.

The results declared showed clearly that Saturday's election was a two-horse race and a straight battle between APC and PDP across the 3,933 polling units and 203 political wards across the council areas of the state.

The APC won 22 and lost two seats in Akoko Southwest, one seat in Akoko Northwest, and one seat in Akure South LGA.

In the same vein, four out of eight serving members of the state Assembly who sought reelection suffered defeat in the election.

They include Tomide Akinribido (Ondo West 1 PDP); Favour Tomomewo (Ilaje 2, ADC); Hon. Taofeeq Muhammed (Akoko Northwest 2, APC) and Toluwani Borokini (Akure South1, APC).

However, four other incumbent lawmakers were reelected. They include Oluwole Emmanuel Ogunmolasuyi (Owo 1 APC/Majority Leader); Oladiji Olamide (Ondo east APC); Ololade Gbegudu (Okitipupa 11, APC); and Abayomi Akinruntan (Ilaje 1, APC) who is returning for the third term.

Three female lawmakers will be part of the 10th Assembly as the female APC candidates won in Owo 1, Idanre and Ilaje 2 constituencies.

In 2019, the APC won 23 seats in the Assembly, the opposition PDP won only two seats, Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) got the remaining one seat, while the ruling APC lost the state to the opposition PDP during the Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Also in 2019, Favour Tomomewo of Ilaje constituency 2 was the only female candidate, compared to 2023 where three females won the election.

Meanwhile, a total of 208 candidates from 19 political parties contested the Assembly election to represent the 26 constituencies across the council areas.

12:36pm

Governorship Election Results in Delta State as Declared by INEC

Ika North-East LGA

Registered voters – 131,945

Accredited voters – 34,807

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC – 4,733

LP – 1,990

PDP – 26,760

Valid votes – 33,807

Rejected votes – 918

Total votes cast – 34,725

Aniocha North LGA

Registered voters – 89,010

Accredited voters – 16,846

APC – 4,386

LP – 1,883

PDP – 8,938

Valid votes – 16,316

Rejected votes – 530

Total votes cast -16,846

Ndokwa East LGA

Registered voters – 86,208

Accredited voters – 20,434

APC – 9,044

LP – 251

PDP – 10,146

Valid votes – 19,843

Rejected votes – 485

Total votes cast – 20,328

12:25pm

Kwara Governorship Election Results as announced by INEC

1. Ekiti local government

Number of registered voters, 44,016.

Number of accredited voters, 11,849

APC 6,836

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP 4,273

Total valid votes, 11,598

Rejected votes, 251

Total votes cast, 11,849.

2. Isin local government

Number of registered voters- 42,238

Number of accredited voters -9,631

Total votes cast -9630

Valid votes -9,438

Rejected votes-192

Total votes cast-9,630

APC 5,274

PDP 3,400

3. Offa Local government area

Number of registered voters 97,945

Accredited voters 24,115||

Total number of valid votes 23,531

Rejected votes 584

Over voting in Essa wards 002 and 006 as such two votes were cancelled.

APC 14,696

PDP 6,705

SDP 1,289

4. Oke Ero

Total 43944

Accredited voters -11942

APC -7,758

PDP -3,768

Valid -11,808

Rejected 134

Total votes -11,942

## 5. Oyun

Reg voters 61672

Accredited voters 16533

APC -8,991

PDP -5,465

SDP 1,068

Valid votes 16170

Rejected 348

Total votes 16528

Cancellation at Ijagbo due to over-voting in one PU

## 6. Ilorin South local government

Reg voters 161,045

Accredited 36,741

APC -20,148

PDP -12,096

SDP -2,356

Valid votes -35,949

Rejected votes -774

Total votes cast -36,723

## 7. Asa local government

Reg 87923

Accredited 29,061

APC -14,946

PDP -11,183

Valid votes 27,907

Rejected votes -583

Total votes cast 28,490

Cancellation in two PUs due to violent crisis

## 8. Irepodun local government

Reg voter 89644

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accredited 23,160

APC -12,860

PDP – 7,614

SDP -1,693

Total Valid votes -22,733

Rejected votes -427

Total votes cast -23,160

9. Moro local government

Registered voters -81,646

Accredited voters-24,928

APC -15,161

PDP -6,823

SDP -1992

Total Valid votes -24,466

Rejected votes -461

Total votes cast -24,927

Cancellation at one polling unit

10. Patigi local government

Reg voters -68,136

Accredited voters -21,930

APC -13,813

PDP -6,544

Total valid votes -20,976

Rejected votes -748

Total votes cast -21,724

Cancellation at two PUs due to over-voting.

11. Ilorin East local government

Registered voters -163,701

Accredited voters -43,578

APC -23,925

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP -14,500

SDP -2,645

Total Valid votes -42,170

Rejected votes -1,015

Total votes cast -43,185

Cancellation at two wards in two PUs due to over-voting

12. Ifelodun local government

Registered voters -130,778

Accredited voters -29,500

APC -17,599

PDP -9,085

SDP -1,559

Total Valid votes -29,006

Rejected votes -494

Total votes cast -29,500

12:15pm

Bauchi State Governorship Election Result: Shira local government Governorship results:

1) Tsaffi Ward:

APC =1844

PDP=2173

NNPP 103.

2) Beli Gagidba Ward:

APC= 2121

PDP=2363

NNPP=264.

3) Kulbori ward:

APC= 1260

PDP=1354

NNPP= 138.

4) Bakal/Bagua ward:

APC= 2632

PDP= 3705

NNPP=213

5) Zubu ward:

APC= 1076

PDP=1311

NNPP=167.

6) Tumfafi Ward:

APC= 917

PDP=893

NNPP=84.

7) Faggo Ward:

APC= 3797

PDP=2848

NNPP 193.

These are the seven wards out of eleven in Shira Local government area that have submitted their results so far.

12:13pm

PDP's Makinde Wins 17 LGs, Awaits Result from 1 Council

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State is coasting home to victory as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has won in 17 out of the 18 local government announced so far by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The governor, who is seeking reelection is contesting against a three-term Senator, Teslim Folarin of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and former Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Chief Adebayo Adelabu of Accord, among other contestants.

Below are the results as announced by INEC.

1) Ona-Ara LG

Accord: 1,212

APC: 5,510

PDP: 17,326

2) Ibadan Northwest LG

Accord: 1,291

APC: 5,947

PDP: 19007

3) Ibarapa East LG

Accord: 1,885

APC: 7094

PDP: 11,125

4) Afijio LG

Accord: 1,357

APC: 5,588

PDP: 13,139

5) Atiba LG

Accord: 1,113

APC: 7,484

PDP: 18,389

6) Oriire LG

Accord: 1,895

APC: 9,216

PDP: 13,767

7) Ibadan Southwest LG

A: 2,270

APC: 9,491

PDP: 31,273

8) Oluyole LG

Accord: 1,386

APC: 6,592

PDP: 21,700

9) Atisbo LG

Accord: 1,188

APC: 6,955

PDP: 9,199

10) Saki East LG

Accord: 188

APC: 5,519

PDP: 8,374

11) Surulere LG

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Accord: 271

APC: 8,882

PDP: 15,554

12) Itewiwaju LG

Accord: 2036

APC: 4,597

PDP: 8034

13) Ogo Oluwa LG

Accord: 50

APC: 5,570

PDP: 10,930

14) Irepo LG

Accord: 388

APC: 9,785

PDP: 7,193

15) Olorunsogo LG

Accord: 998

APC: 4,851

PDP: 5,838

16) Ibadan Northeast LG

Accord: 1,564

APC: 8,486

PDP: 29,396

17) Ogbomosho South LG

Accord: 10

APC: 8,257

PDP: 17,693

18) Ibadan Southeast LG

Accord: 1,846

APC: 9,147

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

PDP: 23,585

12:01pm

Ogun Governorship Election Result As released this morning by INEC

ODEDA

APC 11098 Winner

PDP 8050

ADC 3651

EGBADO NORTH

APC 15331

PDP 11627

ADC 12190

EGBADO SOUTH LG

ADC: 6,435

APC:15,047

PDP: 10,913

ABK SOUTH LG

ADC: 9,264

APC: 19,689

PDP: 24,175

11:12am

BENUE DECIDES 2023 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION Results for 7 Local Governments

Ukum

APC 28,503

PDP 9,418

Logo

APC 15,574

PDP 16,385

Agatu

APC 7,482

PDP 9,934

Gwer west

APC 10,747

PDP 13,609

Ohimini

APC 7233

PDP 6,785

Gwer East

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

APC 20,083

PDP 12,085

Buruku

APC 43,569

PDP 7061

Total APC 133,191

PDP 75,277

APC leading with 57,914 votes

8:45am

Embrace Peace, Accept Poll Outcome, Lagos APC Tells LP's Rhodes-Vivour

The All Progressives Peoples Congress in Lagos State says alleged threats by Labour Party's (LP) governorship flag-bearer, Mr Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, at Saturday's election shows the candidate's lack of sportsmanship.

APC's Publicity Secretary in the state, Mr Seye Oladejo, while reacting to alleged threats by Rhodes-Vivour in a statement on Saturday, said that the ruling party had no reason to be violent.

"The attention of the APC has been drawn to a statement made by LP's governorship candidate Mr Gbadebo Chinedu Rhodes-Vivour on Saturday's elections.

"He accused INEC and the police of provoking Lagosians' and warning that if tonight Lagos State catches fire, it is not our fault".

"He says `a lot of places are still under attack by thugs and hooligans of the APC.

"This scaremongering is typical of bad losers who lack the spirit of sportsmanship," Oladejo stated.

According to him, security agencies should note Rhodes-Vivour's threat.

"Should there be any breakdown of law and order in any part of our state, law enforcement agencies should know who to grab – Mr Rhodes-Vivour," he added.

Oladejo also stated that the APC was also compiling reports of how its supporters were harassed and attacked during the exercise, saying "some of the reports are really scary."

"Now the LP candidate is playing the victim. This old trick won't work; discerning Lagosians know they are all lies deployed to attract sympathy.

"Our party has no need to be violent because we are sure of the glittering credentials of our governorship candidate, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu who will never be associated with violence.

"We advise LP and its candidate to embrace peace instead of threatening to bring down the roof on everybody. It won't work," Oladejo stressed.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that violent attacks by hoodlums disrupted the governorship and House of Assembly elections in parts of Lagos State on Saturday.

Rhodes-Vivour had earlier alleged that an agent of his party at the polls in the state had been shot dead.

The LP candidate, who said the election process was fraught with voter intimidation and suppression, alleged that INEC and the police were complicit in the killing.

Addressing Lagos residents in a video recorded at the LP's Situation Room, Rhodes-Vivour accused the electoral body and the security agencies of provoking the people. (NAN)

8:05am

PDP Wins Ede North Constituency in Osun

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Mr Babajide Kofoworola, the PDP candidate for Ede North State Constituency, winner of the Osun State House of Assembly election.

The Returning Officer, Prof. Popoola Bayode of the Obafemi Awolowo University, declared Kofoworola winner having polled the highest number votes.

Kofoworola polled 17,530 votes to defeat his closest rivalry in the All Progressive Congress (APC), Mr Abdulquadri Suleiman , who came second with a total vote of 9,010 .

Labour party came third with just 13 votes . (NAN)

7:22am

#### PDP Wins Ede South Constituency in Osun

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared PDP's Olayiwola Olalekan winner of Ede South State Constituency seat in Osun.

INEC Returning Officer Muritala Monsuru declared Olalekan winner of the Saturday poll after collating the votes from all the wards.

Olalekan polled 14,468 votes to defeat his APC rival, Mr Raji Sijuade, who got 5,204 votes. (NAN)

7:06am

#### PDP Wins Kaura Constituency in Kaduna

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has declared Mr Yusuf Mugu of the Peoples' Democratic Party as winner in Kaura State Constituency of Kaduna State.

Returning Officer in charge of the State Assembly election in the Constituency, Dr Yusuf Abubakar of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, announced that Mugu polled 14,085 to defeat four other contestants.

He said that Mr Afan Tandad of Labour Party came second with a total of 12,737 votes, while Mr Sunday Nehemiah of the All Progressive Congress came third with 8,715 votes.

The Returning Officer said Mr Isaac Gandu of the New Nigerian People's Party trailed behind with 1,121 votes.

Abubakar explained that a total of 37,260 voters were accredited out of the 101,275 total registered voters in the local government, of which 37,247 cast their votes. (NAN)

6:55am

#### APC Wins Somolu Constituency 2 in Lagos

INEC) on Sunday declared Mr Samuel Apata of the APC as the winner of Lagos State House of Assembly Constituency 2 seat in Somolu.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Governorship and House of Assembly elections were held nationwide on Saturday.

Prof. Issac Olasunkanmi Olusola, the Returning Officer for the Somolu Constituency 2, who declared the results at about 5.05 a.m. at INEC Collation Centre in Somolu, said that Mr Samuel Apata secured 21, 220 votes to beat his closest opponent, Mr Olusegun Fatai of the Labour Party (LP), who got 9, 664 votes.

According to him, 10 political parties contested for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 2 seat.

The returning officer said that the election was contested and the candidates recorded the following votes.

Shobamowo Gbolahan Joseph, Accord scored 33 votes, Koledoye Johnson Ade, AA scored 19 votes, Ishola Rauf Shina, AAC scored 23 votes, Olaiya Ibrahim, ADP scored 66 votes, Adewole Dare Jerry, BP scored 48 votes, Olusegun Fatai, LP scored 9, 664 votes, Baale Taoreed Oladipo, NNPP scored 44 votes, Ajayi Ayodeji Johnson, PDP scored 3, 925 votes and Salami Basiru, SDP scored 22 votes.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Olusola said, "I, Prof. Issac Olasunkanmi Olusola, hereby certify that I am the returning officer for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 2 election held on the 18th day of March, 2023 that the election was contested."

He said that Apata, having scored the highest votes at the election, won the House of Assembly election for the Somolu Constituency 2.

"Samuel Apata of APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law, has scored the highest number of votes; he is hereby declared the winner and returned elected on 19th March, 2023," Olusola said. (NAN)

6:32am

#### APC Candidate Wins Somolu Constituency 1 in Lagos

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Mr Abiodun Orekoya of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winner of the Lagos State House of Assembly Constituency 1 seat in Somolu.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Governorship and House of Assembly elections were held nationwide in Nigeria on Saturday.

Dr Waziri Adisa, the Returning Officer for Somolu Constituency 1, declared the results at about 4.50 a.m. at INEC Collation Centre in Somolu.

He said that Orekoya secured 14, 256 votes to beat his closest opponent, Mr Adelana Adesegun-Adewale of the Labour Party, who got 4, 865 votes.

According to him, nine political parties contested for the Somolu House of Assembly Constituency 1 seat.

The Returning Officer added that Shittu Adedola-Olukorede of PDP scored 1,078, Awofodu Oluwabor-Oluwaseye of AA, 62 votes, Ayodele Gbenga-Johnson of AAC, 4 votes, and Olaleye Ezekiel-Oyefemi of ADC, 70 votes.

Others are Adeniyi Kolade of ADP, 37 votes, Ezitonye Peace Uzoma of BP, 21 votes, Gabriel Temitope-Dosunmu of NNPP scored 24 votes, and Awodeji Abdul of SDP had 1 vote.

"Abiodun Orekoya of APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, is hereby declared the winner and returned elected," Adisa said. (NAN)

5:45am

#### INEC Announces Sunday for Commencement of Result Collation in Cross River

INEC has declared the collation centre for the governorship and state house of assembly elections opened.

Declaring the event open, late on Saturday at the INEC Secretariat in Calabar, Prof Gabriel Yomere, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Cross River, thanked all who were present.

Yomere also used the opportunity to introduce Prof. Teddy Adies, State Returning Officer for the election.

On his part, Adies said the collation of results at the state level was after each of the results had been announced at the Local Government level.

The returning officer, who is from the Federal University Otueke, asked if any LGA was ready with their result and since none was ready, he postponed the collation to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

He said by then, many results would have come in for the collation to fully commence

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that members of Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in Cross River witnessed the event. (NAN)

5:10am

#### INEC Fixes Sunday for Suspended Asari-Toru LG Election

The INEC in Rivers, on Saturday said that the Commission was ready to conduct the election of Asari-Toru Local Government Area and the ward 14 of Degema Local Government Area on Sunday.

The INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) Dr. Johnson Alalibo, disclosed this in a statement by Mrs Geraldine Ekeleme, the Public Relations Officer of INEC, in Port Harcourt.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Alalibo stated that election could not hold in the LGAs due to the voters' resistance of deployed election officials and materials for the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections.

Alalibo said that the electorate and other stakeholders demanded to see the ward collation officer before they would allow the election to commence in Asari-Toru LGA.

He said that voters at ward 14 in Degema LGA equally demanded that the supervising Presiding Officer (SPO) must come to the Registration Area Centre with collation sheets, thereby disallowing the election to hold in the area.

The REC said that the Commission had decided to conduct the election at the areas on Sunday, standing on the premise and relying on section 24 of the Electoral Act 2022. (NAN)

SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2023

10:16pm

#### EFCC Arrests 65 Suspects over Alleged Voter Inducement

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Saturday arrested 65 persons in 28 states over alleged voter inducement during the governorship and Houses of Assembly elections.

This is contained in a statement issued by its spokesman, Mr Wilson Uwujieren.

Uwujieren stated that 20 of the suspects were arrested in Kwara, while 13 suspects were arrested in Kaduna State.

He added that 12 suspects were arrested in Rivers; four suspects each were arrested in Akwa Ibom and Cross River, while others were arrested in Gombe, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger States.

"Those arrested in Kaduna State were 10 males and three females. They were apprehended by EFCC operatives either working on intelligence reports or were chanced upon during monitoring.

"A suspect allegedly involved in vote buying was nabbed at School Road, Ungwan Rimi in Kaduna. The suspect, who initially resisted arrest, is however in custody pending the conclusion of investigation.

"Also in Kaduna, a team arrested a suspect with voter coupons, which he confessed would be used to trace and pay those who voted for his party," Uwujieren stated.

He added that the EFCC team monitoring voting around Local Education Authority School, Kabala Doki in Kaduna also arrested two suspects for vote buying.

The EFCC spokesperson noted that upon arrest, N67,500, a list containing names of voters, their PVC numbers and bank accounts details were recovered from the suspects.

He stated also that investigation showed that the major modus operandi of the suspects was to give cash, transfer money, coupons or send recharge cards to eligible voters to induce them.

Uwujieren said a search of their persons and phones showed that most of them had transferred money into bank accounts of some voters on the lists recovered from them.

"Some of the items recovered from the suspects were voter cards, monies, lists containing names and accounts details of voters and telephone recharge cards," he stressed. (NAN)

9:16pm

#### No Security Threat in Zamfara, APC Plotting to Disrupt Poll Result Collation, PDP Alleges

Zamfara State PDP Candidate, Dauda Lawal has alleged that the state government was hell-bent on disrupting the process of result collation.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Lawal in a statement by his media office Saturday in Gusau stated that the state government had perfected plans to issue a fake security threat in some local government areas of the state.

He said: "The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is in an early lead in the results so far collated from polling units across the state.

"There was a massive turnout of voters, and the results coming out indicates that PDP is comfortably winning.

"Elections were held successfully in all local government areas, but we learned that the governor is mobilizing thugs intending to disrupt the process.

"We have uncovered that they want to disrupt the collation process in Shinkafi, Zurmi, Birnin Magaji, Anka, and Kauran Namoda local government areas.

"We call on the security agencies in the country, INEC, and International Organisations to consider Zamfara as a flashpoint area and beam searchlight on it to monitor, and supervise the collation of results."

9:11pm

#### Zamfara PDP Guber Candidate Wins Polling Unit

The Peoples Democratic Party Governorship Candidate in Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, has won his GRA II Health Centre polling unit, Madawaki, Gusau scoring 384 votes.

His closest rival and incumbent Governor Bello Mutawalle of All Progressives Congress polled 82 votes.

6:37pm

#### El-Rufai Decries Voter Intimidation, Low Voter Turnout

##### John Shiklam in Kaduna

The Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, has decried voter intimidation in Saturday's governorship and state assembly elections in the southern part of the state.

He also lamented the low turnout of voters across the state.

The governor said although the election was generally peaceful across the state, he received reports of voter intimidation in Southern Kaduna.

Speaking in an interview with journalists shortly after casting his vote, El-Rufai commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for improving on the election process.

"Generally speaking, the process has been peaceful and smooth except in a few places in Southern Kaduna where we got a report of voter intimidation.

"People are being asked to vote for one party or go back home," he said.

The governor said security agencies were on top of the situation.

"We anticipated some level of violence but by the grace of God, there was no report because security was put in place in response to that intelligence," he added.

He said the All Progressives Congress (APC) was optimistic of a positive outcome of the election.

Also speaking in an interview after casting his vote at his LEA Kawo pulling unit, the APC governorship candidate, Senator Uba Sani, alleged that the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was conniving with INEC officials to intimidate voters and thumb print ballot papers.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

According to Sani, voters in Zaria and Kajuru were being intimidated while ballot papers were being thumb printed.

Many residents of Kaduna metropolis did not turn out to vote.

In places like Barnawa, Sabon Tasha, Narayi, Kakuri, Kigo Road, Angwan Sarki, Anguwan Megero, among several places, voter turnout was low.

6:25pm

C'River APC Guber Candidate Lauds INEC on Peaceful Polls

One killed in Ogoja, four buses burnt in Odukpani

Bassey Inyang in Calabar

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Cross River State, Prince Bassey Otu, has given high marks to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over the conduct of Saturday's governorship and state House of Assembly elections in the state.

Speaking with journalists in his country home in Adiabo Okurikan, Odukpani Local Government Area, Otu said from feelers reaching him from the field, the elections were generally peaceful, and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machine were largely functional.

Out, who voted in Efut Ward in the area, said: "Yes, I have full confidence in the BVAS. If you want to look at the election INEC have been conducting over the years, right from 1999 till date, even at bye-election, you'll see that somehow they live up their game."

"People must not forget where we are coming from, and the type of greed that has been injected into politics. The fact that our economy is very bad and people are looking at election probably as the only way out, as a result of that, it becomes a total war and at times INEC is at the receiving end."

"INEC must also be given the benefit of doubt to continue to make sure that they perfect all their arrangements. There were issues with the BVAS but I don't think that those issues should be key issues in giving judgement that BVAS is not working. I want to believe that INEC will continue to scale up with technology and everything to ensure that BVAS will deliver to the benefit of Nigerians."

"I don't think there's a lot of challenge with the BVAS, I went there was no delay. I was captured and the tick came out and I voted so I believe that moving forward they'll continue to make sure that things are added that will make it completely fine."

The election in the state was generally peaceful except for few incidences of violence that occurred hours before the commencement of voting.

In Ikoneto, Odukpani Local Government Area, four buses in the convoy of a top member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were burnt beyond recognition and an SUV vehicle vandalised by people suspected to be youths of the community.

Also in Ogoja, a member of the APC, whose name was given as Joe, was allegedly shot and killed by a soldier when he allegedly attempted to tamper with the electioneering.

The police authorities in the state confirmed that they got a report that one person was shot dead by the police in Ogoja.

6:10pm

INEC Postpones Governorship, Assembly Elections in 10 Polling Units in VGC

Segun James

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has postponed Saturday's governorship and state assembly elections in 10 polling units in Victoria Garden City (VGC), Lekki.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner, Lagos state, Segun Agbaje made the announcement when he addressed reporters at VGC.

According to him, corps members deployed as ad hoc staff on Saturday were hesitant to enter the VGC estate as they alleged that they were held hostage in the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

Agbaje said the commission's ad hoc staff set up voting materials in front of the estate on Saturday but the estate residents claimed that hoodlums might disrupt the process, so they did not feel secure and could not cast their votes.

He said the situation was difficult for security agents to contain hence he and his team had to come to the area.

"We have eight polling units here with 6,024 registered voters and out of which 5,624 people have their PVCs," he stated, adding that two other polling units at the estate's main gate were also affected. "Eight here (in the estate) and two outside," he noted.

"After due consultation and further directive from the national headquarters that we should remobilise here tomorrow (Sunday) morning by 08:30am to conduct the elections, by 08:30am tomorrow (Sunday), we will reconvene here."

5:59pm

Three Suspected Ballot Box Snatchers Killed, as Voter Apathy Mar Election in Delta

\*INEC workers, NYSC members scared off polling centres

\*Gunmen ambush INEC staff, snatch voting materials in Bomadi

\*Delta REC hints at early release of election results

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

The governorship and state legislative elections were generally peaceful across Delta State with the BVAS machines reportedly working seamlessly at practically all polling centres across the state but there was serious low turnout of voters with a few cases of violence reported.

Two young men were shot dead by military personnel at Mosogar in Ethiope West Local Government Area as they allegedly tried to flee a polling unit with snatched ballot boxes while one of two persons who disrupted the polling exercise at Utagaba-Uno in Ndokwa West Local Government Area was also reportedly killed.

THISDAY also learnt that unidentified persons ambushed and snatched voting materials from INEC officials early on Saturday in Tuomo area in Bomadi Local Government Area.

However, Delta State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, was accredited and cast his vote at Polling Unit 17 at Eghoma Primary School, Owa-Alero in Ika North-East Local Government Area of Delta State.

He voted at about 9.50am alongside his wife, Dame Edith and their daughter, who is also the candidate of the PDP for the Delta State House of Assembly in the election.

Okowa, who was impressed with the smooth running of the process and working BVAS machines, appealed to the people to put behind them the disappointment over the failure of INEC in the previous election to keep its promise to upload the BVAS results.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The governor, who is the vice-presidential candidate of the PDP, said, "I have played my part in shaping the future of our great state. If you have a PVC, you should too!"

Nonetheless, Okowa also commended the security personnel for enduring that the process in the area was hitch-free and hoped that INEC would sustain the smooth process and upload the election results with the BVAS machines without delay.

The PDP governorship candidate, Hon Sheriff Oborevwori, was accredited and cast his vote at about 11.am at his polling unit in Osubi, Okpe Local Government Area while the APC flag-bearer, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, was accredited about the same and voted at about 11.05am his unit in Orogun, Ughelli North Local Area of the state.

There were conflicting reports of disruption of election process at Evwreni in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, hometown of the 2015 governorship candidate of the Labour Party and a founding member of the APC, O'tega Emerhor.

While a serving member of the State Executive Council was alleged to have led thugs to attack the polling centre and destroyed voting materials in some of the polling units in the community, another account alleged that the APC chieftain had masterminded the disruptive attack witnessed in the community on election day.

There was yet no independent confirmation of those behind the violence at polling units in Evwreni community at the time of filing this report even as the security personnel deployed in the community were apparently unable to stop the disruption or arrest the suspected thugs.

However, some NYSC members serving as INEC adhoc staff and others on election duty reportedly sustained injuries while at least three BVAS machines were also reportedly smashed.

Consequently, INEC recorded an unusual shortage of manpower in several places, including parts of Ethiope East and Amai in Ukwani where voting could not take place at all in at least 16 units as the people refused participate because only about five INEC officials had arrived with voting materials just one or two units.

In a swift reaction to the incident, the Delta State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Monday Udoh, berated the people for "taking the law into their hands" and preventing the few INEC officials from conducting any voting in the community.

He admitted that INEC in the state has been hit by shortage of manpower.

Udoh, who lamented the voter apathy that characterized the entire electoral process on Saturday, noted that the people ought to cooperate with the INEC personnel that came since the Electoral Act 2022 had provided for continuation of voting the following day where voting could not take place due to inability of INEC to conduct election as scheduled.

Nevertheless, the Delta REC commended the relatively peaceful nature of the election and hinted at early collation and declaration of the governorship and state House of Assembly results owing to the fact that there was very low turnout of voters, so that the electoral officers would have relatively less used ballots to compute the results.

THISDAY learnt that the drop in the number of INEC adhoc staff may not be unconnected with the harassment some of them, especially NYSC members, were subjected during the presidential and House of Assembly election on 25th February.

Many corps-members simply opted out of the election duty due to threat of violence, beside the reported delay in the payment of their special duty allowance, alongside policemen deployed to INEC for the general election.

5:28pm

LP Guber Candidate Loses Polling Unit to Sanwo-Olu

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The Labour Party candidate in the Lagos State governorship election, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, has lost his polling unit to the incumbent, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Rhodes-Vivour polled 18 votes while Sanwo-Olu won with 29 votes.

Another contestant in the election, the Peoples Democratic Party's Olajide Adeniran, popularly known as Jandor, polled two votes.

One vote was counted as void at polling unit 01 at Oshifila Street, Anifowoshe, Ikeja.

In the House of Assembly election at the polling unit, the APC polled 34, LP 15, while PDP polled one vote.

5:33pm

Sanwo-Olu Wins Polling Unit

Governor of Lagos State, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the ruling All Progressives Congress, has won his Polling Unit (Unit 006, Ward E3, Eiyekole, Lagos Island).

The APC also won the Assembly election in the polling unit.

GOVERNORSHIP:

APC – 121

PDP – 01

LP – 02

Accord – 02

ASSEMBLY:

APC – 120

PDP – 03

LP – 02

Accord – 01

5:10pm

Lai Mohammed Delivers Polling Unit for AbdulRazaq

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed Saturday delivered his polling unit 006 Oro Ward 2 in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State with 174 votes in the governorship election.

The main opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party came second with 22 votes while the Social Democratic Party polled 16 votes.

Labour Party didn't record any vote.

There were 750 registered voters in the ward but 226 voters were accredited.

5:07pm

INEC Confirms Kidnap, Release of 19 Ad hoc Staff in Imo

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Saturday, confirmed the kidnap of 19 members of its ad hoc staff while on their way to conduct the House of Assembly election in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo.

INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner for Imo, Prof. Sylvia Agu disclosed this in a statement on Saturday in Owerri.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) gathered that they were, however, released following intervention by security agents but election materials including BVAS machines are still missing.

Agu said: "The attention of the commission has been drawn to a report from Ugbelle Registration Area (06) in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo state where thugs carted away all electoral materials and took our staff hostage for some hours during the March 18 House of Assembly election.

"The security forces were informed and a rescue operation was mounted.

"Presently, all ad hoc staff on hostage have been rescued but no trace of the election materials.

"While the commission remains grateful to the security operatives, it condemns such acts of thuggery, intimidation and disenfranchisement of voters and urge the public to continue to have confidence in the electoral process," Agu stated.

The REC said a full statement on the matter will be issued later. (NAN)

4:56pm

#### Thugs Destroy Election Materials in Ebonyi community, Police Confirm

Some Political thugs have destroyed electoral materials including the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machine and other sensitive materials in Omege Ward, Ezza North Local Government Area of the state.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Omege ward is the polling unit of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) Gubernatorial candidate, Prof. Bernard Odoh.

The thugs also injured some voters at the polling unit.

SP Onome Onowakpoye, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ebonyi Command, who confirmed the incident said the electoral materials were initially destroyed.

According to Onowakpoye, yes, some sensitive materials were destroyed but later resent to the affected Polling Unit and election conducted in the area.

An electorate, who refused to mention his name said suspected thugs came into the polling unit and started shooting sporadically.

"No fewer than three persons were shot. They have been taken to the hospital," he said. (NAN)

4:50pm

#### Pandemonium as thugs scatter ballot boxes in Lagos

Some unidentified thugs on Saturday in Lagos chased voters away from polling units, as they attempted to steal ballot boxes.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent, who was at Ward F3 Polling Unit 13, Ago Palace Way, Lagos, watched with surprise as some thugs suddenly started chasing voters away with the aim of snatching ballot boxes.

The people ran for safety as the thugs continued to throw chairs and spray some chemical at them.

NAN reports that the incident was ongoing when armed policemen swung into action and arrested one of the thugs while others fled.

Voting, however, resumed as normalcy was restored by the policemen. (NAN)

4:45pm

#### ICPC Deploys 400 Operatives to Prevent Vote-buying

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) on Saturday said it deployed 400 officers and operatives to prevent vote buying in governorship and Houses of Assembly elections.

The ICPC Spokesperson, Mrs Azuka Ogguga, said in a statement in Abuja that the officers were already operating at the various wards and polling units.

Azuka, said that the chairman of ICPC, Prof. Bolaji Owasanoye, addressed the election monitoring teams before their deployment.

She quoted Owasanoye as saying that "Our participation in the election monitoring is a call to an exceptional national duty.

"Our relevance is neither an after-thought nor happenstance but arose from the recognition of our contribution to national development through the implementation of our enforcement and preventive mandates in combating corruption and associated ills.

"Our importance led to the commission being made a member of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) which comprises our sister agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Military, Police, Department of State Security and other security agencies.

"It has the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Office of National Security Adviser as co-chairs. All these agencies will monitor the elections."

Owasanoye urged the officers to follow the ICPC guidelines for election monitoring and also comply with the ICCES code of conduct and rules of engagement for security personnel on election duty.

The ICPC boss also counseled the monitoring teams to act with discipline and integrity and directed them to put their body cameras to effective use.

Azuka said the reports from field operations by the Election Monitoring Teams had been sent to the ICPC Situation Room at the Headquarters.

"A vote-buyer at the Ba Sarki Polling Unit 002 central capital of Adamawa State fled on sighting the ICPC monitoring team.

"Voting was observed to be going on smoothly in the Surulere area of Lagos State and some other locations in the State.

"ICPC Election Monitoring Teams in Enugu State observed voter apathy at the polling units as only a few voters were on ground, " she said.

She said that ICPC Election Monitoring Teams were also monitoring the election along with some international observers in some polling units in other states.

She recalled that the anti-corruption agency had on February 25 arrested nine vote-buyers in Osun, Ondo, Borno, Akwa Ibom and Sokoto States during the Presidential and National Assembly elections. (NAN)

4:43pm

Masked Thugs Storm Lagos Polling Units, Chase Voters Away

Masked thugs on Saturday invaded some polling units at Ward D, Igando/Ikotun, Lagos State, and chased away voters in queue.

The thugs chased away the voters with sticks and knives at the polling units located at Ijegun Community School.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The polling units include 096, 116, 281, 094, 095 and 084.

A News Agency of Nigeria correspondent, who monitored elections in the area, reports that the thugs came to the polling units on motorcycles.

They went from one polling unit to another chasing them away.

The attack compelled some voters to jump the school's fence for safety.

Also at Polling Unit 227 located at Awonisi Gate on Ijegamo Road, the thugs also beat up a lady who tried to take their picture.

They allegedly took her phones and her automated teller machine cards.

They also beat up and wounded a man who attempted to challenge them.

The voters, including accredited ones, did not return to the polling units as at press time even after the thugs left.

NAN reports that few police personnel were at area but were not armed.

One of them told NAN later that they couldn't do anything because they were not armed.

He, however, said that a patrol team had been called.

A police patrol team arrived at the scene later.

One of the team members said on condition of anonymity, "Why did they call us after the crisis has died down? They should have called earlier."

NAN had reported that voting was abruptly stopped at Unit 078, Ward F5, Okeafa, Ilamose Estate, Oshodi-Isolo Constituency 2, Lagos State, as thugs chased voters away with bottles and stones at about 10.52 a.m.

NAN equally reported that thugs chased voters away and attempted to steal ballot boxes at Ward F3, Polling Unit 13, on Ago Palace Way, Okota, Lagos State.

Voters ran for safety as the thugs threw chairs and poured some a chemical substance on them. (NAN)

4:39pm

Abdusalamami Urges Contestants to Accept Polls Outcome in Good Faith

Laleye Dipo in Minna

A former military Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalamami Abubakar, has charged candidates who contested the governorship and House of Assembly elections to accept the results in good faith.

Abubakar made the plea shortly after casting his ballot at the uphill polling unit on Saturday.

The former Nigerian leader, who is also the Chairman of the National Peace Committee, said so far, the elections seems to free and fair.

"So far from what I have seen, everything is going on smoothly. I was captured within a minute. I hope everything goes peacefully," he said.

Commenting on the poor voter turnout, the former head of state said he could not confirm emphatically since he had not gone round to see things for himself.

"I have not gone round but it should be expected because people get tired to vote. I hope it will be peaceful throughout," he said.

The Niger State Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Sani Bello, also speaking after casting his vote in Kontagora, described the process as peaceful and orderly, adding that the process was very seamless.

Bello commended the electorate for turning out to exercise their franchise, adding that he believes the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates will emerge victorious.

The governor's wife, Dr Amina Sani Bello, also cast her vote in Kontagora.

4:19pm

Polls: NSCDC Arrests Thugs in Enugu

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has confirmed the arrest of scores of suspected thugs in the Nsukka axis of Enugu State.

The spokesman of the Enugu State Command of the corps, Danny Iwuchukwu, who confirmed the arrest, said that it was carried out in the early hours of Saturday, the election day.

He said that the thugs, numbering over 100, were arrested by officers of the Nigerian Army providing security in the Nsukka axis after an intelligence tip-off at a popular hotel in Nsukka.

He noted that the thugs, who were arrested with AK47 rifles and other dangerous weapons, including axes, clubs and matchets have since been handed over to the Nigeria Police in Nsukka.

4:05pm

Thugs Attack Plateau Polling Unit, Destroy Ballot Papers, Voters Registers

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Some suspected thugs have attacked Pangpit polling unit in Mikang Local Government Area of Plateau state destroying the voters register and ballot boxes.

A voter at the polling unit, Mr. Joshua Kabiru confirmed the development, saying that trouble started when some party agents who observed that some voters were being guided before casting their votes started quarreling among themselves.

Kabiru said, "It was at about 11am on Saturday that the incident happened at the Pangpit polling unit in Mikang. Voting was just going on smoothly when we saw the party agents quarreling among themselves .From what I learnt, one of the party agents complained that some voters were not being given free hand to vote for candidates of their choice in the polling unit.

"Suddenly, some people came and attacked the polling unit. In the process, they destroyed some of the votes cast and also the voters register. They also tore some of the used ballot papers and some people sustained injuries but INEC officials were not among those who sustained injuries. It took the intervention of some security agents who were deployed to the polling unit to bring the situation under control. But before the security men arrived, those who perpetrated the act had fled the scene."

It was further gathered that following the incident, voting had been suspended in the area.

Spokesman for the Plateau state Police Command, Mr. Alabo Alfred said Senior police officers had been deployed to all the Local Government Areas to handle every security issue that may arise as a result of the on going governorship and state House of Assembly elections in the state.

4:00pm

Thugs Invade Polling Centre, Attempt to Snatch Ballot Boxes in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Some thugs, suspected to be armed, invaded Metu Memorial Primary School in Odoakpu area of Onitsha, Anambra State, Saturday, attempted to snatch some ballot boxes.

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A voter, Mr Chibuzor Ekene, told journalists that the men invaded the polling centre with a tricycle, and attempted to snatch the ballot boxes.

He said the men were suspected to have been sponsored by one of the popular political party contesting in the House of Assembly election.

He said: "They arrived and attempted to snatch and destroyed ballot boxes. The people were scared, and they ran away. They also attempted to snatch the phones of many voters."

"The bad boys left before security could arrive the scene. Voting stopped temporarily after the incident."

The Anambra State Police commissioner in charge of election duty, CP Aderemi Adeoye, confirmed the incident, saying that police operatives were able to confront the thugs, while they abandoned the act and fled.

3:53pm

One Killed, Another Arrested for Vote Buying in Niger

\* Thugs invade polling station in Busu

Laleye Dipo in Minna

A middle-aged man was shot and killed in Sauka-kahuta area of Minna, the Niger State capital, during Saturday's governorship and House of Assembly elections.

According to eyewitnesses, the man was shot when he and others were throwing stones at security operatives deployed in the area to ensure orderly conduct of the elections.

It was not known why the man and others threw stones at the security men, neither was it known which of the security operatives shot the man.

However, it was learnt that the police personnel, men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) were among the team of security men posted to the area for the polls.

It was gathered that the remains of the man were taken away by his colleagues probably for burial.

THISDAY can also report that operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested the agent of one of the two leading political parties for alleged vote buying in the Sabongari area of Minna.

The agent was said to be giving some naira notes to voters to induce them to vote for his party when he was apprehended and taken away in an EFCC vehicle.

In Busu, Lavun Local Government of the state, thugs were reported to have invaded the Gbadagbadzu polling unit, destroyed the ballot boxes and scattering the votes already cast.

The thugs also injured three people who had cast their ballots and were waiting for the counting.

The presiding officers, according to reports, took to their heels for safety.

When contacted, the Niger State Police Command Public Relations Officer, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, promised to get back to THISDAY but did not do so until the time of filing this report.

3:40pm

APC National Chair Debunks Reports on Zoning of N'Assembly Positions

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

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The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Abdullahi Adamu, has described as fake the widely reported news that the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party had zoned the various leadership positions in the National Assembly.

Adamu made the clarification while addressing journalists after he cast his vote at his Keffi, Nasarawa State country home on Saturday.

He was reacting to a news report that Senator Barau Jibrin was being favoured to emerge as the Senate President because the NWC of the APC had allegedly zoned the Senate Presidency to the North-west.

But Adamu wondered why politicians would be engaging in wishful thinking instead of awaiting the official pronouncement from the party.

He said: "The report about the zoning arrangements for the 10th National Assembly is fake news. We have not done any zoning."

"I have said it times without number since Monday. I am still saying the same thing. No zoning has been established yet and agreed to."

"No zoning has been made public. Anybody who is saying anything is a rumour. It's a wishful rumour."

Also in a statement titled 'APC Yet To Zone Key 10th National Assembly Positions', signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, on Saturday, the party described stories of the zoning of leadership positions as false and misleading.

Morka said: "The attention of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has been drawn to a report circulating on social media on purported zoning of key positions of the incoming 10th National Assembly. The report is false and misleading and should be disregarded in its entirety."

"The party has not made any decision on zoning of positions or offices of the 10th Assembly."

"As soon as a decision is made on zoning, it will be made public through the party's official communications channel."

The misleading reports, which was published by major newspapers on Saturday, had claimed that the NWC of the APC had finally opted to zone the Senate Presidency position to the North-west geopolitical zone, making the "odds to clearly favour Senator Barau Jibrin".

The false report claimed that the decision on zoning was reached on Friday night by the leadership of the APC after consulting with the President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"The decision takes pre-eminence over earlier suggestions in some quarters to zone the position to the South," the debunked story further claimed.

3:38pm

Poor Turnout, Improper Configuration of BVAS Mar Election in Plateau

At Polling Unit 008 Dantanko Ward, Miango.

INEC officials idle by 1:32pm, as only 70 voters from out of 840 registered voters turned up.

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Poor turnout of voters on Saturday characterized governorship elections in Plateau State with electorate accusing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of lacking integrity.

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While some male adults were seen playing draft and other games under the trees in front of their houses, the youths took over the football pitches all over Jos town to while away time.

Some youths numbering over 30 at Dadin Kowa community Jos South Local Government Area of the state, who abandoned the voting exercise said blamed their actions on the outcome of the presidential election which they described as disappointing.

One of them, who identified himself as John Datti said, " We came out in large en mass during the last presidential election hoping that our votes will count. But we were disappointed when INEC eventually announced the results which obviously did not reflect the voting pattern the votes of the people of the community.

"It shows that our votes did not count and that is why we decided to come out to the pitch to play football rather than going out to waste our time in the name of voting which may still not count at the end of the day."

Another youth, by name Sunday Igbigbi at Angwa Rukuba football pitch where they the youths also stages a football match, also corroborated Datti's position. They called on INEC to learn to respect the Nigerians and their votes.

Igbigbi said, "I can tell you that many Nigerians will not come out next time to vote at all if INEC's integrity remains questionable. So, it's up to INEC to use this last opportunity of governorship elections to save it's face from shame.

At Polling Unit: 042 Tudun wada/Kabong Ward, Rukuba Road. Number of registered voters is 3144, accredited voters were just 500 in number.

Meanwhile, initial hitches were experienced at Rabin polling unit, Du when configured BVAS still carries February 25th, 2023 date when the Presidential polls held.

The Returning Officer said the error must have emanated during the configuration of the BVAS. He returned the BVAS for proper configuration.

3:06pm

Bode George Condemns Voter Suppression in Lagos

Segun James

As violence and voter suppression are reported in parts of Lagos during the ongoing governorship election, former national Deputy Chairman of the People's Democratic Party, Chief Olabode George, has described the election as a sham.

He faulted the conduct of the election, saying reports of snatching of ballot boxes, intimidation and harassments of voters is disappointing.

George made the remark after voting at his Cameron Road, Ikoyi, voting unit, insisting that the election was a sham.

He said, "The attitude of the APC is very disappointing. If you continue like this when things happen, don't complain.

He said where he voted was peaceful but the reports he had received so far showed, there were ballot snatching and harassments of voters.

He mentioned Surulere, Ikeja, Somolu, Oshodi and Kosofe as areas where voters suppression were allegedly committed.

"What is all this? They forget that the international community is watching. What kind of nation do we want to be in the eye of the comity of nations?

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"What I found was a general voters' apathy. How would the outside world look at us because we can't exist alone. We will wait and see the final outcome.

"If this kind of attitude becomes a norm, it means we can't do simple things right," he added.

The PDP chieftain said the presence of military personnel should be to ensure that the process was orderly, saying "they are to ensure that people vote freely without any encumbrance."

2:54pm

#### Zamfara PDP Cries out over Arrest, Harassment of Party Leaders

The People's Democratic Party, Zamfara State chapter, has decried the harassment and arrest of its members by the police.

The PDP, through its Publicity Secretary, raised the alarm following the arrest of some key members of the party by the police while elections are still in progress.

The PDP noted that the hatchet job by the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC) was targeted at frustrating the leaders of the party and as well threatening party members in order to ensure that the election process is not free and fair.

The party said: "It is unfortunate that the Zamfara State government is using the police to intimidate and harass members of the opposition across the state.

"There is nowhere in the country where party members are being harassed like this.

"Zamfara State government should stop intimidating our members. They have perfected so many evil plans to disrupt the process and suppress voters, but the people stood against them and their plans.

"Now they have resorted to the use of the police to arrest our leaders across the state. We are not in military era.

"We have confirmed so far that in Mafara LGA, our party leaders like Captain Mairiga and Alhaji Aliyu E.S were arrested this morning.

"While in Anka LGA, the police have arrested Mustapha Ibrahim Mayanci, Mustapha Ibrahim Danliti Mayanci, Abubakar Usman Mayanci, and Sama'il Mayanci among others.

"We call on the Inspector General of Police, the Director DSS, and international election observers to watch the happenings in Zamfara very closely.

"We are hopeful of winning the election in Zamfara, as our candidate Dauda Lawal is in the early lead from the results collated so far."

2:46pm

#### Polls: Makinde, Wife Cast Votes in Ibadan

#### Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

Governor 'Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and his wife, Tamunominini, joined millions of voters in the state to cast their votes at the governorship and state House of Assembly elections.

The governor, who voted at Ward 11, Unit 01, Abayomi Iwo Road in Ibadan North East Local Government, said that he was impressed with the peaceful conduct of the election so far.

His wife, Tamunominini, voted at Unit 08 Army Barracks, Iwo Road, also in Ibadan North East Local Government of the state.

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Makinde had arrived the voting point at 10:40 am, and cast his vote at about 10:48am.

He had earlier been verified and accredited with the BVAS machine.

The governor, while speaking with journalists after casting his ballot, described the voting process as peaceful and commended the security agencies for doing a good job.

He called on the people to come out in good number to exercise their civic rights, urging those who were yet to cast their votes to be patient.

He expressed confidence that the people of the state would vote for him again.

According to him, "In my own unit here, everything is going peacefully. The INEC officials came early. You yourselves can see that people are out here exercising their civic rights, and from the security aspect, it has been so far so good.

"Let me also use this opportunity to tell people to come out. You know they were saying there will be security challenges, but as you can see, there are no security challenges. Our people are here voting peacefully.

"I believe our people will vote Omituntun 2.0."

2:32pm

#### Guber, Assembly Election Better Than Feb 25 Poll, Says Tambuwal

Gov. Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State has appreciated the general conduct of the March 18 Governorship and State Assembly elections in the state.

Tambuwal made the commendation shortly after he cast his vote at Community Girls' Secondary School, Tambuwal, in Sokoto on Saturday.

According to the governor, the exercise is truly and generally secure and free of rancor.

"There is a lot of improvement when compared with the Feb. 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should keep to its promise of ensuring all-inclusive election across the country.

"We were highly disappointed with the way INEC conducted the last elections in which the process experienced a lot of irregularities.

"Comparing with the current elections, the situation is highly different from the report we are receiving so far across the state," he said.

Tambuwal further added that if the situation was sustained to the end, the will of the people would truly prevail at the end of the exercise.

"The election materials arrived most of the polling units in time and so far no issue of BVAS malpractice.

"However, government needs to ensure the recruitment of more security personnel to address shortage of manpower in the country," he added. (NAN)

2:22pm

#### Residents Unleash Dogs on Thugs at Lagos Polling Units

\*Police shoot suspected thug

Rebecca Ejifoma

Ago Palace in Lagos is currently under tension as residents unleashed their dogs to chase away political thugs suspected to be loyal to the ruling All Progressive Party (APC),.

Also, police has shot one of the suspected thugs.

THISDAY gathered that the Ago Palace residents stood their ground to vote for the candidates of their choice.

While a police van filled with armed officers was seen driving off, the thug shot was left behind gasping for breath on the ground.

2:10pm

Former Osun Governor Gboyega Oyetola, casting his vote during the House of Assembly election, at his polling unit, Ward 01,  
unit 10, Boripe Local Government, Irágbijí, Saturday

2:00pm

Osinbajo, Abiodun, Adebutu, Others Vote, Laud Process

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, the Governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and other stakeholders have commended the organisation and process of the ongoing Governorship and House of Assembly election in Ogun State, describing it as improvement on the February 25, presidential and National Assembly elections.

The stakeholders, spoke shortly after casting their votes at their various units in Ogun State.

Osinbajo, who voted at VP Unit 14 Ward 1, Ikenne Local Government, described the process as very excellent in his own unit.

He said, "My own polling booth here is excellent and i think everything is peaceful and the whole process has been conducted very well and i just hope and pray that this is how it is being carried out across the nation. It has been very pleasant experience that i was able to cast my votes and also so many of us have been able to cast our votes."

Governor Dapo Abiodun of the All Progressives Congress, APC, voted at his Unit 3 Ward 1 in Regun area of Iperu town few minutes after 11.am while Oladipupo Adebutu voted at 10.59am at Ward 5, polling unit 4, Wesley Primary School Iperu.

Iperu is the home town of governor Abiodun of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Adebutu, who is the governorship candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and main challenger of Gov. Abiodun in the governorship race.

Adebutu described the turnout of voters as impressive and expressed the hope that their expressed wishes would count at the end of the day.

Also, the Gubernatorial candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Ogun state, Biyi Otegbeye, voted at about 10:01am at the State hospital, Ilaro, Ward 1, Unit 1, in Egbado South Local Government area of the state.

Otegbeye while speaking with journalists, commended the electoral process, saying that, it is an improvement on what was obtained during the last presidential election.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"To the glory of God, everything looks peaceful. Everybody is orderly and I can see the excitement and enthusiasm on people to cast their votes.

"The electoral officers are on duty, they are cautious and everything seems to be going on smoothly at this particular time.

"What I can see at this stage is that it is much more better than what we experienced during the Presidential election.

Otegbeye said he was however, optimistic of victory for himself and his party at the poll.

"I am expecting an overwhelming victory for myself and my party, the ADC", he added

Also speaking, the newly elected senator for Ogun West, Solomon Adeola, commended the Saturday's election process as a great improvement on the what obtained on February 25.

Meanwhile, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was conspicuously, absent at his Ward 6 Unit 22, Totoro Abeokuta North Local Government.

A media aide to the former president, Kehinde Akinyemi, said Obasanjo, has not been in Abeokuta, for over 10 days.

1:46pm

#### Sokoto PDP Guber Candidate Votes, Confident of Victory

The Governorship Candidate of PDP in Sokoto State, Mallam Saidu Umar has described the I governorship election as a seamless exercise. He made this known while exercising his franchise at Ubandoma Polling Unit 020, Sabon-titi, Kofar Atiku area of Sokoto.

Umar, while briefing newsmen immediately after casting his ballot, said "so far voting has been going on calmly, and peacefully in the area, and within the metropolitan areas."

Commenting on the recently held Presidential and National Assembly elections, Mallam Umar described today's leg of the election as relatively better than the previous one.

However, the PDP candidate said he remains upbeat about victory, when asked about his expectation at the end of the exercise.

"The PDP, God willing, is optimistic of victory in the election", he said

He called on eligible voters to come out and vote, and also safeguard their votes.

1:36pm

#### Soludo Lauds INEC for Early Commencement of Voting in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, has commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for early commencement of the voting process in the state.

Soludo gave the commendation shortly after voting at Polling Unit 002 Ovuiyi Umueze, Isuofia, Aguata Council Area at 11:30 am

"From the information available to me, I have sampled views across the state and it seems to be going on fairly well in terms of deployment of logistics and early commencement of election.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"I think there is a great improvement compared to the previous election in terms of the arrival and deployment of materials. It seems to be going on well, relatively peaceful," Soludo declared.

The governor, who expressed optimism that the will of the people will prevail, also said that the turnout of voters is low compared to the previous election and encouraged Anambra residents to step out and exercise their civic obligations by voting.

"Anyone who is in the queue before 2:00 pm, will be allowed to vote and your vote will count. We expect the finishing, collation and announcement of results to end with a flourish," the governor concluded.

1:35pm

Tambuwal Votes, Confident of PDP's Victory

By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

Governor Aminu Waziri Tambuwal of Sokoto State has voted at his polling unit.

Tambuwal who voted at his 033 polling unit, Kofar Ajia Government Girls Day Secondary School, Tambuwal, a 11:30am was confident of the victory of PDP's candidate Sa'aidu Umar.

He maintained that last month's presidential and national assembly elections fell short of international electoral standard.

"Look at last election, no national assembly seat was declared in the state. How can 9 federal house of representatives and 3 senate seats be declared inconclusive?" he asked.

He noted that PDP was popular among the people of Sokoto state, stressing the people of the state will massively vote for the party.

He however commended INEC for improving on last election, noting that INEC officials arrived polling units early on Saturday compared to last election.

He urged people of the state to come out en mass to cast their votes for the candidate of their choice, saying this election will define their future.

12:59pm

Emenike Votes, Confident of Victory, Lauds INEC for Improved Voting ProcessEmmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

The governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State, Ikechi Emenike, has expressed confidence in emerging victorious in the governorship contest.

"I'm confident of victory. You can see the mood of voters. We are looking forward to victory by the grace of God by tomorrow," he said.

Emenike, who cast his vote in polling unit 11 Umukabia Okpuala at exactly 10:13a.m, told journalists that he was happy with the arrangements put on ground by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as the voting process was going on smoothly.

"You can see that the BVAS is working well and I'm sure you can see that quite a lot of people are desirous to vote," he said.

He advised the electoral umpire "to ensure transparency and fairness to everybody".

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Meanwhile, the governorship and state assembly election has shown remarkable improvement on the part of INEC as deployment of election materials was done on time.

In most polling units monitored at Umuahia North and Umuahia South Local Governments that make up the capital city, voting started on or before 9.00am.

However, the enthusiasm of voters which manifested in the huge turnout of voters very early on voting day during the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly polls was lacking this time around.

A senior citizen, Chief Orji Ukaonu, said that people have a sense of disappointment over the outcome of the presidential poll and it has dampened their enthusiasm for the governorship and state assembly elections.

"People were driven by the enthusiasm generated by the candidacy of Peter Obi and they trooped out in large numbers to their polling units as early as 6.30am.

"But after the result was announced, people were disappointed and unhappy. You can see the effect today as electoral officers are telling ones waiting for voters instead of the other way around," he said.

But a party agent, who gave his name simply as Ukoha, said that it was expected that large number of voters would still turn out to vote "if they hear that the voting process is no more rigorous as it was during the presidential election".

12:55pm

**Buhari Votes, Says APC Will Triumph in Governorship, Assembly Polls**

.Asks electorate to vote according to their conscience

.Osinbajo lauds voting process

**Deji Elumoye in Abuja**

President Muhammadu Buhari has predicted victory for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Saturday's Governorship and State of Assembly elections across the country.

According to him, Nigerians know the party "means what it says, and says what it means."

Speaking with newsmen on Saturday after casting his vote at Ward A, Sarkin Yara Polling Unit, 003 in his country home Daura in Katsina state, the President said "I am sure we are going to win, again".

According to him: "Nigerians trust us because we mean what we say and say what we mean. We have maintained that trust. We told Nigerians that we will work for them, and we have done our best in education and health facilities, and Nigerians appreciate our efforts".

The President urged the electorate to follow their conscience in choosing right leaders, both state executives and legislatures, admonishing that the era of vote buying had been diminished.

"I am aware that the money is not there like before for people to sway voters, like they used to do. And if they bring out money now, the people should pocket it, and still vote their conscience," he said.

President Buhari noted that he was not surprised at the results of the Presidential elections on February 25, 2023, which saw Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerging as President-elect, since the APC campaigns were thorough, and detailed.

The President noted that the APC followed the constitutional procedure for the entire electoral process, choosing a party Chairman, Sen. Abdullahi Adamu, who had served as a two-term Governor in Nasarawa State, and legislator in the Senate, with an experience that will secure the electoral value and relevance of the party.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

On deepening of democratic culture and rising awareness among Nigerians, President Buhari said the media had played a major role in empowering people with information on their rights, and providing a platform for voters to challenge leaders on promises and records.

His words: "The media is doing very well in creating awareness and enabling the right conversation. You can hear the tough questions for leaders during interviews on TV, radio and other platforms, and the journalists always press for answers".

Meanwhile, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and his wife, Dolapo Osinbajo, on Saturday voted at the Egunrege Polling Unit 14, Ward 1 in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, expressing satisfaction with the conduct of the election.

Osinbajo and his wife arrived the polling unit, got accredited and proceeded to cast their votes at exactly 10:34 am.

Speaking afterwards with journalists, the Vice President said "from here at my own polling unit, it is excellent. The whole process has been conducted very well and I just hope and pray that this is how it is being carried out across the nation.

"It has been a very pleasant experience. I am glad that I am able to cast my votes and so many others who want to cast their votes have been able to do so," he added.

12:53pm

Obi Votes, Laments Vote Buying, Apathy

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Mr Peter Obi, has voted at his Amatutu polling unit in Agulu, Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Obi, who cast his vote at about 11.20am, lamented that Nigeria has returned to the era of transactional politics, saying that the ongoing election is witnessing vote buying.

Obi also lamented the low turnout of voters in the state.

He said this may be because the people have lost interest in the system.

12:36am

No Police Presence in Most Zamfara Polling Units, PDP Alleges

The Zamfara State Peoples Democratic Party has said that there is zero police presence in most of the polling units across the state.

The party in a statement through the Dauda Lawal Media Office, Saturday in Gusau, stated that elections were yet to commence in many polling units in the state.

The governorship elections were expected to commence early Saturday.

Though in some states, concerns heightened over alleged moves by governors to rig the elections by all means possible.

The statement read: "It is worrisome the situation in Zamfara State at the moment, because elections are yet to commence in most of the polling units across the state.

"The Police that is expected to provide security for INEC officials, election materials, and voters are nowhere to be found.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

"The Zamfara State PDP is worried and believes that this is a plan by the state government to resort to extra-judicial means to compromise the process.

"There is already information of thugs attacking voters in Gummi, Zurmi, Bungudu, Mafara, and Shinkafi Local Government Areas.

"We call on the Inspector General of Police to call the Zamfara state commissioner of police to order. The police should be neutral, not partisan.

"It is only the security operatives that can thwart the plan to further compromise the electoral officers, thus making the falsification of results much easier than it was in the previous exercise."

12:20pm

Low Turnout as Enugu Residents Elect Gov, State Assembly Members

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

Residents of Enugu State appear to have lost hope and interest in the conduct of elections given the low turnout of voters that is currently being experienced at the ongoing governorship and state assembly elections.

This is unlike the last Presidential and National Assembly elections during which residents of the State trooped out in large numbers to vote, despite threats of sit at home.

Recall that in some polling units where voting materials did not arrive on time, voters waited for several hours just to exercise their rights.

However, while voting materials arrived on time today and voting commenced early enough, it was noticed in some of the polling units visited that the turnout was poor.

At the Central Primary School Ugwuaji and Afor Market Square Polling units, accreditation and voting started at 9am. But only a few voters turnout out. The story is the same across some polling units across the state.

It was also noticed that unlike in the last election when residents stayed back in their numbers to count their votes, most of them were leaving as soon as they cast their votes.

At the Central Primary School Ugwuaji and Afor Market Square, party agents who spoke to this reporter said that the low turnout being experienced was as a result of the outcome of the last presidential and national assembly election.

"The outcome of the presidential election, particularly, was not what the citizens expected, one of them said. " And that is why most of them have decided to stay back since their votes will not count,".

Some of those who voted in the last election but didn't turn up for the state elections also told this reporter that they had lost hope and trust in the capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC to conduct free and fair polls.

As at the time of this report, voting was still ongoing and no violence has been recorded yet.

11:27am

Heavy Security as Voting Commences in Lagos

Segun James

Amidst heavy security, voting has commenced in Lagos.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

The President-elect, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was one of the early voters as he voted at his Alausa, Ikeja polling unit at about 09.40 am.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has just voted.

THISDAY Correspondent, who visited Awolowo Way, Ikeja, Agege-Motor Road, Oshodi, Mushin and Lagos Island noticed heavy security presence, made up of men of the Nigerian Army at known flashpoints along the axis.

The soldiers were moving in armoured trucks.

11:23am

#### Tinubu Votes Amid Heavy Security

President-elect, Sen. Bola Tinubu voted at 9.35 a.m. at Unit 085, Ward 03, Alausa, Ikeja amid tight security in the Governorship/National Assembly elections on Saturday.

Tinubu was accompanied by his wife, Oluremi and the Lagos Market leader, Chief Folashade Ojo.

Mr Dele Alake, his Media Spokesman, told journalists after he voted that the president-elect will not be able to grant interviews till later in the evening.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that barriers were used to demarcate the unit into sections and designated areas for voters, journalists and security operatives which is different from the previous situation.

NAN recalls that during the Presidential and National Assembly elections on Feb. 25, hundreds of journalists and party supporters struggled to capture Tinubu's arrival and voting.

INEC officials were early and had completely set up before 8 a.m.

At exactly 8.30 a.m, Miss Adebola Adeniyi, the Assistant Presiding Officer III, made announcement, showed empty ballot boxes and the BVAS Machine and read out the election guidelines.

She said 324 voters registered in the unit.

A combined team of Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, DSS, FRSC and Nigeria Immigration Service were on ground.

The heads of the various security organisations, including the commissioner of police inspected and patrolled the area before the arrival and departure of the president-elect. (NAN)

11:16am

#### Large Turnout, Tight Security as Plateau Goes to Poll

Electoral officers in most polling units across Plateau conducted peaceful accreditations of voters and voting amid huge turnout of voters on Saturday for the state governorship and House of Assembly elections.

However, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that voters' turnout was poor in Jos North Local Government when accreditations and voting had begun in other polling stations.

Some polling units in Kuguya, Bukuru and Dadin Kowa, in Jos-South began accreditations and votings immediately it was official time for the exercise.

The residents in Jos obeyed the restriction directive as most streets in the metropolis were deserted, no traffic and shops were locked up during the elections.

Most voters commended the officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for arriving in polling stations promptly.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

Voting began as scheduled in polling units 028 (Gut), 024 (Shaka) and 017 (Air force Primary School) all in old Airport Road amid tight security

Polling units in Kugiyi, Bukuru Lowcost and Dadinkowa were set up before 8 a.m. awaiting the official time of 8.30 a.m. to begin accreditations.

The Presiding Officer in charge of polling unit 032, in Bukuru Lowcost , Mr Okoi Nsa, said that he and his team arrived as early as 7.15 a.m. to set up the place.

Similarly, the Presiding Officer in charge of polling unit 048, Dadinkowa, Miss Blessing Edoh, said that she was at the station as early as 6.30 a.m. to forestall a repeat of the incidence that occurred during the presidential and national assembly elections.

In polling units 043 and 006 at Kugiyi, Jos South, as the polling units were set and the officers in charge were seen addressing the electorate before the commencement of the voting exercise.

Some of the electorate who spoke with NAN expressed satisfaction on the prompt arrival of the INEC officials, noting that this would enable the electorate to cast their votes within the stipulated time.

Mrs Garos Pam, an electorate, commended the INEC officials for coming out early as this has enabled her to cast her vote in good time.

Another voter, Mr Moses Bitrus, said that because the exercise commenced in time, he spent less than 10 minutes to cast his vote.

Miss Jummai Dalyop, said that the process this time was less cumbersome as compared to that of the presidential elections.

Another electorate, Mrs Joy Jacob said that this process would enable every eligible3 voter to cast their vote as the officials arrived early and the process was better.(NAN)

11:13am

#### Awka Records Poor Voters Turnout

Turnout of voters in most polling units in Awka and environs for the March 18 State House of assembly election was very low, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Correspondent of NAN who visited some polling units within Awka township reports that electoral officials arrived before 8a.m. in most of the units.

The polling units visited include Awka South Aroma 1, PU. 002, Aroma 2, 008, Aroma 3, PU.007, Amudo Hall 2, PU 009, Ukwuorji 5, PU. 006, and Ogbugbankwa PU. 011.

Also at Adabebe Amawbia Polling units 1 and 2 Polling, Agu Awka 09 polling units 005 and 0012, the turnout was low, there were presence of security operatives and party agents.

Pastor Emeka Okoli, a voter at Aroma Awka 1 told NAN that the poor turnout was due to the poor handling of the Feb. 25 presidential and national assembly elections.

"As you can see many people are not here now, by this time during the last election, more than 150 people were already here.

"For people to show up in their numbers in future elections, INEC must make sure they stick to the rules", he said.(NAN)

11:10am

#### APC, PDP Agents Kick as Materials Arrive Bauchi Ward Late

Agents of All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), on Saturday, decried late arrival of INEC officials and materials at Haruna Memorial Primary School ward 029,

The ward is in Alkaleri Local Government Area of Bauchi state.

Speaking with newsmen, Mouktar Gidado, the PDP observer at the polling unit said he arrived at the venue exactly at 8am when election materials should have arrived.

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"However, I don't know why the materials arrived at 9:20am and voting has not yet commenced though the electoral officers are on ground now.

"I want to appeal to INEC that there should be a departure from late arrival of election materials. It is 9:30am and voters are still waiting", he said.

Gidado, who is also the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to Gov. Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State , said apart from the late arrival of election materials, everything was going on smoothly at the polling unit.

Also speaking, Abdullahi Gidado, the All Progressives Congress (APC) party agent at the polling unit, decried the late arrival of election materials.

He said some voters wanted to return home but he convinced them to stay.

"We have been waiting since 8am and they arrived at 9:20am. We hope that the election will commence soon as they have already set up the polling unit.

"Apart from the fact that INEC officials arrived late, there is no other issue here," he said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that as at 10am, election had not commenced at the polling unit. (NAN)

11:08am

#### Voting Starts Early in Nasarawa

Election officials arrived early for the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections in Motor Park 001 and 002 Polling Units Gudi, Akwanga Local Government Area (LGA), Nasarawa State.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the polling units visited by its Correspondent, accreditation and voting began simultaneously at exactly 9:08am.

NAN also reports that Officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) arrived most polling units around 8:30am and set up the place for voting.

Security agencies such as Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps were present at the polling units to ensure security and to check vote buying. (NAN).

11:02am

#### Materials Arrive, Voting Commences Early In Eket

Electoral materials arrived early in polling units in some parts of Eket Local Government Area of the state for governorship and House Assembly elections.

Mr Solomon Daudo, Polling Officer said that electoral materials arrived at Unit 18 one of the wards in Ward 4 Urban, Primary School Atai Ndon at 7:20 a.m on Saturday

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Wards 4 Urban comprises five units which are units 3, 4, 17, 18 and 19.

Daudo said that everything was in place, as they were waiting for INEC authorisation to commence the election.

Mrs Dorothy Imoh, the polling officer said that electoral materials arrived polling units at 7:30 a.m.

She also that the security officers and party agents of different political parties were all on ground.

Mr Joseph Ekaette, Senior Polling Officer, (SPO) said electoral materials arrived Registration Area Technical Support (RATECH) centre Ikot Ibiok last night and distributed the materials before 7:30 a.m.

NAN reports that voting later commenced by 8:30 a.m. (NAN)

10:58am

#### Large Voter Turn-Out in Kano Amidst Tight Security

A huge turnout of voters is being witnessed in the Governorship and House of Assembly elections in Kano as people troop out to exercise their franchise.

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The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that voters, especially in parts of Municipal and Nasarawa Local Government Areas thronged their polling units as early as 7 a.m.

The election personnel and materials also arrived as early as 8 a.m. to various polling centres especially at the Emir's Palace, Kwalli Police Station, School For Arabic Studies and the Old Kano State Library.

Other polling units that witnessed the development were those located in Gidan Makama Primary School, Unguwar Gini Comprehensive Health Centre, Magwan Primary School and Government Junior Secondary School, Race Course.

Similarly, security was tight in all the areas visited with military personnel, the Police, Civil Defence, FRSC and other operatives manning major streets and screening people as they approached the polling stations. There was also compliance to the order restricting movement of unauthorized vehicles in the city with the streets virtually deserted.

Shops, shopping malls, restaurants and other places of human endeavour remained closed in compliance with the police order.

NAN also observed that voter turnout was impressive as people came out early to cast their votes under a conducive atmosphere. (NAN)

10:55am

#### Large Turnout of Voters in Mafa, Zulum's Hometown

There is large turnout of voters in Mafa, hometown of Gov. Babagana Zulum of Borno, as accreditation and voting in the March 18 governorship/state assembly elections start.

Mafa is the headquarters of Mafa Local Government Area of Borno, about 35km from Maiduguri.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent monitoring the exercise in Mafa, reports that accreditation and voting started on time in most polling units in the town.

Some of the voters who spoke to NAN said the turnout was unprecedented compared to the last election because of improved mobilisation.

Bulama Abubakar, said after casting his vote that "we trooped out to cast our votes in support of our son, Prof. Zulum because he is seeking reelection."

He commended the early arrival of officials and election materials at many polling units in the town which he said was a big improvement to the Feb. 25 presidential and National Assembly elections.

Also, Aisha Modu and Mustafa Lawan, said the large turnout was in solidarity for their son.

NAN correspondent who also monitored the exercise in Jere Local Government Area, however, reports that many voters were still waiting for arrival of officials and materials in some polling units in the area.

"It is already 9.30 a.m. but we are still waiting for the officials to come," said Abubakar Ibrahim, a voter at a polling unit in Mairi ward of Jere LGA. (NAN)

10:49am

#### Police Arrest Armed Thugs in Anambra

#### David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The Anambra State Police Command has arrested five persons suspected to be thugs, mobilized to disrupt elections in the state.

According to a short text message from the command's spokesperson, DSP Toochukwu Ikenga, the men were arrested in Ihiala, with four pump action rifles recovered from them.

Ikenga said: "Five armed thugs were arrested in Ihiala and four pump actions recovered."

CP Aderemi Adeoye, who is heading the command's personnel on election duty, was also quoted to have said that thuggery will not be allowed during the election.

10:09am

Go Out and Vote, Adeleke Calls on Osun Residents

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

The Governor of Osun State, Senator Ademola Adeleke, has called on residents of the state to go out and cast their vote, assuring them of safety and security.

Speaking early Saturday morning at his country home in Ede, the governor said:

"You are still at home? Come out now and use your PVC as a democrat. It is safe outside. Exercise your right to vote and be voted for.

"Don't be scared to abandon your right to vote. Security agencies are in top form to ensure that your vote and my vote count. I have issued relevant directives to service commanders to secure lives and properties as we all vote today.

"I need you good people of Osun State to vote massively. If you love democracy and good governance, stand up now and face your polling units."

10:03am

High Turn-out of Voters in Osogbo Metropolis

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

There is high turn-out of voters in the governorship and state Assembly elections in Osogbo metropolis in Osun State, while security personnel are also present to maintain law and order.

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state, Musbaudeed Ayodele Kusamotu, who spoke with THISDAY, urged the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure free and fair polls.

He advised voters to be mature in the course of the exercise and avoid trouble.

Voting is already in progress in some wards with security personnel on ground to provide adequate security for voters.

Some of the wards visited are wards 3 unit 8 in Osogbo Local Government, wards 3 unit 3 Agana in Olorunda Local Government, Ward 1 Ataoja A, unit, polling unit 3 and ward 4 Fagbewesa, Osogbo.

9:42am

Low Turnout of Voters in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

There is a low turnout of voters in Anambra State in 5oday Assembly election, compared to the large number of people that thronged polling centres for the Presidential election three weeks ago.

Polling centres visited in Awka, the state capital, showed near empty units as staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, sat idly.

At Aroma junction 1, polling unit 008, Awka South Local Government Area, as at 9:20pm, only six persons had been able to vote, despite the commencement of voting at 8:30am, and the swiftness of the BVAS machines.

A voter, Mrs Chika Ndu told our correspondent that: "People are not coming out because they feel their votes may not count because of what happened last three weeks.

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"It will take a level of enlightenment for people to accept to come out, because they believe their votes will not count.

"I cannot believe that this same place where I found it difficult to cast my vote last three weeks, I can just come in and in less than three minutes, I had cast my vote."

Another respondent, a journalist, Mr Damian Egwuonwu, said: "I think it is early, people will still come out."

9:35am

Polling Units Open Early in Minna

\* Agents absent in centres visited

\* Poor voter turnout

Laleye Dipo in Minna

Officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC opened the various polling units in Minna the Niger state as early as 8am.

However party agents were absent at the polling units visited as at 8:45am, resulting in polling not commencing.

At Umoru Audi primary school, polling officials arrived at 8am to set up for the election with only about 10 voters around.

All party agents were absent at the unit, so polling could not start .

"We are waiting for the agents, even if we have one agent we will start, Aliyu, a polling official said.

In other areas, polling started at 8.30am but with few voters on the queue.

THISDAY observed non compliance with restriction of movements ordered by the police.

9:31am

Voting Commences in Anambra

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Voting has started in Anambra State for the House of Assembly elections.

Polling centres visited by THISDAY within Awka, the state capital showed that as early as 8:30am, most of the centres visited had started voting.

The state Resident Electoral Commissioner Mrs Elizabeth Agwu had in a press conference on Friday said that the commission was ready, and that voting would start early.

Observation also showed that the BVAS had been very swift in capturing voters.

8:47am

Accreditation, Voting Commence in Sokoto

By Onuminya Innocent In Sokoto

Voters in Sokoto State came out as early as 6am in to queue at polling units as they awaited the arrival of electoral officials.

Accreditation and voting commenced at 8am

at Gwiwa extension, behind Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, College of Administration .

A voter Murtala Yakubu told our correspondent that he was eager to elect who will pilot the affairs of the state for the next four years.

8:42am

#### INEC Disowns Fake ID for Security Personnel on Election Duty

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has distanced itself from a fake identify card for security personnel on election duty.

The commission did this in a statement by its National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, in Abuja.

Okoye said INEC's attention had been drawn to an identity card for security personnel bearing the name and logo of the Commission with the inscription "Complete Access" boldly written in red at the bottom of it.

"We wish to state categorically that the identity card did not emanate from the Commission. Identity cards for security personnel on election duty were issued by the security agencies and not the Commission.

"Anyone bearing an identity card allegedly issued by the Commission for security personnel can only be on illegal duty. Such a person is liable to arrest and prosecution.

"The public is alerted to this diabolical action of some misdirected elements and to report any such person to the security agencies," Okoye said.(NAN)

7:03am

#### Tension As 28 States Elect Governors

- Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Oyo, Sokoto, Delta, Rivers, Benue, Plateau are battle grounds
- 993 state assembly seats also to be filled today
- INEC promises uploading of results from polling units to Result Viewing Portal real time

Ahamefule Ogbu

Voters in 28 states across Nigeria will today file out to elect governors who will run their affairs for the next four years, effective May 29.

There will also be voting into 993 state assembly seats across the 36 states of the federation in this rescheduled governorship and state houses of assembly elections.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), after a slipshod performance at the Presidential and National Assembly elections on February 25, largely due to failure to transmit and collate results electronically as assured, promised an improved performance today.

INEC's Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu vowed that today's polls will be free and fair.

Yakubu urged parties and candidates to speak to their agents and supporters to see the elections as a contest and not war and to "refrain from acts of violence that may mar the elections or compromise the security of our personnel, observers, the media and service providers."

By yesterday morning, INEC had concluded the distribution of sensitive materials for the governorship and house of assembly elections to all the wards.

### INEC Promises to Upload Results Real Time

Yesterday, INEC gave an insight into how polling unit results will be transmitted during today's governorship elections.

The Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee of INEC, Festus Okoye, while speaking on Arise News said "the law as of today prescribes a dual mode of either transmission of results or transfer of results."

He said when polls closed at the level of the various units, the Presiding Officer who superintended the polling unit would enter the scores of the various political parties in form EC8A which is the polling unit level result.

"The PO will sign that particular result sheet and stamp it, the PU agent or party agent if available will also countersign and copies will be given to them and the police.

"That original result is what will be scanned and uploaded to our INEC Result Viewing Portal for public viewing. Not only that, the accreditation data that has arisen from that polling unit will also be uploaded, but the physical result and the BVAS itself will also be taken to the Registration Area Collation centre," said Okoye.

According to him, the Collation Officer will have the benefit of seeing the original results and the BVAS itself and have the benefit of looking at the accreditation data as transmitted, and the result sheet as transmitted from the polling unit.

"That is the dual mode which the law has prescribed for the commission and that is the mode that we're going to use for the purpose of this election," said Okoye.

Speaking on real-time IREV delivery on Saturday, Okoye said results would be transmitted as soon as the polls closed from various polling units.

"The commission is determined to improve on its previous performance. What we have done is to learn valuable lessons from previous elections that we conducted, and we're going to put those lessons into our planning purposes and processes, and into our deployment purposes," Okoye said.

On INEC's readiness, he said, "In all the states of the federation, both the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System machines and all the sensitive election materials have left the Central Bank and the various state offices of the federation.

"We want to ensure that all polling units open on time. Secondly, we made sure that we reconfigured all the BVAS that will be used for this particular election in terms of making sure that the BVAS perform optimally and also making sure that some of the challenges we had in the previous elections do not reoccur."

### Police Pledge Tight Security

The Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba, is deploying over 400,000 officers and men for today's operation.

Baba, who urged voters to come out and vote without fear, promised tight security.

He has also ordered the restriction of all forms of vehicular movement on roads, waterways, and other forms of transportation, from 12 am to 6 pm on Saturday in all states where elections will be conducted.

Baba said those on essential services such as officials of INEC, electoral observers, accredited media and observers, ambulances responding to medical emergencies, firefighters, amongst others are exempted from the restriction.

He noted that the directive excludes the Federal Capital Territory, as no election is being conducted therein.

The IGP reiterated the ban on all security aides to VIPs and escorts from accompanying their principals and politicians to polling booths and collation centres during the election.

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State-established and owned security outfits/organizations, quasi-security units, and privately-owned guard and security outfits are also barred from participating in election security management.

The IGP has also extended additional human and logistic support to police commands and formations across the country for effective election security management today.

The additional support includes the deployment of personnel, operational vehicles, non-lethal weapons, personal protective equipment (body armour), and anti-riot equipment among others.

### Gubernatorial Battlegrounds

#### Abia State

It's a three-horse race in God's own State. Incumbent Governor Okezie Ikpeazu of the PDP is pushing for his former Chief of Staff, Okey Ahiwe to succeed him.

This appears to be in danger because of Ikpeazu's poor performance in the last eight years.

The bad situation is at a boiling point in this state. Teachers and civil servants are owed backlog of salaries, pensioners not paid, tertiary institutions losing accreditation, and all forms of development arrested, while political office holders and their families flourish.

This anger of the masses has already claimed the ambition of the Ikpeazu who desired to retire to the Senate but was trounced at the polls.

The PDP has Alex Otti of the LP and Ikechi Emmenike of the APC to contend with. The LP has upset the apple cart in several states and Otti who is riding the crest of the euphoria appears set to clinch the prize in Abia State. Emmenike of the APC will no doubt give him a good fight. It's too close to call here.

#### Enugu State

The state parades an array of strong contestants with front runners being Peter Mbah of PDP, Chijioke Edeoga of Labour Party and Frank Nweke of APGA.

Mbah enjoys a broad spectrum of support from political bigwigs in the state and with the state treasury at his disposal, being the candidate of the sitting governor and the state being a PDP state for long, Mbah who also parades a personal war chest will give a good fight.

However, Edeoga of the Labour Party might ride on the back of the tsunami sweeping through the political space, added to the sympathy of having their senatorial candidate murdered, to clinch the coveted seat, especially as the Labour Party is wearing the messianic toga now.

Frank Nweke, who even some "Obidients" favour because of his past records, is also a strong contender which also makes the state a battleground, especially as the state is known for its violent disposition of some old politicians. Allegations of arms stockpiling is already rife and it will be a tough fight between PDP struggling to retain the state and LP/APGA bent on wresting it from them.

#### Kano State

This is an APC state with a gladiator in the person of Rabiu Kwankwaso that has moved to the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of APC, though none of them is on the ballot.

While Kwankwaso who swept the presidential ballot in Kano is supporting Abba Yusuf, Ganduje is backing Yusuf Gawuna.

The candidates of the governor and Kwankwaso are not only contesting but there is an ego war of who has the bragging rights over the state. Kano State is too close to call. The prize can go either way.

### Benue State

There is a marked departure from the past as a Catholic Priest, Father Hyacinth Alia, contesting under the APC, survived all intrigues to hold on to the ticket, while Herman Hembe latching on to the Labour Party's acceptance to struggle to be elected governor to succeed Samuel Ortom, one of the G5 governors that bloodied the nose of their party over power shift to the South.

Ortom, who lost his senatorial election, would strive to ensure his candidate of the PDP, Titus Uba wins, so there won't be a double loss of his seat and that of his successor. Allegations of arming youths to steal mandates are rife in Benue. It's a three-horse race here and too close to call.

### Ebonyi State

Since Governor Dave Umahi moved over to the APC on account of complaints of inequity in PDP, Ebonyi was suddenly racked by spates of violence and the governor is one to ram through his wish on issues of interest.

So, it is expected that he may, against all odds, do everything he can to deliver Mr. Francis Nwifuru to succeed him.

Umahi however has Chief Francis Odii of the PDP to contend with in a predominantly PDP State before Umahi jumped ship.

On the shadows to spring surprises might be Labour Party's candidate, Chief Edward Nkwegu who is riding on the back of Peter Obi and his Obidients. As usual, violence will make or mar the outcome of the contest. Nwifuru of the APC may pick this ticket.

### Rivers State

Old rivalries have been rekindled as former governor Rotimi Amaechi and incumbent Governor Nyesom Wike have squared up again with their support for candidates of their parties and brickbats are flying, often leaving issues to attack personalities.

Wike is pushing Similaye Fubara for his party, PDP, which he had campaigned vigorously against in the presidential election over the sharing of party positions, while Amaechi came back in full force leading the campaigns for APC, which fortune had dwindled with exit of many members over choice of candidates, with his candidate, Tonye Cole.

The presidential election saw a lot of violence when their direct interests were not at stake, and this signposts what will happen today. Candidates were attacked with dynamites and guns during campaigns so worse would be expected today as Wike will struggle to break the jinx of Rivers State governors not being able to determine their successors.

Senator Magnus Abe of Social Democratic Party (SDP) is also in the race and can make the contest to go anywhere.

### Oyo State

It is going to be a straight battle between incumbent Seyi Makinde of PDP and Teslim Folarin of APC.

Makinde, being a G5 member that dared the party, is not enjoying the backing of some of Oyo PDP big wigs.

Even with being an incumbent, with some of the parties collapsing their structure for him, Makinde still does not have that edge. Folarin is looking good for the Oyo State governorship.

### Plateau State

With Governor Simon Lalong's failure to grab his senatorial seat, his quest to determine who takes over from him has become a serious agenda.

## Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

So far, his candidate, Dr. Nantwe Yilwada of the APC has Caleb Muftwang of PDP and Yohanna Margif of Labour Party to slug it out with, given their performances during the presidential elections. Margif has been bogged down by court orders which were cleared a few days ago.

With the backing of the incumbent governor, APC will strive to retain the state which has been a core PDP state till Lalong took it to APC.

Also, the general acceptance of the Labour Party in Plateau and the performance of its presidential candidate in the last election may throw up some upsets in favour of the Labour Party. Muftwang looks determined to return Plateau to the PDP. But anything can still happen in Plateau State today.

#### Lagos State

The loss of Lagos by the APC to little known LP in the Presidential election threw up a gamut of variables which sent strategists hurrying back to the drawing board.

Whereas Lagos was seen as tug of war between the APC and their usual PDP, what could be a rib excised from PDP ended up causing an upset that has made the poster boy of Lagos, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to start losing sleep due to the possibility of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the LP upstaging him.

This factor has seen a flurry of activities in churches, football stunts and visits to places that ordinarily would not be contemplated.

Later statements by Rhodes-Vivour that he was going to open the account books of Lagos for people to see how funds of the state had been applied will definitely lead to a do or die contest. Moreso, when it comes with the threat that may smear reputations. The heat is already on in the state with threats of Oro cult and warnings to non-Yorubas not to rock the boat.

#### Delta State

As for Delta State, apart from being the sitting Governor, Ifeanyi Okowa was also Atiku's running mate, and the least expected from him was to deliver maximum votes in the Presidential election. However, he managed to garner 161,600 votes, trailing the LP by a distance.

Okowa will be fighting today to take his preferred candidate, Sheriff Oborevwori, to the Delta State Government House, Asaba.

Apart from the rising popularity of the Labour Party, Okowa also has the candidate of the APC and Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege to contend with.

With PDP chieftains, including the former governor of the state, James Ibori, and Senator James Manager both working at cross purposes with the Okowa administration, it would be interesting to see which of the parties have the last laugh today. It's a three-horse here.

#### Sokoto State

Governor Aminu Tambuwal of Sokoto State may have won the North-west state for Atiku and his PDP in the February 25 presidential election. Yet, a dark cloud of uncertainty hangs over the governorship election. Today's voting will be a keenly contested poll between Saidu Umar of the PDP and the APC's Ahmad Aliyu. The race is too close to call in Sokoto State.

#### Kaduna State

In Kaduna State, Governor Nasir el-rufai will require a miracle to determine his successor.

Live Updates: Governorship/Assembly Elections 2023

El-rufai and the APC were badly trounced in the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections by the PDP, making today's election a tough one for his favoured Ubah Sani. Isah Ashiru of the PDP will give el-rufai's man a good run for his money. Victory can go either way. The race is too close to call in Kaduna State.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

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## Top military arrests stun Nigerians

Guardian Weekly

December 22, 1999

Copyright 1999 Guardian Publication, Ltd.

**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 558 words

**Byline:** Rotimi Sankore in Lagos

**Highlight:** Case of murdered journalist heads list of allegations against former army regimes

### **Body**

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Nigerians have been stunned by the arrest and trial of some of the most influential army and police officers of the past two military regimes, including army generals who until this month had been thought completely untouchable. They are facing trials for crimes allegedly committed over the past 13 years during the regimes of generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha.

Some of their more junior alleged accomplices have agreed to testify against them about crimes for which pro-democracy activists were falsely accused and incarcerated, or which the police had claimed could not be solved.

The most celebrated case is that of the murder of Dele Giwa, one of Nigeria's finest journalists, who was killed by a parcel bomb delivered by a military dispatch rider on October 19, 1986.

At the time of the murder, Giwa -- then editor in chief of Nigeria's investigative weekly Newswatch -- was believed to have been working on a story alleging a link between Gen Babangida, his wife Maryam, senior officers and a drug-smuggling cartel.

Abacha's chief security officer, Major Hamza Al Mustapha, is expected to face trial as part of the team alleged to have arranged Giwa's murder. He already faces trial for the murder of leading political activists, including the wife of the late Moshood Abiola, who was jailed for declaring himself president-elect after an election in which he was leading was annulled by the army.

Also expected to stand in the dock are Brigadier General Akilu, former head of the DMI military intelligence force, and Colonel Tunde Togun, deputy director of the state security service SSS. Both have been arrested. They both interrogated Giwa about his investigation only a week before he was killed.

The trial will open a can of worms that could lead to the trial of Gen Babangida. This would be difficult for the current government of General Olusegun Obasanjo as Gen Babangida is close to allies of Gen Obasanjo.

After the then government's reluctance to investigate Giwa's death, Gani Fawehinmi, Nigeria's leading human rights lawyer, began a private prosecution of Gen Babangida, Gen Akilu and Col Togun. The police later took over

## Top military arrests stun Nigerians

the inquiry but claimed to have no evidence or motives and a judge struck out the case. Mr Fawehinmi insists that Gen Babangida must be tried as "he is the chief culprit and co-conspirator and mastermind of Giwa's murder."

Nigeria's human rights commission announced last week that it had completed categorising more than 10,000 petitions and reports from the public, alleging torture, assassination, murder and wrongful imprisonment.

It is clear, however, that Gen Babangida and his former security chiefs will fight the process every step of the way. Under Nigerian law the penalty for murder is death.

Apart from those who have been arrested and are being interrogated pending possible trial, prominent people currently facing trial for murder and conspiracy to commit murder include Mohammed Abacha, the late dictator's son; General Isahya Bamaiyi, Abacha's chief of army staff; Ibrahim Coomaasie, Abacha's former police chief; and Brigadier General Ibrahim Sabo, his director of military intelligence. Colonel Ibrahim Yakassi, Abacha's former physician (known to prisoners as Dr Death) also faces prosecution.

Nigeria's current minister of defence, Theophilus Danjuma, has supported the trials.

## Graphic

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Picture, Mohammed Abacha, son of former dictator Sani Abacha, on his way to court. He is accused of conspiring to murder the wife of the late Mashood Abiola

**Load-Date:** December 28, 1999

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## **The first citizen of journalism Dele Olojede regards politics as a blood sport**

Financial Times (London, England)

May 16, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 The Financial Times Limited

**Section:** FT REPORT - NIGERIA; Pg. 3

**Length:** 483 words

**Byline:** By DINO MAHTANI

### **Body**

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Although the country of writers such as Chinua Achebe, Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka and Booker prize winner Ben Okri, Nigeria has few journalists of international acclaim.

**Dele** Olojede is an exception. The 45-year-old is the first African journalist to win a Pulitzer Prize - in his case, for his "fresh, haunting look at Rwanda" 10 years after the genocide.

His award is as much a victory for African journalism as it is a vindication of the investigative reporting on which he built his reputation during his former years as a reporter in Nigeria. Unlike many journalists in Nigeria who chose to defer to wealthy politicians or senior editors with political leanings, Mr Olojede was scrupulous and uncompromising.

He left his first newspaper, the Concorde, two years after joining it when he sensed its objectivity was at risk of suffering from the political ambitions of owner Moshood Abiola. Mr Abiola went on to win presidential elections though they were annulled by the military government of Ibrahim Babangida in 1993. He was imprisoned by the junta and died a few years later.

After leaving the Concorde, Mr Olojede co-founded Newswatch magazine where, in his most celebrated piece of journalism in Nigeria, he secured the release from prison of Fela Kuti, the polemical jazz superstar, incarcerated on a trumped up currency trading charge.

In 1986 after **Dele Giwa**, the editor of Newswatch, was killed by a letter bomb, Mr Olojede drafted a press statement accusing Mr Babangida of perpetrating the crime. He then left Nigeria and later joined Newsday in New York as a reporter. He worked as a correspondent in Asia and Africa and as a news editor before leaving in 2004.

Based in South Africa, Mr Olojede is no less compromising when talking about Nigerian politics but now he also bewails the state of the media in his native country. "You don't see the ordinary Nigerian in the press. It's not as if they exist or are even worth chronicling. The Nigeria media is too often a dialogue of the elites," he says.

In spite of greater press freedom since the end of military rule in 1999, the media is often subject to the corrupting influence of patronage by political figures and businessmen.

The first citizen of journalism Dele Olojede regards politics as a blood sport

In one example, two national dailies published full page advertisements paid for by prominent businessmen in favour of an extended tenure for the president.

"That was one of the most embarrassing displays of crassness," says Mr Olojede, referring to one of the publications. "The paper chose to sell its face, its identity."

Nigeria's press has been able to criticise the government and politicians in the last few years though it occasionally incurs the wrath of the authorities.

Mr Olojede saves his most damning indictment for the government.

"Politics is a blood sport in Nigeria and government is seen as the quickest route to wealth," he says. "Nigeria is showing every sign of becoming what Congo became."

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2006

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## **Confab: Ighure, Dokpesi make case for journalists**

PM News

June 6, 2014 Friday

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**Length:** 568 words

### **Body**

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Delegates representing the media at the National Conference on Thursday in Abuja called for the protection of journalists and media organisations in order to carry out their constitutional responsibility.

The delegates, while making contributions on the state of the media, said such protection was necessary for the media to effectively monitor governance on behalf of the people.

Isaac Ighure, representing the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), called for the amendment of Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution to protect journalists.

The media is the only professional group that is recognised by the 1999 Constitution, and this gives us a very huge responsibility to hold our leaders accountable and that includes those of us here.

Chief Raymond Dokpesi

These cameramen and the reporters here are watching us and they are reporting every word we say.

Yes, we have been given a responsibility, but there is no protection. We have been sent into the jungle to hunt down the lion without any arms or any form of ammunition.

We are reporting from Sambisa forest. We are everywhere. That is why we need to be protected.

That is why we are asking this august gathering to ensure that Section 22 of the Constitution, which gives us that responsibility, is amended to protect us.

When this Conference started, there were delegates here who wanted the cameramen moved out. But others said 'no' and stood their ground," he said.

Ighure, who is also the Executive Director, Editorial Operations, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said the media's presence had helped a lot.

That is why we now have fewer people sleeping on duty.

ut in the midst of this, a **journalist** covering this conference, Iheanacho Nwosu of Sunday Sun, was harassed by security men for doing his job. He was detained."

### Confab: Ighure, Dokpesi make case for journalists

He recalled that the likes of **Dele Giwa**, Bayo Ohu, Godwin Agbroko, Tayo Awotunsin, and Kris Imodibie paid their lives in their attempts to serve the public red-hot news on television, radio and newspaper".

Ighure also called for improved welfare for journalists, saying media workers were grossly underpaid.

Chief Raymond Dokpesi, representing Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON), regretted the difficult conditions under which private broadcast stations operated.

AIT and TVC have been transmitting your (National Conference delegates') sitting here free of charge.

This is a public service responsibility which they are doing, just like every other government station.

We are saying simply that in a dual broadcasting provision, make provisions for public existence and private existence. That is the situation all over the world," he said.

Dokpesi, who owns Daar Communications, also expressed concern that some private broadcast stations might not be able to meet the deadline for transition from analogue to digital transmission in 2015.

He said the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) had warned Nigeria and the rest of the world 10 years ago that analogue broadcasting would stop by 17 June 2015.

Dokpesi noted that private stations paid N1 billion as fees for a national network licence while government-owned stations paid no fee.

They said the Federal Government stations are doing public service. But, I don't know what we can call the service we (AIT) are providing here.

The coverage of the Presidency and all the other activities are also on the same basis. So, there is no level-playing ground, no equity, no justice," he said.

**Load-Date:** June 6, 2014

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## Where is Aliyu Isma'il Gwarzo?

Sunday Trust

May 7, 2017 Sunday

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Length: 809 words

### **Body**

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Aliyu Isma'il Gwarzo, a former National Security Adviser, has been silent since the demise of former military Head of State, General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998.

Gwarzo was always in the news during the reign of former heads of state, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the late General Sani Abacha and former interim President Ernest Shonekan.

The retired Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG) served under the three presidents in different capacities, before and after his retirement. He served under Babangida as police commissioner before he became AIG. After he retired, he was appointed the first Director-General of the State Security Service (SSS) in June 1986.

He dominated the media in October same year after the brutal murder of the late Dele Giwa, an editor-in-chief of the defunct Newswatch magazine, on October 19, 1986.

The retired police spy was the director-general of the SSS when Giwa was murdered. He was accused of having hand in the murder of the late journalist, as two operatives of the service were accused of presenting the late Giwa with a parcel bomb that eventually led to his death.

In the 90s, the retired police AIG was appointed the National Security Adviser to the former interim President Shonekan and later to the late General Abacha respectively. A close friend to the late Abacha and Galadimain Kano, Alhaji Tijjani Hashim, the former intelligence officer took office as the NSA to Shonekan in August 1993. He retained the position till 1998 when Abacha died.

But shortly after the demise of Abacha, Gwarzo found himself in trouble with the government in respect of financial mismanagement to the tune of \$2.45 billion. As a result of that, Abacha's successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar (retired) placed Gwarzo on house arrest for three months before he was freed. But he was later arrested in connection with the missing funds.

After his release from detention, he returned to Gwarzo and was warmly received by his people, a family source told Daily Trust on Sunday. According to the source, this might not be unconnected with the generosity Gwarzo had shown to his people while in government.

'Gwarzo has a very good relationship with his people. He has never abandoned them. Despite the nature of his job, he made it a duty to spend at least three days in Gwarzo town every week. He would come on Thursday and leave on Sunday every week. This greatly help in building a good relationship between him and the people of Gwarzo.'

### Where is Aliyu Isma'il Gwarzo?

'You know the locals always cherish and love whoever lives the way they live. If you endure to live with them I am sure they will love you. Gwarzo has done that, and that is why his people always love him,' he said.

Again, sometime in 1999, precisely after the return of democracy, former President Olusegun Obasanjo issued an informal injunction restricting Gwarzo to his hometown. He was detained under house arrest for 18 months with no charges against him.

Later, the Federal Government freed him, and since then he has not been arrested again. But despite lifting the house arrest on him, it was very rare to see Gwarzo in public events such as burial, wedding and naming ceremonies even though he lives in a local community.

Born and brought up in Gwarzo town, Gwarzo Local Government Area of Kano State, the former police spy attended Gwarzo Primary School and later Barewa College before he finally joined the Nigeria Police Force, an organisation he served in various capacities.

Sama'il Gwarzo, as he was popularly known, worked in various states, including Lagos, Borno, Rivers and Kaduna as a police officer, rising through the ranks before his retirement.

Our correspondent gathered that after he retired, he relocated to Gwarzo and ventured into farming, and has spent most of his time in his residence, receiving visitors from within and outside the town.

He contributed immensely to the development of Gwarzo town and its people. He used his influence to secure jobs for many youths in the area into the police, immigration, army, customs and other public organisations, a source close to him told Daily Trust on Sunday.

According to the source, though the former AIG mingles with local politicians in Gwazo town, he has never interfered in Kano politics. And he has not sponsored any politician to contest for any seat, either locally, state or federal levels.

'Oga has never sponsored a politician to contest for any political office. In fact, he did not include politics in his agenda, not to talk of sponsoring others to contest for positions. To the best of my knowledge, even his children are not participating in politics, at least for now. I don't know what will happen in the future,' the source said.

Gwarzo has two wives and 16 children. Despite his age, he is still energetic with sharp memory. He is currently battling with two sicknesses: diabetes and hypertension.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2017

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## **Nigeria enforces press clampdown**

The Independent (London)

April 18, 1992, Saturday

Copyright 1992 Independent Print Ltd

**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS PAGE; Page 15

**Length:** 472 words

**Byline:** From KARL MAIER in Lagos

### **Body**

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ARMED POLICEMEN have occupied National Concord's press complex this week following the military government's decision to shut down one of Nigeria's leading media houses, alleging it was threatening national security.

The closure took place on 9 April, when police ordered Concord employees off the premises. At the time, National Concord's owner, the multi-millionaire Chief Moshood Abiola, was in the capital, Abuja, attending a state banquet in honour of the South African President, F W de Klerk.

Chief Abiola has urged President Ibrahim Babangida to revoke closure immediately. He pledged that "whatever might have caused them to take the action will be carefully looked into".

The Information Minister, Sam Oyovbaire, justified the action by alleging that "there is sufficient evidence available to the government that the Concord group had begun to undermine national security". Human rights activists filed a suit at the High Court seeking an immediate reopening of the Concord offices.

Journalists at Concord and other publications believed the government was angered by critical reports carried in the weekly magazine The African Concord. "One reason the government has applied the sledge-hammer has been the unrest in the air," said Sully Abu, editor-in-chief of the independent weekly, The African Guardian. "When governments are in trouble, they try to muzzle the press."

The Guardian was closed last year because of its coverage of student demonstrations in which two students were killed. A court action brought by human rights groups resulted in an interim injunction restraining the police from closing any media in Lagos. Thus, the police action, human rights groups said, was illegal.

" It represents an absolute disregard for the rule of law and judicial authority," said Clement Nwankwo, executive director of the Constitutional Rights Project. The Lagos chapter of the National Union of Journalists called the action "an act of brigandage".

The press in Nigeria, comprising at least 30 newspapers and 50 magazines, provides a kaleidoscope of opinion and is regarded as the freest in Africa. Concord - which publishes a daily and Sunday paper as well as The African Concord magazine - was founded in 1980 by Chief Abiola.

## Nigeria enforces press clampdown

However, journalists have often suffered detention or worse for their reporting, and many say that self-censorship on issues such as religious unrest and official corruption is common. And in 1986, a prominent journalist, Dele Giwa, editor of Newswatch magazine, was assassinated by a bomb. His killers have never been found.

Still, the Press maintains a vigour unmatched in most of the rest of the continent. "The complexity of the country makes it difficult to box the press in," Mr Abu said. "The government can try to muzzle the press, but the press always wins in the end."

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## Omisore's thoughtful thoughts

Nigerian Tribune

April 5, 2015 Sunday

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Length: 650 words

### **Body**

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A review of Ipoola Ahmed Omisore's Thoughtful and Thoughtless Thoughts by Adedeji Badejo.

THOUGHTFUL and Thoughtless Thoughts by Ipoola Ahmed Omisore, a member of the Lagos state House of Assembly is a book based on his 'thoughts' on contemporary Nigerian issues and politics. It includes an account of his stewardship, marital life lessons, Yoruba and family history, general tips and wise sayings. The contents are from his daily social media posts from 2010 to 2015.

Divided into five sections and 14 chapters, section three deals largely with marriage in the context of weakening family values arising primarily from crises in the society. The author dwells on the vagaries and challenges of marital life, family, love and sex. He emphasises home building, the age-long rivalry between mothers and wives and the importance of love in marriage (in actual fact, he encourages men not to give 100% love to their wives, suggesting 90% while the remaining 10% should be tied to the success of the marriage).

As a politician of the progressive hue, he eulogizes his leader and former governor of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a man with a lion's heart who bestrides the country's political space like a colossus. To him, Tinubu is a master planner, a phenomenon and a generous personality.

From pages 79-87, the author gives account of his stewardship including the empowerment of 350 women and 250 youths in Ojokoro, free pre-WASCE lectures, 200 free medicated eye glasses, free exercise books, youth football challenge and his visit to Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) to settle the medical bill of a patient abandoned by his family and friends after an accident. He also defends his membership of the House of Assembly at 66 with a biblical proclamation! Omisore also refers to an incident that almost made him quit the social media when someone called him a clown.

One very important aspect of this book is the author's unwavering belief in the indivisibility of the country. He looks at issues troubling Nigeria including dashed hopes, religious intolerance, insurgency in the northeast, petroleum subsidy removal, the crave for private jets by Nigeria's bigwigs, poor state of infrastructure, and graduate unemployment. But he does not only highlight the issues, he offers workable solutions. Interestingly, the author also mentions the late **Dele Giwa**, the renowned **journalist** killed by a letter bomb in 1986, saying they both attended the same primary and secondary school in Ile Ife. They completed their secondary education in 1967, according to Omisore.

A whole section of the book (section 4) is devoted to Yoruba and Ile-Ife history. Omisore has his roots in Ile-Ife, and he gives a picture of his family history dating back to his earliest progenitors. Readers are taken on an historical

### Omisore's thoughtful thoughts

excursion from the First Republic to the present. Sir Adesoji Aderemi and great Ile-Ife indigenes including Chief Ajani Anibijuwon Omisore (the author's progenitor), Reverend Kayode (Femi Fani-Kayode's grandfather) Reverend Cole, R.A. Fani-Kayode, SAN, Chief Alex Duduyemi, Chief Ijiwoye, Chief Adeyera, and Barrister Michael Omisade are given prominence in this chapter.

Chapter 13 celebrates the author's immediate family, most especially his aged mother, wife and children, while the last section (15) is devoted to general tips and wise sayings about life and development by great political leaders, former presidents, the Bible and others. It is to serve as a guide for anyone aspiring to greater heights.

On the whole, this is a good book though the inclusion of feedback from his audience would have enriched the work. One must commend Omisore, 66, and indeed a grandfather, for his commitment in terms of time and energy to social media for five years and at odd hours (3am-6am). Most importantly, he deserves praise for bearing the insults associated with social media platforms.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2015

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## Nigeria: Time for action

Nigerian Tribune

April 17, 2017 Monday

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Length: 669 words

### **Body**

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THeRE are different political parties in the country accommodating politicians with the same habits. It is now obvious that lies, selfishness, corruption, heartlessness and other impious practices are the notorious characteristics of the politicians in the country. I did my research and findings have proven that it is a tradition and culture for our political leaders to be careless about any issue of development that could touch positively, the lives of the common people in the nation. My research findings have shown that our political leaders are always ready to do anything that can benefit their lives, and the lives of their families and their friends. The research also revealed that in the process of working on how to actualize their selfish plans, they can crush any human who seems to be standing in their way. If you want to stop them from taking public funds, they can crush you. If you want to expose them for enriching themselves with public funds, they can as well crush you. If you even cough when they are doing the act, you can be crushed. If you see them doing it, that is even enough reason to crush you. If you dare question them, they will not think twice before crushing you.

The late **Dele Giwa** was crushed when he wanted to expose one of them. Fela Anikulapo Kuti, a musician, was also crushed for exposing some of them in his songs. Many journalists and human right activists were equally crushed for standing in their way. Currently, a man called Ahmed Isa, popularly known as Ordinary President, is undergoing torture of different kinds by these same people because of the fact that he is standing firmly in their way. Isa is an investigative **journalist** and a radio presenter on Love Fm, 104.5 , Abuja.

They have said everything and don't know what to tell us again. Therefore, they keep repeating the same lies we were told in previous years. Nothing new is coming from their mouths; there is nothing different about them. They are still politicians, they are still indifferent, they are still corrupt, they are still selfish, they are still story tellers, they are still heartless, they are still vampires that suck our blood, make us dry and die. They are still diverting public funds meant for the execution of projects in our country for their narcissistic reasons. They are still using us as manure to grow. However, they are now thinking on how to package other convincing lies that can woo us to vote for them again in the next elections, they are holding meetings and making consultations that could help them actualize their plan of remaining in power and coming into power in the next elections. That's why we see them cross carpeting from one party to another and from another party to another party. In whose interest are they doing all that? For their selfish interests.

We have to let them know that we know their usual plans; we have to let them know that they are responsible for the killings of the innocent people by the Fulani herdsmen, Boko Haram and political louts. They should also know that they are responsible for the present economic recession, hunger, poverty, armed robbery, kidnapping and the drastic increase in prostitution across the country. We have known everything about them now; we are also meeting

Nigeria : Time for action

and consulting keenly on how to handle them, we will no longer tolerate their excesses. We are many but they are few, we will start deciding what happen and what doesn't happen. We are not going to be casualties of any war any more, we are going to replace them, let them take our positions and feel the pains we are experiencing now.

We are going to do everything possible to pull them down, we will fight for our future and the future of our younger ones, we are not going to sit back and watch any longer. We are going to be engaged and influence actions and decisions that could develop us and our society. It will no longer be a business as usual, we are going to confront threats, fears and even death. Enough is enough. We are no ready for them.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2017

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## At NIJ Convocation - Dokpesi Sues for Professionalism in Media

Vanguard (Lagos)

December 22, 2011 Thursday

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**Length:** 670 words

**Byline:** Dayo Adesulu And Ikenna Asomba

### **Body**

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Chairman, DAAR Communications Plc., High Chief Raymond Aleogho Dokpesi has charged the Nigerian media to imbibe professionalism in the sourcing and dissemination of its daily information for public consumption, saying this would further aid in the national unity and development of the nation.

Speaking at the 3rd convocation of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogbia, Lagos, held last Wednesday, in its campus, Dokpesi who was represented by Mr. Tony Akiotu, the Group Managing Director, DAAR Communications Plc., said for the media to continue to act as the 'watch dog' of the government and the society, it must eschew all forms of unethical and unprofessional practices in its reportage, culpable of tearing the nation apart.

Recalling the history of the Nigerian media from pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial era, military era until this present democratic dispensation, Dokpesi explained that the media has been able to withstand the test of time, even inspite of all the draconian decrees and laws used to gag it.

"This noble profession has been in the forefront of various struggles for national development in the country, since inception in 1859 to this present democratic dispensation. Infact, the ***journalist***, media cannot be wished away in the metamorphosis of development of our great nation.

He added, "Both the print and broadcast media have contributed immensely to the development of this nation, especially in the war against colonialism and imperialism, even in the war for true democratic governance in the nation, therefore, worthy of mentioning are icons like Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Herbert Macaulay, Ernest Ikoli, Dr. Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Babatunde Jose, Uncle Sam Amuka, Peter Enahoro, ***Dele Giwa***, Segun Osoba and a host of others".

Speaking further, the media boss affirmed that a ***journalist*** is a resourceful person, who through electronic or print medium disseminates factual and unbiased reportage to a large audience, stating that the media played a pivotal role in uniting the nation, shortly after the 1967-1970 civil war which engulfed the country, thus, making the nation return to the path of development.

Dokpesi harped that the media in its pivotal role in fostering national development over the years, has also held various Nigerian governments accountable to its people. "However, This is not without its own challenges", he said.

## At NIJ Convocation - Dokpesi Sues for Professionalism in Media

"Before the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill (FoIB), those in power never allowed the general public access to vital information, especially those not favourable to them in power.

"Now the bill has been passed into law, I implore the Nigerian media to at all cost imbibe professionalism in the sourcing and dissemination of information for public consumption, which will further ensure government is accountable to its people, adding, "the media should avoid every act of unprofessional and unethical reportage culpable of tearing the nation apart".

However, according to the Provost, Nigerian Institute of Journalism, NIJ, Ogbia, Dr. (Mrs.) Elizabeth Ikem, 677 graduates from two academic sessions were presented for convocation: National Diploma (289); Higher National Diploma (105); Post Graduate Diploma (174); Certificate in Effective Writing and Communication (85) and Certificate in Photo Journalism (24).

Meanwhile, she congratulated the graduands for their successes and charged them to go into the society and make necessary impact. Noting, "While we congratulate you on your graduation from the institution, we charge you to be good ambassadors of the Premier Monotechnic in Mass Communication in Nigeria".

High points of the event were conferment of Fellowship Awards to Mr. John Momoh, Founder/CEO, Channels Television; Mallam Wada Abdullahi Maida (OON), MD/CEO, Finlay Communications Ltd; Chairman/Editor-in-Chief, THISDAY Newspaper Group, Mr. Nduka Obaigbena; daughter of late M.K.O Abiola, Dr (Mrs.) Doyin Abiola; Alhaji Kabiru Yusuf, Chairman/CEO, Media Trust Limited and Mrs. Maiden Ibru, wife of Guardian Publisher, late Alex Ibru.

**Load-Date:** December 22, 2011

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## **National Conference - Ighure, Dokpesi Make Case for Journalists' Protection, Welfare**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

June 05, 2014

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**Length:** 600 words

### **Body**

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Delegates representing the media at the National Conference on Thursday in Abuja called for the protection of journalists and media organisations in order to carry out their constitutional responsibility.

The delegates, while making contributions on the state of the media, said such protection was necessary for the media to effectively monitor governance on behalf of the people.

Mr Isaac Ighure, representing the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), called for the amendment of Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution to protect journalists.

"The media is the only professional group that is recognised by the 1999 Constitution, and this gives us a very huge responsibility to hold our leaders accountable and that includes those of us here."

"These cameramen and the reporters here are watching us and they are reporting every word we say."

"Yes, we have been given a responsibility, but there is no protection. We have been sent into the jungle to hunt down the lion without any arms or any form of ammunition."

"We are reporting from Sambisa forest. We are everywhere. That is why we need to be protected."

"That is why we are asking this august gathering to ensure that Section 22 of the Constitution, which gives us that responsibility, is amended to protect us."

"When this Conference started, there were delegates here who wanted the cameramen moved out. But others said 'no' and stood their ground," he said.

Ighure, who is also the Executive Director, Editorial Operations, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said the media's presence had helped a lot.

"That is why we now have fewer people sleeping on duty."

"But in the midst of this, a **journalist** covering this conference, Iheanacho Nwosu of Sunday Sun, was harassed by securitymen for doing his job. He was detained."

## National Conference - Ighure, Dokpesi Make Case for Journalists' Protection, Welfare

The NGE General Secretary, recalled the story of Minere Amakiri, whose head was shaved with a broken bottle by a Military Administrator then, now a delegate at the conference.

He also recalled that the likes of **Dele Giwa**, Bayo Ohu, Godwin Agbroko, Tayo Awotunsin, and Kris Imodibie paid their lives in their attempts "to serve the public red-hot news on television, radio and newspaper".

Ighure also called for improved welfare for journalists, saying media workers were grossly underpaid.

Also speaking, Chief Raymond Dokpesi, representing Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON), regretted the difficult conditions under which private broadcast stations operated.

"AIT and TVC have been transmitting your (National Conference delegates') sitting here free of charge.

"This is a public service responsibility which they are doing, just like every other government station.

"We are saying simply that in a dual broadcasting provision, make provisions for public existence and private existence. That is the situation all over the world," he said.

Dokpesi, who owns Daar Communications, also expressed concern that some private broadcast stations might not be able to meet the deadline for transition from analogue to digital transmission in 2015.

He said the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) had warned Nigeria and the rest of the world 10 years ago that analogue broadcasting would stop by June 17, 2015.

Dokpesi also said private stations paid N1 billion as fees for a national network licence while government-owned stations did not pay.

"They said the Federal Government stations are doing public service. But, I don't know what we can call the service we (AIT) are providing here.

"The coverage of the Presidency and all the other activities are also on the same basis. So, there is no level-playing ground, no equity, no justice," he said.

**Load-Date:** June 6, 2014

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## **Shoddy investigation of violent deaths**

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 23, 2013 Saturday

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**Length:** 647 words

### **Body**

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The international human rights watchdog, Amnesty International, has again carpeted Nigeria over shoddy investigation of violent deaths in the country. In its recent report entitled: "Nigeria: No Justice for the Dead," Amnesty International observed that there are hundreds of killings by the Nigeria Police which were either never investigated or poorly investigated, giving rise to a situation where neither the dead nor their living relatives got justice at the end of the day.

The report also acknowledges that there is a medical practice in the country that makes doctors to sign death investigation reports of victims without bothering to either confirm what killed them or even seeing the corpses at all. Amnesty International which based most of its conclusions on a study of killings in Rivers State said that "basic techniques of crime scene protection and investigation are not applied and autopsies and inquests are either not carried out or are inadequate.

" The report decried the treatment of dead bodies at Braithwaite Memorial Specialist Hospital in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where dead bodies are merely dumped on the floor or even corridors of the mortuaries. According to the report, "in many cases, the identity of the deceased is not known to the police and bodies are registered as 'unknown' while little effort is made by police to identify them." Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Africa, Lucy Freeman, said: "to have one of your friends or family members killed by the authorities causes terrible anguish, but never to find out the truth of what actually happened to them causes a particular agony for relatives of the victims.

" The body points out that "many of the victims killed by the police each year may have been unlawfully killed, including in what constitutes extra-judicial executions." What Amnesty International has said on poor investigation of murder cases in Nigeria is a further confirmation of what most Nigerians already know about the situation. It is, indeed, sad and shameful that the security agencies, especially the police, have proved incapable of investigating violent deaths in Nigeria.

## Shoddy investigation of violent deaths

Victims of such deaths still crying for justice include frontline journalist, Dele Giwa, former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, industrialist, Alfred Rewane, Engr Funso Williams, Chief Harry Marshal and others too numerous to mention. Despite many promises by the government and the police authorities that they will open and probe all unresolved murders, nothing has so far shown that they are serious on the matter. Rather more Nigerians are still being killed in questionable circumstances. The most recent being the bizarre discovery of about 40 floating male corpses on Ezu River in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. We, therefore, call on the police authorities and those in charge of the judiciary to do something about shoddy investigation of violent deaths in the country.

The Nigerian authorities should not wait for rights group such as Amnesty International to remind them of the need to properly investigate murder cases. Sweeping such matters under the carpet as it is the usual practice in this part of the world is not helpful. Besides being a neglect of the victims of such crimes against the state, it is an indictment of the nation's criminal justice system. It is also a confirmation of the decay of the police investigative arm, which apparently lies prostrate in the face of many unresolved murders.

It is also apparent that most high profile murders in Nigeria are unresolved simply because government has not shown enough political will to investigate them. Therefore, let government muster enough courage to prosecute such cases. If the perpetrators of such violent deaths are apprehended and brought to book, it will deter others from indulging in such dastardly acts.

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2013

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## Journalists at the Mercy of Gunmen [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 19, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1426 words

**Byline:** Emma Maduabuchi

### **Body**

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Recent events concerning the kidnap of some officials of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), have once again, thrown to the fore the mounting danger in the practice of the profession in Nigeria. The development has also exposed the vulnerability of the media practitioners to even the supposed ordinary people, who the average Nigerian *journalist* has shed sweat and blood in fighting for their cause.

Kidnapped on Sunday, July 11, were Wahab Oba, Lagos State Chairman of the journalists' body; Adolphus Okonkwo, Zone D Secretary; Sylvester Okeke, Secretary to the Union; Shola Oyeyipo, Lagos based *journalist* and Azeez Abdulraf, driver of the team. By Friday, July 16, five clear days after the kidnap the men had not been released by their abductors.

With their captivity, it fell on their friends, families and colleagues to bear the emotional pains of their absence. A visit to Iyalla Street office of the union in Ikeja, last week, for instance, showed a deserted office. Few journalists who spoke on the matter gave reasons for the union's business being at standstill, insisting that the only thing that mattered was the release of their men.

On a visit to the kidnapped journalists' homes at Journalists' Village, Arepo, Mrs. Barakat Oba, wife of Alabi Oba, the Chairman of Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Lagos chapter, cried repeatedly, lamenting her fate.

Christiana Okereke, wife of Sylvester Okereke on her own, appealed to Nigerians to help them by joining to pray for the release of their husbands. "The only one who can touch their heart of the men to release my husband is God. This is why I am pleading Nigerians to join me in prayers," she said.

Mrs. Anthonia Okonkwo, who spoke exclusively to Daily Independent, said the absence of her husband was becoming quite unbearable, both for herself and their children. She explained that the psychological torture on them was becoming too much.

Ademola Babalola, a *journalist* who lives at journalists' village Arepo, was among many who expressed disappointment with the ugly development, noting that journalists were also victims of society and should not have been subjects of kidnap. "I have not seen any *journalist* being part of the oppressors in this country; they are also victims of society like the kidnappers and should not be kidnapped," he said.

### Journalists at the Mercy of Gunmen [analysis]

The entire society is also seen as the loser each time a **journalist** is harmed. Though the likelihood existed that their abduction may not have been because they were journalists, there was the belief in some quarters that on realising that they were journalists, the abductors should have released them, on the strength of their altruistic services to the society.

Odimegwu Onwumere, an author and founder of Poet Against Child Abuse (PACA), who is based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, condemned the abductors for even taking in journalists in the first place. He believed the abductors were doing great disservice to society that the men served.

Among other things he had said, "The kidnap of a **journalist**, let alone four, was the kidnap of the entire mammoth of voiceless Nigerians whom government has so much suppressed, oppressed and emasculated with lack of roads, lack of a working healthcare system, lack of quality education, lack of pipe-borne water, capitalism, rigging of voting system and the incessant stashing of money abroad."

But Okey Ifionu, a clergyman and member of the Editorial Board of THISDAY Newspapers, philosophised that, "The society has bred a monster and we have to live with it until we find a solution to it."

Explaining further, he said he did not believe the journalists were kidnapped because they were journalists, but most probably because they were members of the Nigerian society. He however noted that it was unfortunate that the latest victims of the bizarre engagement happened to be journalists. According to him, this was because journalists were a group of people who, more or less, crusade against injustice in society.

He nevertheless, believed strongly that the kidnappers were members of society who were trying to get even with society. "These are the problems of a skewed society. Look at what the leaders are doing; look at the kind of money legislators at the National Assembly are allocating to themselves. And these people hear of these things, and you think they would keep quiet for long."

Before now, the travails of journalists used to come from government and dubious people who felt exposed by media men, but the latest act of abduction had become a cause of concern for many.

Incidentally, this is just the latest in the ordeals of journalists in Nigeria. There is no doubt among informed Nigerians that the Nigerian **journalist** and his profession are as a result currently under siege.

Early May this year, two journalists were felled by assassins' bullets. On many occasions, journalists labour under threats of either government officials or members of public who feel exposed by them. Many practitioners, for these reasons have left the profession, while many others are considering opting out.

Saturday, April 24, Edo Ugbagwu, a reporter with THE NATION Newspapers was murdered by assassins in his sitting room in Lagos. Since the coming of civil government in 1999, danger for journalists has heightened. Incidentally the last two years and half have seen more assassination of journalists than the past 30 years put together.

At least, assassins felled three journalists within that period. Abayomi Paul, a member of the Editorial Board of The Guardian was killed in August 2008. In September 2009, Bayo Ohu, Assistant Editor in the organization, was shot dead, while at home with his family.

The hazards of journalists practice entered another phase, during the regime of former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, when **Dele Giwa**, founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine was killed in a letter bomb, in October 1986.

On December 22, 2006, Godwin Agbroko, 53, head of the editorial board of the ThisDay Newspapers was shot in his car in Lagos. He was winner of PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Prize in 1997. He was known to have edited many titles during the military era, from 1993 to 1999, and even though he was detained at least twice, there was no previous attempt on his life.

### Journalists at the Mercy of Gunmen [analysis]

There was also the death of Tunde Oladepo, a senior correspondent with The Guardian Newspapers. He was at his home early morning in Ogun State when five masked men came into his house and shot him to death in front of his wife and children. Nothing was removed from his house leading investigator and analysts to conclude that robbery was not a motive.

The mounting hazards of what journalists go through can also be gleaned from the case of Bagauda Kalso, a journalist with The News magazine who disappeared in 1996 in suspicious circumstances.

As a result of incessant dangers that journalists face as a result of their profession, they had to organise a protest march in Lagos, the nation's commercial capital recently.

On Thursday, April 29, the Abuja chapter petitioned the police commissioner in the Federal Capital Territory, John Haruna, over a new threat to journalists. This threat came in the form of a text message to Gbenga Aruleba, an Africa Independent Television (AIT) presenter and other colleagues for doing their jobs. One of such messages read: "Gbenga Aruleba (AIT), Yusuf Ali (The Nation), Olusola Fabiyi (Punch), Chuks Okocha (ThisDay) all have no hiding place. U must be happy now that Prof. Maurice Iwu has been sacked due to ur bad stories and reports. We will deal wit u soon." The men were told to remember the fate of late Dele Giwa, Bayo Ohu, and Edo Ugbagwu. Sundry persecutions practised against journalists, even date back to the colonial era when the nationalists in the media were being hounded.

There was also the case during the military era when a certain Amakiri was shaved by soldiers. There are Nigerians, who look at the hazards of the profession and the poor remuneration of journalists, and wonder why it is so.

It is still quite incomprehensible to many, especially journalists, that a profession saddled with so much responsibility is neglected, while the journalists themselves who are making so much sacrifice for the growth of the country are so much neglected.

It is intriguing, many observe, that journalists are not insured, not well paid, and upon that often owed salaries running into months in some media outfits. Explaining the feeling of a journalist in a time such as this, Anote Ajeluorou , of The Guardian described it as being terrible.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2010

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## **Nigeria: Lagos journalist gunned down at home, 2 others killed in religious violence in Jos**

The Canadian Press(CP)

April 26, 2010 Monday

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**Section:** FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

**Length:** 662 words

**Byline:** JON GAMBRELL, AP

### **Body**

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LAGOS, Nigeria \_ Gunmen shot and killed a Nigerian ***journalist*** at his home the same day two others died while attempting to cover fighting between Christians and Muslims in the nation's restive central highlands, authorities said Monday.

The outbreak of violence highlights the daily dangers confronting local journalists in Africa's most populous nation, a country where bribery and corruption prevails at all levels of government and some reporters temper their stories for fear of angering those in power.

In Lagos, police spokesman Frank Mba said gunmen on Saturday night raided the home of Edo Ugbagwu, a reporter who covered court cases for the daily newspaper The Nation. Mba said Ugbagwu's younger brother witnessed the men begin an argument with Ugbagwu that led to the shooting of the 42-year-old ***journalist***.

Mba said detectives on the case had yet to come up with a motive for the slaying. Lawal Ogienagbon, a deputy editor at The Nation, said Ugbagwu hadn't been working on any controversial stories leading up to his death and had received no threats.

"He worked in the courts. All you do is hear from both sides and whatever the judge does, you report," Ogienagbon told The Associated Press. "We can't say why he was killed."

In Jos, the central Nigerian city at the epicenter of recent religious violence, two journalists working for the Christian publication The Light Bearer newspaper died Saturday. The Nigeria Union of Journalists identified them as deputy editor Nathan S. Dabak, 36, and reporter Sunday Gyang Bwede, 39.

The union said unknown attackers stabbed the two men to death as they were on their way to an assignment. Earlier that day, the body of a 13-year-old boy was discovered in front of a mosque in the city, sparking protests and attacks.

The union called on the military and police to find and prosecute the men's killers.

Nigeria : Lagos journalist gunned down at home, 2 others killed in religious violence in Jos

"It is unfortunate that men of the fourth estate ... in Nigeria are not accorded the deserved respect and recognition in the course of performing their duty \_ especially in a crisis," the union said in a statement Monday.

The violence in and around Jos has left more than 500 people dead since the beginning of the year. Covering the attacks remains dangerous for reporters as well. After killings in Christian villages in March, enraged residents attacked a Muslim **journalist** covering a mass burial. The man escaped, but suffered serious injuries and lost all of his equipment.

Violent crime remains a problem for all Nigerians in the nation of 150 million people, as police often shake down those they are supposed to protect for bribes.

However, journalists have been targets over their reporting in the past. In the country's most infamous case, **journalist Dele Giwa** of Newswatch magazine died after opening a letter bomb sent to his home in 1986. The crime remains unsolved, and many blame the nation's security services under dictator Ibrahim Babangida for the slaying. Babangida recently announced his intention to run as a candidate in next year's presidential election.

The most recent killing of a **journalist** happened last year. Bayo Ohu, a politics editor from the daily newspaper The Guardian, bled to death after being shot at his house in Lagos.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists identified several attacks in Nigeria last year on reporters, including one it claimed a state governor orchestrated during an election marred by allegations of voter fraud. Other journalists have been detained by security services for publishing critical stories, the committee said.

Such attacks have led some fearful reporters to censor their own stories.

"Working as a local **journalist** in Nigeria is becoming an increasingly hazardous profession," said Tom Rhodes, the committee's Africa Program co-ordinator. "Nigerian police have a poor track record in resolving the murders of local journalists and the killers know that."

Associated Press Writer Ahmed Saka contributed to this report from Jos, Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2010

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**Load-Date:** April 27, 2010

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## **Ex-Daily Times MD Adinoyi-Ojo is dead**

The Nation (Nigeria)

March 6, 2017 Monday

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Length: 917 words

### **Body**

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Saraki, Bello, Mark, NUJ mournThe man OnukabaThe former Managing Director of the Daily Times Nigeria Plc, Dr Adinoyi-Ojo Onukaba, started his journalism career in The Guardian in 1983 and made his mark covering the airport in Lagos.Onukaba struck friendship with many Nigerian dignitaries on this beat, including former Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo.

The relationship latter blossomed into Onukaba writing the first biography of the retired General, titled: "In the Eyes of Time".He also wrote the biography of Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's former vice-president.

It was titled:"The Story of Atiku Abubakar".The veteran ***journalist*** was born on March 9, 1960 in Oboroke-Ihima, Okehi LGA of Kogi State to the family of Malam Shuaibu Onukaba and Hajia Aisha OnukabaHe obtained his first degree in 1982 in Theatre Arts from University of Ibadan.

He spent his National Youth Service Corps year at Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi Lagos, from where he joined The Guardian in 1983.He rose to the position of News Editor before travelling out in 1989 for graduate studies at New York University, New York, USA.

While in New York, he worked as a Research Officer at the African Leadership Forum, New York.He also served as the Information Officer, Division of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) between 1994 and 1995.

He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1996 from New York University.Dr Onukaba became Adjunct Professor of Mass Communication at the School of New Resources, College of New Rochelle, New York in 1997.

Between 1997 and 1998, he worked as Press Officer, Department of Public Information, United Nations (New York). In June 1998, he was sent to Iraq as an Information Officer, United Nations Office of the Humanitarian CoordinatorUpon his return to Nigeria in 1999, he worked with former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, as Special Assistant on Media Relations.

He had known and related closely with both Atiku and Olusegun Obasanjo since 1984.Onukaba got to the peak of his journalistic career in August 1999 when he was appointed Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the then ailing Daily Times of Nigeria PLC.

## Ex- Daily Times MD Adinoyi-Ojo is dead

He returned to the Presidency as Senior Special Assistant to the former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on Public Communications between July 2003 and April 2005. On several occasions, Onukaba had shown interest in the governorship post of his state.

But not being a man with deep pockets, he never made it beyond the primaries. His last attempt was in 2015, when he contested for the seat.

He also lost at the primary level on the platform of the All Progressives Congress. Apart from his books on Atiku and Obasanjo, he also co-authored "Born to Run", a biography of late **Dele Giwa**, with Pulitzer winner **Dele Olojede**.

Onukaba, despite his journalistic career, never divorced himself from his first love, Theatre Arts. Thus, he had written several plays, some which are "Her Majesty's Visit", "A Resting Place", "Tower of Burden", "The Virginity Flee", "The Lone Ranger", "Bargain Hunting" and "Soommalliyya".

His play, "The Killing Swamp", was one of the three finalists for the 2010 NLNG Literature Awards. In 2011, he made the shortlist of the Nigerian literature prize with his play "A Resting Place", a book on the late Ken Saro-Wiwa. Until his death, he was a part time lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts of the University of Abuja, where he taught the semantics of literature and plays.

A former Managing Director of the Daily Times Nigeria Plc, Dr Adinoyi-Ojo Onukaba is dead. He was aged 57.

Onukaba died at about 6pm on Sunday at Ero Village, a few metres to Igbaraoke in Ifedore Local Government Area of Ondo State. It is about 10 minutes to Akure, the state capital.

He was on his way back to Abuja from Abeokuta, Ogun State, where he had joined other dignitaries for the inauguration of the Obasanjo Presidential Library. Sources said the deceased noticed a long queue of vehicles at Ero village and alighted from the vehicle only to discover that it was a robbery incident, a development which prompted him to run into the bush alongside other passengers.

A car that also escaped from the scene coming from the Akure end of the road reportedly lost control and hit him (Onukaba), where he hid. The driver of the vehicle eventually escaped.

Police spokesman Femi Joseph confirmed the incident, describing it as unfortunate. Joseph, who said the command has started investigation on the incident, said the body of the deceased has been released to the family.

The spot, where Onukaba was killed, has been identified as haven of armed robbers, where they even operate in the day light. A top official of the First City Monument Bank (FCMB) Akure, Sola Abe, was on February 24 killed in the area after he was kidnapped along with his driver on their way to Lagos.

One of Onukaba relations, Mr Yusuf Itopa, confirmed his death in Lokoja yesterday. Itopa, who was devastated by Onukaba's death, said three of them, including his driver were travelling when they ran into a blockade mounted by armed robbers.

He said Onukaba's body was later deposited at a mortuary in Akure from where it was expected to be transferred to his hometown, Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State for burial. The late Onukaba, who was Senior Special Assistant on Media to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, lost his first wife, Rachael, about five years ago.

He, however, remarried in 2015 to Memunat. Onukaba is survived by three children two girls and a boy.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2017



## Nigeria: 3 journalists killed in weekend violence

Associated Press International

April 26, 2010 Monday 10:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press Writer

**Dateline:** LAGOS Nigeria

### **Body**

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Gunmen shot and killed a Nigerian journalist at his home the same day two others died while attempting to cover fighting between Christians and Muslims in the nation's restive central highlands, authorities said Monday.

The outbreak of violence highlights the daily dangers confronting local journalists in Africa's most populous nation, a country where bribery and corruption prevails at all levels of government and some reporters temper their stories for fear of angering those in power.

In Lagos, police spokesman Frank Mba said gunmen on Saturday night raided the home of Edo Ugbagwu, a reporter who covered court cases for the daily newspaper The Nation. Mba said Ugbagwu's younger brother witnessed the men begin an argument with Ugbagwu that led to the shooting of the 42-year-old journalist.

Mba said detectives on the case had yet to come up with a motive for the slaying. Lawal Ogienagbon, a deputy editor at The Nation, said Ugbagwu hadn't been working on any controversial stories leading up to his death and had received no threats.

"He worked in the courts. All you do is hear from both sides and whatever the judge does, you report," Ogienagbon told The Associated Press. "We can't say why he was killed."

In Jos, the central Nigerian city at the epicenter of recent religious violence, two journalists working for the Christian publication The Light Bearer newspaper died Saturday. The Nigeria Union of Journalists identified them as deputy editor Nathan S. Dabak, 36, and reporter Sunday Gyang Bwede, 39.

The union said unknown attackers stabbed the two men to death as they were on their way to an assignment. Earlier that day, the body of a 13-year-old boy was discovered in front of a mosque in the city, sparking protests and attacks.

The union called on the military and police to find and prosecute the men's killers.

"It is unfortunate that men of the fourth estate ... in Nigeria are not accorded the deserved respect and recognition in the course of performing their duty especially in a crisis," the union said in a statement Monday.

## Nigeria : 3 journalists killed in weekend violence

The violence in and around Jos has left more than 500 people dead since the beginning of the year. Covering the attacks remains dangerous for reporters as well. After killings in Christian villages in March, enraged residents attacked a Muslim **journalist** covering a mass burial. The man escaped, but suffered serious injuries and lost all of his equipment.

Violent crime remains a problem for all Nigerians in the nation of 150 million people, as police often shake down those they are supposed to protect for bribes.

However, journalists have been targets over their reporting in the past. In the country's most infamous case, **journalist Dele Giwa** of Newswatch magazine died after opening a letter bomb sent to his home in 1986. The crime remains unsolved, and many blame the nation's security services under dictator Ibrahim Babangida for the slaying. Babangida recently announced his intention to run as a candidate in next year's presidential election.

The most recent killing of a **journalist** happened last year. Bayo Ohu, a politics editor from the daily newspaper The Guardian, bled to death after being shot at his house in Lagos.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists identified several attacks in Nigeria last year on reporters, including one it claimed a state governor orchestrated during an election marred by allegations of voter fraud. Other journalists have been detained by security services for publishing critical stories, the committee said.

Such attacks have led some fearful reporters to censor their own stories.

"Working as a local **journalist** in Nigeria is becoming an increasingly hazardous profession," said Tom Rhodes, the committee's Africa Program coordinator. "Nigerian police have a poor track record in resolving the murders of local journalists and the killers know that."

Associated Press Writer Ahmed Saka contributed to this report from Jos, Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2010

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## **Police - an Institution and Its Challenges**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 25, 2015

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**Length:** 739 words

**Byline:** Kingsley Omonobi

### **Body**

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In the recent past, despite the commendable efforts of IGP Solomon Arase at repositioning the Nigerian Police Force, criminals have been unrelenting in their escapades.

In this piece, Vanguard takes a look at certain reasons that have hampered Police performance over time.

First, is the issue of attaching a sizeable number of scarce police personnel needed to police a population of 170 million Nigerians, to a negligent minority of less than 250, 000 prominent and well-to-do individuals.

At the last count, over 130, 000 police personnel out of 400, 000 are attached to unauthorized persons and VIP's in the country.

Following the complaints of Nigerians and directive of President Muhammadu Buhari however, the Inspector General Police, recently deployed high level monitoring teams to the nation's airports, highways and other public places to enforce the presidential directive of immediate withdrawal of policemen from personalities who are not entitled to them.

#### **Internal security**

"The monitoring team was given the powers to stop VIPs' on the highways, airports etc, for confirmation of their status and that of the Policemen attached to them. Any erring VIP or Policeman caught in such unauthorized beat is to be prosecuted," he said.

On the same issue, Chairman of the Police Service Commission, Mike Okiro had this to say, "Henceforth only authorized government officials and VIPs' will be entitled to police security."

Okiro said the Nigeria Police will now be "structured to do its primary duties of providing internal security and protecting lives and property" and that "the Commission will give the leadership of the Nigeria Police Force the required support and encouragement to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness".

Second is the challenge of armed robbers now using uncharted creeks and waterways to escape after robbing banks or kidnapping people.

## Police - an Institution and Its Challenges

Arase aptly captured this challenge when in a meeting with Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ibok Ibas recently, he expressed readiness of the Police to partner the Navy in the area of rehabilitation of over 60 Police boats out of over 100 presently grounded to reinforce its maritime operations.

Arase's words: "In the last two to three months, we have been so worried about our Maritime operations. We have written the Nigerian Navy to help us put our boats back into the waters. We won't mind even if some are cannibalized to repair others. We just want them to work".

Another area of challenge for the Police is lack of diligent prosecution of cases, which has led to several garnishee problems for not only the Nigerian Police, but has seen criminals using lawyers with ulterior motives escaping justice.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of poor or lack of adequate forensic equipment necessary for the Police to adequately carry out investigations at crime scenes.

A retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, David Omojola however told Vanguard that lack of forensic equipment is hampering successful investigation of such high profile murder cases.

"The Nigeria Police needs more men. It might interest Nigerians to know that since the past five years, the Nigeria Police has not carried out any recruitment exercise. The workforce has been depleted, owing to manpower leakages arising from retirement, litigations and death," he said.

### **Manpower leakages**

On unresolved murder cases, Omojola said, "The investigation of such cases can only be facilitated with modern and well equipped forensic laboratories. The Nigeria Police needs funds to set up state-of-the-art forensic laboratories which provide a driving force for crime investigation. The force also needs modern equipment for the detection and safer detonation of bombs and other Improvised Explosive Devices.

Some of the unresolved political assassinations cases in Nigeria include those of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa on October 19, 1986 in Lagos through a parcel bomb; Babatunde Elegbede on May 5, 1994 also in Lagos; Lekan Owolabi (March 1995 Lagos); Captain Tunde Ashafa (June 11, 1995, Lagos) and Alfred Rewane on October 6, 1995 also in Lagos.

Others are Mr. Kayode Awosanya, January 1996 in Lagos; Mrs. Tajudeen Abiola, February 9, 1996 Lagos, Alhaji Sama Kano April 8, 1996 Lagos; Admiral Olu Omotehinwa, May 22, 1996 Lagos; Mrs. Irene Obodo, June 1996 Lagos; Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, June 4, 1996 Lagos; Chief Adejola Balogun, June 15, 1996, Lagos and Mrs. Esther A. Tejuoso, September 19, 1996, Lagos.

**Load-Date:** November 25, 2015

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## UNFORGETTABLE DIMGBA IGWE @ 60

The Sun (Nigeria)

May 14, 2016 Saturday

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**Length:** 1426 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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Notice: Undefined index: layout\_id in /var/www/vhosts/sunnews/wp-content/themes/fastnews/library/front.php on line 1663

AS I write, the imaginary church bell of my broken heart tolls. It tolls 60 times. It tolls for you my friend and my de-parted brother who would have been 60 next Monday, on May 16, 2016. The bell tolls and it tolls for our bond of friendship and brotherhood that defy the dif-ferences of...

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The bell tolls and it tolls for our bond of friendship and brotherhood that defy the dif-ferences of tongue, tribe and religion that divide and disunite us as a nation. Our friendship and brotherhood go back to the Bible—your favourite book—to the story of David and Jonathan whose father Saul turned out an enemy who wanted David killed, yet their friendship was unalloyed. They were insepara-ble. Theirs was a friendship that "sticks closer than a brother." (Book of Proverbs)

I cannot forget one morning when we were together at the burial of your mother-in-law and you said to me: "Mike you are my real brother." I was so touched. In the Scriptures, Je-sus was similarly preaching to a crowd when He was told that his mother and brothers were looking for Him. And He re-plied: "Who is my mother and who are my brothers? Pointing to His disciples, He said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'"

## UNFORGETTABLE DIMGBA IGWE @ 60

I was your brother and you were my Bible teacher and spiritual mentor from whom I learnt a lot. I can never forget the prophetic speech you made on my 60th birthday, saying that if you go to sleep and did not wake up, you will be rest assured that "Mike will be there for me and my family."

When I was 60, you rolled out the drums for me. You pulled every string to make it a grand occasion. For a start, I didn't want any loud celebration. But you overruled, asking me: "Do you know what it means to be 60? And do you know your worth in this Nigeria?"

You gathered the whole world to celebrate with me at Sheraton where encomiums were poured on my poor head. Next there was a "Mike Awoyinfa Colloquium on Tabloid Journalism" organised by City People's publisher Seye Kehinde where my contributions to Nigerian journalism were acknowledged and discussed by journalism experts. And the thing is that whenever and wherever my name was mentioned, so was your name. Nothing I achieved in journalism was achieved individually. We achieved it together in our rare professional and business partnership that became a reference point and a benchmark.

When it comes to organising an event, you were the chief organizer and a master planner. Thanks to you, the 60th birthday celebration turned out memorable. I was hoping and looking forward to the time you would turn 60, when I would pay you back with a bigger celebration of your life packed with so much achievements—how you seamlessly combined life as a **journalist** and as a true man of God. Now, May 16 is here. And you are nowhere to be found. Like Jonathan said to David in 1 Samuel 20:18, "To-morrow is the new moon, you will be missed, because your seat will be empty."

No one can fill your vacant seat. No one can fill your big shoes. You may be small in stature, but you were a giant who bestrode the world like a colossus. You were the wise one, the one who knew everything in all fields. And you were a great teacher who poured everything out for others to drink deep from your Pierian spring. Everybody learnt from you—including me. Be it in the news-room or the church. You were such a hard act to follow. Your happiest moment was when you were on the pulpit, dishing out erudite sermons straight from the throne of grace. As a writer and as a speaker, you delivered the goods in equal measure. It's so sad that such a prodigious talent should end so quickly in the graveyard.

Life indeed is a mystery. Death is even a greater mystery. Why do good people die so early? And why do bad people continue to live on and enjoy life, wallowing in the vain glory of our looted, empty treasury? The British Prime Minister has just said Nigeria is "fantastically corrupt." I wish he had used a bigger, ignominious word to describe our country mired in the morass of corruption and stolen wealth—even though his country is also culprit in receiving stolen wealth. Wish you were still around to comment on the affairs of our beloved nation.

I miss you my friend. Every minute, every second, I miss you. Your family miss you most. Just this week, the papers were looking for a story to mark your 60th birthday. Some journalists wanted to interview your wife, but she declined, saying she was not strong enough to reflect on life without you. I had to plead that they respect her feelings.

They say time heals. But time simply has refused to heal the wound, the pain, the agony of your sudden exit. Try as we want to relegate it to the background and move on with life, the tragic event of September 6, 2014 looms large every time, haunting us all, like a horror movie that scares an innocent child. It was the day that will forever live in infamy. We only take solace in the belief that as a good servant of God, you have gone to God to be rewarded with a place of honour where all good people go.

Ours was a friendship made in heaven and consummated on earth. We met for the first time in the '80s under the editorship of the legendary **Dele Giwa**, the pioneer editor of Sunday Concord who mentored us all. **Giwa** was one editor we could die for to get a good story. You and I became friends because we discovered we have a lot in common: the passion for books and good writing skills honed under literary guru **Dele Giwa** himself. As the Bible says, "Iron sharpens iron, so man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17) We collaborated in many assignments which drew us closer and strengthened our friendship. In a moment of frustration, we decided to write a book. And that gave birth to the classic Art of Features Writing which is a compulsory text in journalism schools. From there, more books evolved from our partnership: 50 Nigeria's Corporate Strategists, Nigerian

## UNFORGETTABLE DIMGBA IGWE @ 60

Marketing Memoirs, Segun Os-oba, The Newspaper Years, 50 World Editors and a wide rep-ertoire of books and biographies soon to be published.

Currently, we are writing a book on Nigeria's boardroom gurus sharing their thoughts and experiences on "Board-room Leadership and Corporate Governance"—a book whose idea came after your death. For me, whether you are here or not does not matter. You are my co-author forever. From now till eternity, all the books I write will still carry your name because from the grave you still contribute your own quota. In the spirit world where you are, I can hear you cheering, inspir-ing and interceding for me. And God has been so faithful and merciful, helping me and giving me the strength and wisdom to carry on without you my friend. Even death, with all its ironclad power, cannot break our friend-ship.

So on Monday, May 16, as we quietly celebrate your 60th birthday, the host of heaven will also celebrate with you in triumph for a life of service on earth to God and humanity. May there be rejoicing in heav-en for your sake. May there be a big birthday cake for you in heaven with your favourite bib-lical hero Apostle Paul supervis-ing the cutting. May the host of heaven surround you as you cut your 60th birthday cake. And may God bless and abide with the family you left behind in Je-sus name.

Let me end this piece with the bell metaphor which I started with. Of course you know the idea of a bell tolling was first written by John Donne and made even more famous by Ernest Hemingway in his novel For Whom the Bell Tolls, just like Chinua Achebe got his No Longer at Ease title from T.S. Eliot's Journey of the Magi.

This is from John Donne, to you and to me: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is less, as well as if a promon-tory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death dimin-ishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee."

Happy posthumous 60th birthday to my friend and men-tor Pastor Dimgba Igwe!

<http://imgs.syndigate.info/364/1228/53/146319260224.jpg>

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2016

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## Nigeria: 3 journalists killed in weekend violence

Associated Press Online

April 26, 2010 Monday 10:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press Writer

**Dateline:** LAGOS Nigeria

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Such attacks have led some fearful reporters to censor their own stories.

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Associated Press Writer Ahmed Saka contributed to this report from Jos, Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2010

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## Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo (1960-2017)

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 1, 2017 Saturday

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**Length:** 932 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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The death of Dr. Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo, veteran ***journalist***, playwright, author, gubernatorial aspirant, as he tried to flee from armed robbers a few miles from Akure, is a sad reminder to all Nigerians of the precarious security situation in the country. He was on his way home from Abeokuta where he had attended the inauguration of...

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The shock of Adinoyi-Ojo's death is still reverberating in journalism and literary circles, which still do not comprehend how such an illustrious life could end so abruptly. The Lagos State Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) has scheduled special events in his honour, including A Day of Tributes, in Lagos and Abuja. Veteran ***journalist*** and popular columnist, Sonala Olumhense, has instituted the Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo Memorial Trust Fund also in his honour. He described the deceased as "an exceptional human being... you do not remember him without remembering just how genuine he was."

Condolences have come from far and near. Vice President Yemi Osinbajo expressed sadness that Nigeria has lost a gem. Former governor of Lagos State and Leader of the APC, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, issued a moving statement extolling the virtues of Adinoyi-Ojo. With his passage, he averred that journalism has lost one of its best and

## Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo (1960-2017)

brightest. Minister of Labour, Chief Chris Ngige, said Nigeria would miss his services as a journalist and a journalism teacher. The All Progressives Congress, his political party, paid its tribute through its National Chairman, Chief Odigie Oyegun, consoling the Kogi State Chapter of the party through its governor. Special Adviser on Political Matters to President Muhammadu Buhari, Senator Babafemi Ojudu, described Adinoyi-Ojo as "a brilliant and incorruptible journalist. He stood out among his colleagues as aviation correspondent for The Guardian where he met and struck a friendship with Obasanjo."

Dr. Adinoyi-Ojo lived a life crowded with achievements and activities. Born on March 9, 1960 at Oboroke-Ihima, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, he obtained a degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan in 1982 under the tutelage of Prof. Femi Osofisan who was said to have been instrumental to his joining The Guardian, where he quickly distinguished himself, in 1983. In three years, he had been promoted News Editor of The Guardian and in 1989, he proceeded to the United States for graduate education at the New York University.

In New York, he served as Research Officer at the African Leadership Forum and also as the Information Officer, Division of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) between 1994 and 1995. He obtained his Ph.D in 1996 from New York University and was subsequently appointed Adjunct Professor of Mass Communication at the School of New Resources, College of New Rochelle, New York, in 1997. He was later appointed a press officer of the United Nations Department of Public Information, which sent him to Iraq as Humanitarian Co-coordinator. It was during that posting he chanced upon the Chaldean seer and the dire prophecies about his future wife, which tragically came to pass when his wife, Rachel, died five years ago. He remarried in 2015 to Memunat, who along with his three children, are his survivors.

He was one of Nigeria's most productive journalists and playwrights, leaving behind an awesome number of plays and books including Born to Run, a biography of Dele Giwa, the famous Nigerian editor murdered in 1987 by a parcel bomb, which he co-authored with Dele Olojede. He wrote two biographies: In the Eyes of Time, a biography of the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo; The Story of Atiku Abubakar, a biography of former vice-president, Atiku Abubakar. He wrote many plays including a literary masterpiece such as The Killing Swamp, which got listed in 2010 among the three finalists for the 2010 NLNG Literature Awards. Other Plays are Her Majesty's Visit; A Resting Place; Tower of Burden; The Virginity Flee; The Lone Ranger; Bargain Hunting, and Soommalliyaa.

Dr. Adinoyi-Ojo returned to Nigeria at the advent of democratic rule and got appointed as Special Assistant on Media to the then Vice President Atiku Abubakar. Indeed, his friendship with President Obasanjo and Vice-president Atiku Abubakar must have influenced Onukaba's foray into politics. And, although he was yet to achieve his dream of governing his home state, Kogi, the hope was that if he had lived longer, he would have achieved his ambition as he did in everything he tried to do in life.

The circumstances of his death will remain like a fresh wound in the psyche of Nigerians who will always remember that the absence of security on Nigerian highways robbed the nation of one of its most creative, hardworking and humane citizens. Adieu, Onukaba-Adinoyi Ojo.

Share

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2017



## **Dimgba Igwe: Passage of the veteran**

The Sun (Nigeria)

October 15, 2014 Wednesday

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**Length:** 684 words

**Byline:** Kola Johnson

### **Body**

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I had known Dimgba Igwe by reputation, right from his years, as a staff writer in the defunct Sunday Concord. However, my first chance of an inter-personal interaction with him, was about twenty eight years ago.

The post Dimgba Igwe: Passage of the veteran appeared first on The Sun News.

I had known Dimgba Igwe by reputation, right from his years, as a staff writer in the defunct Sunday Concord. However, my first chance of an inter-personal interaction with him, was about twenty eight years ago.

The veteran **journalist**, Monzor Olowosago and Dimgba were colleagues in the Sunday Concord, then edited by **Dele Giwa**, the flamboyant media chief of blessed memory.

I was at that time Assistant Editor, Oriwu Sun, a leading community newspapers in the Nigerian journalistic firmament, founded by Monzor Dawodu Olowosago; who prior to his advent into newspaper publishing was the production Editor of Sunday Concord.

At that momentous inception of that pioneer leader of community journalism, colleagues of the publisher, who were obviously joyous about his vision, had ensured that they availed their quota of input in the drive to propel the experiment to the envisioned height of fulfillment.

Prominent in this category were Dimgba Igwe and Chuma Adichie, also of Sunday Concord. Dimgba and Adichie were regular visitors in our office, then. This aside, I had cause to relate on a frequent basis with Dimgba - usually on the premise of his regular editorial contribution to our newspaper - at the Mafoluku location of his office at the then defunct Concord newspapers. With time, Dimgba receded in presence, ostensibly on account of his increasingly busy schedule, as Adichie featured more prominently, even to date.

### Dimgba Igwe: Passage of the veteran

While Adichie radiated impressively personable airs, Dimgba,in my own view, was more of a taciturn person. This might afterall be a natural outward façade; at variance with, perhaps, a more sublime inner nature.

My interpretation of this, whether rightly or wrongly, was that it might be due to his Pentecostal strain of born-againism. It was, of course, for this code of born-again as one was apt to recall then, that the Oriwu Sun publisher, Mr Olowosago, would usually tease him.

As Dimgba rose through the ranks from the National Concord to the Weekend Concord, and later, The Sun – coupled with his extra-journalistic exploits in book authorship – it would not be off the mark to suppose that it was the hand of God tellingly visible as a trademark consequent upon of the prophetic covenant of Divine prosperity of God, for the exclusively hallowed circle of his chosen.

Dimgba, to be sure, soon attained the apotheosis of journalistic fame and glory. He was a good family man.

For a self-made man like this writer, who for whatever reason did not have the benefit of a first degree; this was no mean achievement – but an unusual kind, exclusively repository of the inner circuit of the beloved of the most high divine.

For Dimgba, all things went well. Life was fine. Life for him, was the quintessential paradise on earth. Dimgba became a role model to many, – especially those driven by hard work, excellence and service to God. He did well in these areas. It was against this background that when recently, the departed media notable was writing, in a tribute – in the wake of the death of Dora Akunyili – little did the imminence of his own passage occur to anyone. It was as if the dividing line of separation, in the spatial frame of time, would amount to an eternity.

Can you imagine a man, who in a remarkably pathetic elegy as rendered in his regular weekly column in The Sun had narrated his sense of shock, in the face of the eventual, but grim unfolding that he would have no option than to henceforth refer to Akunyili in the past tense.

However, not exactly three months after, the mourner himself is gone in a stupefyingly reminiscent motion picture fiction or fantasy-like fable of classic textbook yarn for the marines. Gone to be seen no more. What an intriguing irony.

•Johnson writes from Lagos.

The post Dimgba Igwe: Passage of the veteran appeared first on The Sun News.

**Load-Date:** October 15, 2014



## Lingering Effects of Nation's Terror Status [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

June 7, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 617 words

**Byline:** Stevens A. Wisdom Okoro

### **Body**

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The fear of terrorism is the beginning of wisdom. 'Terrorism is not in our culture'. Meaning what? Whose culture, then, is terrorism? How do Nigerians classify the letter bombing of eminent *journalist, Dele Giwa*, in 1986? How do these patriotic commentators want to classify the bombings during the days of IBB and Abacha? The killing of journalists by hired assassins, the attempted firebombing of The Guardian newspaper's head office in 1996, and the failed bomb planted recently in the Edo State House of Assembly in Edo State? Are these not all forms of terrorism?

How can people say Nigeria is a nation of peace, when criminals keep kidnapping oil workers, and northern Muslims in Nigeria keep killing Christians whenever they have the opportunity? If Nigerians had respect for human life and liberty, there would have been no need, at the beginning of the year, for America to put Nigeria on the list of terror nations to watch. Besides, our so-called leaders have continued to plunder the Nigerian treasury, while our citizens commit fraud all over the world.

However, nemesis has caught up with us. Remember the December 25, 2010 failed attack on an American airliner by Al-Qaeda agent, Farouk Abdulmutallab? The disgraceful incident exposed afresh the motionlessness of Nigeria and her overdose of false national consciousness. In fact, there is so much talk about terrorism not being our culture, about its being un-Nigerian, as if terrorism is part of any people's culture.

The Abdulmutallab fiasco has had a legion of negative effects on the country. From the sociological angle, it has limited the free flow of social interaction between Nigeria and United States, and even beyond, to other nations. Nigerians travellers to the western nations have had to endure more embarrassing body searches. Visa issuance to Nigerian applicants has also become subject to more rigorous screening.

Nigerians living abroad, particularly in America, are also paying the price. Among other liabilities, their opportunities to seek, obtain and keep jobs have shrunk as a result, which in turn has affected their remittances back home.

Another effect, from the economic viewpoint, is in the area of business transactions. These are largely based on reputation and how citizens of a particular country are perceived. If our national reputation is perceived as negative and unstable, foreign businessmen will be more cautious in dealing with their Nigerian counterparts. For years, Nigeria's image had been unattractive. Now, the old issues of trust have become even worse, with the heightening of concern about the safety and security of persons doing business with our nationals.

### Lingering Effects of Nation's Terror Status [analysis]

The speed of transactions has also been a casualty. Foreign business partners often want to carry out a thorough feasibility report and due diligence before carrying out any business in and with Nigerians. Such potential investors now have more cause to see the country's environment as a tough area in which to conduct business. It is not impossible to have a similar terror incident in the future, and if it should happen, it might seal the issue as to whether Nigeria is a terrorist nation, which will profoundly affect our international relations. It will slow down foreign aid, and might provoke more sanctions.

In conclusion, terrorism is evil. Nigerians have been paying for the sin of one man. The Nigerian government, at all levels, must take every necessary measure to repair our battered economy so that there will be no need for our citizens to be escaping for succour to other parts of the world, only to be treated like dirt.

Stevens A. Wisdom Okoro Dept. of Banking & Finance, Lagos State Polytechnic, Kosofe Annex.

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2010

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## Democracy and Freedom of the Press [opinion]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

May 10, 2011 Tuesday

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Length: 733 words

### **Body**

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Last Tuesday was marked as World Press Freedom Day. When the United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 of every year to mark the day, the aim was not only to celebrate the importance of a free press to democracy and economic development but also to honour those who die in the course of exercising this right.

This year's celebration coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek - a statement of free press principles put together by African newspaper journalists in the South African city in 1991. UNESCO usually marks the day by conferring the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize on an individual, organisation, or institution that has made a remarkable contribution to either the defence or promotion of press freedom, especially in the face of danger. The Prize, created in 1997, was named in honour of the Colombian **journalist** Guillermo Cano Isaza who was murdered in 1986 in front of his newspaper office. The jailed Iranian **journalist**, Ahmad Zeidabadi was named the winner of the year's prize.

The theme of this year's celebration, "21st Century Media - New Media, New Barriers" is apt. There is no doubt that the social media-internet, mobile phones, and other social networking tools-have helped to advance the course of press freedom by creating a community of 'citizen journalists' who are unencumbered by time, space, or even resources.

In Nigeria for instance this new media genre has given rise to online outlets, most of them foreign-based, that often go beyond the traditional bounds of mainstream media to expose incidents of bad governance and corruption in high places.

The importance of the social media in promoting democracy and good governance in Africa was underlined during this year's World Press Freedom Day when the Omidyar Network of Redwood City, California, announced the award of nearly \$5 million in funding to four media-related groups involved in investigative and citizen journalism in developing countries-African Media Initiative (Kenya); the SaharaReporters project (Nigeria); Media Development Loan Fund (U.S.), and the Committee to Protect Journalists (Africa programmes). Though the importance of the new social media in advancing the frontiers of press freedom is obvious, the ability of many Nigerians living in Nigeria to access them is however constrained by low internet penetration, poor access to computers, insufficient training on the use of these new resources, poverty and poor pay and as well as other challenges often associated with underdevelopment.

Just as the new social media have helped to advance the course of press freedom by enriching the marketplace of ideas, they are also liable to abuse, especially by 'citizen journalists' who mistake press freedom for license to

## Democracy and Freedom of the Press [opinion]

impugn the hard-earned reputation of others. There are several instances of blatant defamatory stories, rumours and innuendos being presented as facts - often without the writer bothering to hear the other side of the story before clicking on the 'send' button'. Therefore while new social media deserve passionate support, 'citizen journalists' need to cultivate some healthy self-restraint and a code of responsible online journalism, especially on matters involving national security and attack on people's reputation.

In Nigeria, this year's World Press Freedom Day is also an opportunity to remember those journalists who died in the course of plying their trade, such as **Dele Giwa** of Newswatch, Godwin Agbroko and Abayomi Ogundeleji of ThisDay newspapers, Bayo Ohu of Guardian newspapers, Edo Ugbagwu of The Nation and Nathan Dubak and Gyeng Bwede, both of Light Bearer newspapers of Jos, Plateau State. The government should step up efforts to fish out the murderers of these journalists, and take measures that will offer a more protective environment for press freedom to flourish. The World Press Freedom Day is equally an opportunity to call attention to the numerous violations of the right to freedom of expression such as the use of threats of libel proceedings to chill speech or the suppression of unfavourable reports in the media through influence peddling or buying up and destroying copies of newspapers that run what those involved in these acts consider to be unfavourable stories. This calls to mind the recent conducts of some senior government officials, which threaten free working environment for journalists.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2011

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The dollar is dearer than your life!



## **The dollar is dearer than your life!**

Weekly Trust

November 10, 2018 Saturday

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Length: 958 words

### **Body**

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Who will write the writer's epitaph when he is gone? It is the lot of the hunter who survives the hunt to sing a dirge for the one who didn't. More so when the object of the hunt is News - intangible yet ever so corporeal. The armour of truth is useless in the jungle of dictatorships where puny man reenacts all over again the atmosphere of the Orwellian 1984.

On October 2, 2018, a news-hunter was hunted down for penning empirically verifiable reality, worse than what happened in the book, 1984 where the mythical Winston Smith wrestles with institutionalised oppression in Oceania. The ever-watchful Big Brother of Oceania was ubiquitous. Individuality was a crime. But Winston still managed to record his thoughts in a diary and nurture a relationship with his dear Julia.

Not so for 60-year-old father of four, Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, the Saudi Arabian *journalist*, author, and one-time editor of the Saudi Arabian newspaper, Al Watan. Khashoggi's grandfather, Muhammad Khashoggi of Turkish origin, had married a Saudi woman and was personal physician to King Abdulaziz Al Saud, the founder of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ironically, it was on the eve of his own marriage to another Turkish woman, Hatice Cengiz, in the land of his grandfather's birth, that Jamal met his cruel end.

For daring to criticise the monarchy that rules the land of his birth with an iron fist, he was butchered within the hallowed premises of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Istanbul, Turkey, dismembered and (according to Turkish authorities) his remains were vaporised in corrosive acids despite the fact that the human body after death is considered sacred in Islam.

For a long time, the world has turned a blind eye to atrocities committed by Arab governments, especially the muzzling of the media. Hopes that the liberating force of the internet would help open the public space have all but fizzled as these repressive governments have aggressively blocked the Internet, whisked local reporters out of circulation and forced advertisers not to patronise specific publications targeted for destruction.

This is the Iron Curtain all over again, conceived, designed and remote controlled by internal power mongers. As Khashoggi himself noted in his last article, 'The Arab world needs a modern version of the old transnational media so citizens can be informed about global events. More important, we need to provide a platform for Arab voices. We suffer from poverty, mismanagement and poor education. Through the creation of an independent international forum, isolated from the influence of nationalist governments spreading hate through propaganda, ordinary people in the Arab world would be able to address the structural problems their societies face'.

The dollar is dearer than your life!

For propagating such sentiments, he was marked, not just for elimination but bodiless deletion. Then followed a spate of inveterate lies. The human soul fights back from the grave, rendering the oil-soaked voices of the Saudi government incoherent: (a) Oh, the ***journalist*** left the consulate on his own; (b) The Consulate is equipped with cameras that do not record; (c) The 15 hit squad members who flew in for the assignment from Saudi Arabia were tourists; (d) Kamal was killed by rogue killers; (e) The ***journalist*** died by mistake during a brawl; (f) A local collaborator disposed of Khashoggi's body.

When all those lies were punctured one after the other, the government resorted to demonising the victim as sharing the same beliefs with the Muslim Brotherhood, a claim which Bruce Riedel, a former CIA official, described as 'character assassination added to premeditated murder'.

But Turkey is soldiering on. Chief Prosecutor Irfan Fidan has requested for the 18 suspects to be extradited to face trial in Turkey, and asked Saudi Arabia's public prosecutor to disclose the identity of the 'local cooperator' who, according to a Saudi official, disposed of Khashoggi's body. The Saudi government in response has invited Fidan to Saudi Arabia to question the suspects and determine 'the fate of the body' and establish whether the killing was premeditated. The world will know the whole truth about this savagery someday, even if Khashoggi is gone for good.

Sadly, we live in a world where the dollar is dearer than human life. Unspeakable savagery is tolerable if you're rich. So, those who can rein in the Saudi regime would rather not, because of lucrative contracts expected from the repressive monarchy. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly touted a \$110 billion arms deal ('tremendous order') he negotiated with Saudi Arabia last year which he said would create 500,000 jobs (the truth, according to businessinsider.com, is 500 new jobs, but who is to separate Trump from his congenital lies)?

The savage butchery of a ***journalist*** in any part of the world is an ominous proverb to journalists all over the world. We mourn our own very own martyr with an adaptation of Omobayode Arowa's dirge for Adekunle Fajuyi

Fare thee well, Jamal

It is goodbye, as when a stranger is seen off to the town gate.

Once dead and re-born, a person does not know the front of his father's house.

The stump of the palm tree does not owe a debt to the wind.

Jamal, who was so feared that they had to vaporise his corpse,

Owed no personal obligation to those who played god.

He met his end like a true soldier of the pen

Child of the big cloth which made the loom shake violently

Made king and kinglet dance naked before the world's klieg lights

Give a heavenly hug to our own martyrs of the pen - Bagauda Kaltho, **Dele Giwa**,

Bayo Ohu, Sunday Gyang Bwede, Nathan Dabak, Zakariya Issa,

Famous Giobaro, Lawrence Okojie, Ike Onubogu et al ...

Whose individual suns were gruesomely eclipsed untimely

Fare thee well, one and all

Peace, perfect peace!

The dollar is dearer than your life!

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2018

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## Omisore's thoughtful thoughts

The Sun (Nigeria)

November 7, 2014 Friday

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**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

### **Body**

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T houghtful & Thoughtless Thoughts, a book written by Hon Ipoola Ahmed Omisore, a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, is a book based on his 'thoughts' on contemporary Nigerian issues and politics. It encompasses an account of his stewardship, marital life lessons, Yoruba and family history, general tips and wise sayings. The [...]

T houghtful & Thoughtless Thoughts, a book written by Hon Ipoola Ahmed Omisore, a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, is a book based on his 'thoughts' on contemporary Nigerian issues and politics. It encompasses an account of his stewardship, marital life lessons, Yoruba and family history, general tips and wise sayings.

The book contents are from his daily social media posts from 2010-2015. Divided in five sections and 14 chapters, section 3 deals largely with marital life in the context of weakening family values arising primarily from marital crisis in our society. We all know that that the institution of family and marriage are endangered these days.

The author dwells on the vagaries and challenges of marital life, family, love and sex. He place emphasis on home building, the age-long rivalry between mothers and wives, the importance of love in marriage (in actual fact, he encourages men not to give 100% love to their wives, suggesting 90% while the remaining 10% should be tied to the success of the marriage), according to him sex is a strong aspect in marriage. Both chapters 7 and 8 advise that a man needs patience to be a good husband, though I disagreed.

As a politician of the progressive circle, he eulogizes, with fanaticism, his leader and former governor of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a man with a lion's heart who bestrides the country's political space like a colossus. To him, Tinubu is a master planner, a phenomenon and a generous personality.

### Omisore's thoughtful thoughts

From pages 79-87, the author gives an account of his stewardship, including the empowerment of 350 women and 250 youths in Ojokoro, free pre-WASCE lectures, 200 free medicated eye glasses, free exercise books, one day honourable programme, youth football challenge and his visit to Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) to settle the medical bill of a patient abandoned by his family and friends after an accident.

He also defends his membership of the House of Assembly at 66 with a biblical proclamation! Also, refers to an incident that almost made him quit the social media when someone called him as a clown; but thank God, he kept faith.

One very important aspect of this book is the author's unwavering belief in the indivisibility of the country. He looks at those issues troubling Nigeria as dashed hopes, religious folly, insurgency in the north, Islamic banking, failed agendas, petroleum subsidy removal, the crave for private jets by Nigeria's bigwigs, state of infrastructure, the rich versus the masses, and graduate unemployment ( a time bomb).

He also offers workable solutions. Interestingly, he mentions the late ***Dele Giwa***, the well-known ***journalist***, killed by a letter bomb in 1986, saying they both attended the same primary and secondary school. They completed their secondary education in 1967 according to Omisore.

A whole section of the book (section 4) is devoted to Yoruba and Ile-Ife history. Omisore has his roots in Ile-Ife, and he gives a picture of his family history dating back to his earliest progenitors. Readers are taken on historical odyssey from the First Republic to the present. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Akintola, Sir adesoji Aderemi and great Ile-Ife indigenes like Chief Ajani Anibijuwon Omisore (the author's progenitor), Reverend Kayode (Femi Fani-Kayode's grandfather) Reverend Cole, R.A. Fani-Kayode, SAN, Chief Alex Duduyemi (former Palliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa), Chief Ijiwoye, Chief Adeyera, Barrister Micheal Omisade are given prominence in this chapter.

Chapter 13 is basically to celebrate the author's immediate family, most especially his aged mother, wife and children, while the last section (15) is devoted to general tips and wise sayings about life and development by great political leaders, former presidents, the Bible and others. It is to serve as a guide for anyone aspiring to greater heights.

On the whole, this is a good book. However, publication of feedback from his audience would have enriched the book. One must commend Hon. Omisore, 66, and indeed a grandfather, for his consistent commitment in terms of time and energy to social media for five years (2010-2014) and at odd hours (3am-6am). More importantly, he deserves praise for bearing the insults associated with social media platforms. This book has shown the positive side of social media.

Surulere, Lagos State.

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2014



## Journalists - An Endangered Species [analysis]

Leadership (Abuja)

July 24, 2010 Saturday

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**Length:** 1803 words

**Byline:** Chika Otuchikere

### **Body**

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Nigerian journalists have at no other time more than the present come under such serious threat of extinction. To borrow a term from the science, they have become an endangered species. The Fourth Estate of the Realm is the organ statutorily established to not only report activities and events in society and government, but also act as a check on both government agents and the populace in order to maintain a society of law and order.

Since the country's independence, the frequency with which journalists have either been assassinated or have met with gruesome and sometimes inexplicable death, leaves one with the impression that some individuals or organised groups are on a mission to wipe out the profession from the surface of the country's soil.

At the last count, no fewer than 50 Nigerian journalists have lost their lives in questionable circumstances, while scores of others have undergone gruelling interrogation in police detention or at the hands of persons who decided to take the law into their own hands to harass, detain, or maim journalists. The axiom 'the pen is mightier than the sword' no longer holds true in the Nigerian environment as journalists daily continue to fall by the guns of assassins.

The word of journalism is a high risk profession which exposes its practitioners to life threatening situations; in many parts of the world, premium is placed on the importance of the job and ensuring adequate protection for the journalists. In Nigeria however, evidence abounds that journalists operate in a hostile environment where there is no protection either from the government or the particular media organisation the ***journalist*** represents. It has become commonplace for journalists to be assassinated or kidnapped without the law enforcement agents doing any more than routine investigations.

Those who are lucky to escape the assassins' bullets are faced with imminent death from hunger due to poor remuneration from employers. Only very few media houses are reputed for keeping a date with payment of staff salaries. And when the salaries come, they are barely enough to transport the journalists to their offices and places of assignment. This has in no small measure contributed to eroding the fortunes of the job. Journalists are forced to depend on hand-outs from the same individuals and government agents they are expected to report. This definitely affects the quality of the report expected from such journalists.

Because there are no strict rules guiding entry into the profession, it becomes easy for individuals who either have no qualification or experience and most times are not attached to any medium, to go about parading them selves as journalists. These individuals who have become known as fake journalists go about begging for money from

## Journalists - An Endangered Species [analysis]

unsuspecting public figures who, believing that they are dealing with real journalists and thinking about the poor remuneration prevalent in the industry give them money for doing nothing.

These dubious individuals brandish identity cards of reputable media outfits which the public figures probably know and hold in esteem. In the end, they bring the profession into disrepute. On several occasions these fake journalist have put up unruly behaviours in public places; such behaviour has led the general populace to believe that the actions were carried out by genuine journalists.

A critical look at the activities of fake journalists would reveal an unwitting connivance of the real journalists in promoting fake journalists. The fake journalist understands that public officers are not supposed to give money to journalists for doing their legitimate duties. But seeing the frequency with which these public officers dip into their pockets to give money to journalists, they cash in on it and start parading themselves as journalists in order to collect money from the same public figures.

Were authentic journalists not compelled to depend on whatever they get from public officers for their livelihood, fake journalists would not have sprung up in the first place.

There have been stories of how some media employers encourage their reporters to engage in what many media watchers have come to dub 'corporate begging' by these journalists. They tell them that with the company's identity card in their hands, they already have a meal ticket which they could use to make a fortune for themselves. The identity card, according to such employers, is a passport to making money.

In many countries where ethics are strictly adhered to, it is ethically unacceptable for a journalist to accept even a meal from anyone in the course of his duties. A journalist cannot receive transport fare from other sources other than his employers. In Nigeria however, employers deliberately and impudently egg on their staff to indulge in unethical practices through poor and irregular remunerations.

Brown envelopes, an innuendo for gratification, has become an engrained element of the journalism practice. Many journalists would readily tell who ever cares to listen that without the brown envelope they would not be in the profession. Everyone agrees that the brown envelope contributes to the destruction of the profession but nobody at the moment is willing to address the malady. In Nigeria the issue of unethical practices in journalism should as a matter of necessity be looked into alongside the problem of poor remuneration for Nigerian journalists.

Information minister, Professor Dora Akunyili, in an attempt to address the issue of poor remuneration for Nigerian journalists recently received the report of a committee on a new welfare package for Nigerian journalists.

The committee headed by chairman of Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria (BON), Abubakar Jijiwa, came up with varied recommendations on how the welfare of Nigerian journalist can be improved. It is expected that the recommendation would move to the stage of implementation which has always been the greatest challenge of Nigerian policy makers.

The United Nations General Assembly declared World Press Freedom Day in 1993, following a recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. Access to information and the empowerment of people has been the central focus of the world Press freedom declaration. Nigeria, which is a signatory to the declaration, has defaulted in keeping the letters and spirit of the conference. Since 1999, the freedom of information bill has remained an abandoned project in the national assembly.

Vital information which would have served crucial purposes in assessing the government of the day has been jealously guarded from the media. Even legislators' sessions, which ordinarily should be assessable by the press, have been done behind closed doors.

The country is also a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) where articles 19 and article 9 respectively guarantee freedom of expression and the press. But the country has no law to stop media censorship rather abhorrent laws that promote it.

## Journalists - An Endangered Species [analysis]

The country has a barrage of laws which are promulgated to frustrate the practice of journalism. Such provisions as Official Secrets Act 1962; Newspaper (Amendment) Act 1964; The Defamatory and Offensive Publications Decree No 44, 1966, Sections 50, 51, 59, 373 - 379 of the Criminal Code Act, LFN 1999; Obscene Publications Act 1961; all these were carefully intended to bridle in the press.

Presently, the most fundamental issue which is not only threatening the continued existence of journalism practice in Nigeria but posing a serious matter of concern for Nigerians, are the incessant unsolved murders of journalists. The 1986 unsolved cold blooded murder of then editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine, Mr. Dele Giwa, more or less opened the floodgates for other unsolved murders of Nigerian journalists. There is evidence that since 1999, the military boys have who exchanged their khaki for civilian garb, transmuting from dictators to 'democrats', have become more daring and flagrant. More journalists have lost their lives since 1986 following in the trend of the murder of Dele Giwa. The following journalists have been murdered, starting in 1996 when Baguda Kaltho of TheNews disappeared.

Chinedu Offoaro of The Guardian, May 1, 1996

Tunde Oladepo of The Guardian, February 26, 1998

Okezie Amaruben of Newservice, September 2, 1998

Bolade Fasasi National Association of Women Journalists, March 1, 1999

Fidelis Ikwuebe, freelancer, April 18, 1999

Sam Nimfa-Jan of Details, May 27, 1999

Samson Boyi of The Scope, November 5, 1999

Godwin Agboroko of ThisDay, December 22, 2006

Paul Abayomi Ogundesi of ThisDay, August 16, 2008

Ephraim Audu of Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service, October 16, 2008

Bayo Ohu of The Guardian, September 20, 2009

Nathan S. Dabak of The Light Bearer, April 24, 2010

Sunday Gyang Bwede of The Light Bearer, April 24, 2010

Edo Sule Ugbagwu of The Nation, April 26, 2010.

The list above is by no means a reflection of all the journalists whose lives were cut short in the course of duties. Besides, many other journalists have suffered various forms and degrees of harassment, detention, and brutality.

The issue of the Nigerian journalist and the perils associated with practicing his profession, came to the limelight recently following penultimate Sunday abduction of four journalists on their return from a visit to Akwa Ibom State. For seven days, the journalists were held captive by their abductors without any government security operatives being able to trace their whereabouts. Although kidnapping has become a major criminal activity in the country when the journalists were kidnapped many Nigerians could not help but wonder how journalists would raise the ransom that was demanded. The kidnappers, as if bent on making a mockery of journalists, slammed a N250million ransom on the journalists freedom, which was later reduced to N30million after much negotiation.

Incidentally, after the journalists were released, Nigerians are still in the dark as to whether or not any ransom was paid and if yes, by who. The incident once again presented a picture of a country in the grip of kidnappers and other bandits. Journalists are the most apprehensive in the rising incidence of kidnapping, given their predisposition to travel from one place to another in order to cover assignments.

Journalists - An Endangered Species [analysis]

The government through, the Ministry of Information, has been urged to come up with a comprehensive welfare package for journalists. This package many observers say, must include a comprehensive insurance cover which would make provision for families of journalists in the event of death or disaster in the course of duty.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2010

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## 50th Award - Robbing Peter to Pay Paul [opinion]

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 2, 2010 Tuesday

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Length: 679 words

### **Body**

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INCONTESTIBLY, getting Britain to agree to Nigeria's Independence didn't come on a platter of gold. Nigeria nationalists struggled and fought the colonial lords. From Herbert Macaulay to Azikwe to Awolowo, the fire of nationalism got stoked.

However, it was Chief Anthony Enahoro who actually moved the motion for our nation's flag Independence in 1960.

And apart from obtaining our independence there was the deucedly-heavy national burden of evolving an egalitarian society where no man would feel oppressed. In fact, some people laid down their lives that Nigeria might live corporately and forge ahead. That is when we remember the Adekunle Fajuyis, the Muritala Mohammeds, the Ken Saro-Wivas, Pa Alfred Rewane the Abiolas.

And the October 19, 1986 A parcel bomb killed Dele Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine. Who killed him?

It is also true that some compatriots used their intellects abilities and substances to serve this nation dutifully. We therefore remember the Dr Oritsejolomi Thomas, first Nigerian surgeon in University of Ibadan, the Chief Festus Okotie Eboh, first Nigerian finance minister, the Awojobis, the Ransome Kuti, the Fawehinmi, heroes who fought tooth and nail to rid our land of despots, autocrats, tyrants and power-crazed totalitarians. Those were the tasking labours of our heroes past.

So it came as a rude shock in the course of the Golden Jubilee and the concomitant national awards to see the labours of our heroes past being rubbedish. Or else how does one explain away the conspicuous absence of these hallowed names from the revered list of awardees of Nigeria national honours.

Granted that Chief Obafemi Awolowo deservedly got their recognition and awards, why did we leave out the names of Chief M.K.O. Abiola, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Chief Festus Okotie Eboh, Pa Alfred Rewane, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Hogan 'Kid' Bassey, World Featherweight Boxing Champion, Mallam Aminu Kano, Prof. Grace Alele Williams, First Woman Vice Chancellor in Nigerian, Isaac Boro, Adegoke Adelabu, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, Segun Odegbami, Capt. Green Eagles who won Cup of Nations in 1980 and even from the hall of fame?

Was it a case of selective amnesia or involuntary omission that these proven titans of our corporate existence now constitute more footnotes on the ever-filling pages of individual and corporate history.

50th Award - Robbing Peter to Pay Paul [opinion]

Another pertinent and imperative question is how did the presidency, indeed the PDP power superstructure arrive at the names whose owners bagged national recognition? Who and who constituted the selection panel? Perhaps more importantly what and what criteria were used?

Incidental to this waxed issue is the obviously inauspicious development of the bomb which exploded at the venue of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations. It is on record that the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta-MEND-have denied responsibility for the outrage.

However what seems to beat our collective imagination hollow is the burning question of the motive behind this suicidal stridency. What in the name of all that is good, what was the bombers stand to gain from mindless violence on hapless citizens just going about their quotidian business in the land of the living.

The plot to blackmail Jonathan and Sambo at the Golden Jubilee anniversary looks like the "Hand of Esau but the Voice of Jacob". Is it not possible that the anti-Jonathan forces are resorting to terrorism to blackmail the Goodluck lead Government? No matter the number of bombs exploded in Abuja, Goodluck and Sambo remain the best choice for 2011.

They present Nigerians the best opportunity for a new beginning, a chance to walk away from a past of corruption and his-governance, a past riddled with the bones and stained with the blood of innocent citizens-men and women slain in the pursuit of hegemony a national calamity but why must President Goodluck Jonathan be made to pay the price for the military and highly condemnable the country, act sponsored by people who want to rule until thy kingdom come may everlastingly.

Mr. Gab EJUWA, a *journalist*, writes from Lagos.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2010

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## Why I Endorse Adams Oshiomhole [column]

This Day (Lagos)

July 14, 2012

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**Length:** 1688 words

**Byline:** Dele Momodu

### **Body**

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Fellow Edolites, please permit me to start this epistle by clearing doubts about my stakes in Edo State. Let it be known to all and sundry, and any unbelieving Thomas in particular, that I Ayobamidele Ojutelegan Momodu, is a bonafide, and proud, son of Edo State by parentage and not by honorary association.

My father, the late Jacob Momodu, was born and raised in Ihievbe, now in Owan East Local Government of Edo State.

At the time of my birth in 1960, Nigeria used to exist as regional compositions and our Afemai tribe fell under what used to be known as Mid-Westerners but since then so much water has passed under the bridge. Our country has moved from one disastrous experiment to another. And we've embarked on deliberate and voluntary journeys to perdition.

At what seemed the peak of our collective madness, we fought a most devastating and debilitating civil war of attrition but our selfish and myopic leaders still refused to learn useful lessons. All they have succeeded in doing is to set the stage for a far worse explosion that is just waiting to happen.

By birth, I'm an Ile-Ife indigene. I was born at Obalufon, in The Church of the Lord Aladura, the famous spiritual denomination of Baba Ayo Ositelu. Our Ile-Ife had always been cosmopolitan in nature and it served as a confluence for people of all tribes who converged there for greener pastures. Cocoa farmers and civil servants were the kings of years gone by and the gap between the rich and the poor was not too wide. My father was then a Road overseer at the Public Works Department (PWD), rising through the ranks after starting as a Labourer, as they were called in those good old days when there was dignity in labour. It remains a mystery how Pa Jacob left home in Ihievbe and meandered his way through the forests of a thousand daemons and finally arrived and settled in Ile-Ife, the cradle of civilisation.

It was in this ancient city that he met and fell in love with my beautiful mother, Lady Gladys, from Gbongan Olufi, near Ile-Ife, and I'm the only product of that immaculate union. My mum was a mere petty trader from Ile-Oosa in Gbongan but this did not diminish our sense of importance and self-worth. We had our cousins, the Oyemades, in Modakeke but also had our shop at Atiba square, located in the heart of Ile-Ife. It was here that Nigeria's iconic journalist, Dele Giwa, was born. Like my dad, Dele Giwa's father had migrated from Ugbekpe Ekperi, now in Edo State, to work in the palace of Oduduwa, where he served the then Ooni of Ife, Oba Adesoji Aderemi, so meritoriously that he himself became a household name in the community. Also working in the same palace was

### Why I Endorse Adams Oshiomhole [column]

Baba John II, the father of my former school mate and fellow **journalist, Dele** Agekameh, who came from the old Mid-West, and became the live-wire and the Chief of Staff to The Ooni. Baba John II remained with The Aderemis even after the demise of the great King, and was quartered in the monumental Atobatele House as a mark of gratitude for his superlative work.

I remember with sweet memories what life was in those days. It is like I'm writing about ancient history yet this is a tale about life in Ife about 40 years ago. The Oloyedes and Olojedes of Modakeke mingled freely with the Aderemis and Olagbajus. The Orafidiyas and Omoworares played with the Alawodes and the Ojewumis. We knew no difference. Our fathers accepted Ife as home and integrated us fully into the system. It is important to set the records straight for the sake of our kids who have totally lost interest in our glorious heritage and know nothing about Nigerian history.

I did not have the opportunity of visiting our popular village Ihiebe until after much after my father's death. It was normal at that period of our existence to hide your kids from the village as a way of protecting them from witches and wizards that supposedly littered the traditional environs of Africa. Ours was not an exception and this robbed us of the chance of growing up to know our roots. I still don't know precisely why most of our parents chose the Ibadan/Ile-Ife/Ilesa axis to live in at that time. The explanation is probably the fact that Ibadan used to be the centre of government in the West which was made attractive by the Action Group of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Titus Martins Adesoji Tadeniawo Aderemi (1889-1980, the Ooni of Ife, 1930-80, and the first Black Governor in Africa), Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, Alhaji Dauda Adegbemiro and others. They were the pace-setters of that golden era.

Our parents like all ambitious youths of their time, must have wandered their ways variously and navigated towards the West where those wise men reigned like their Biblical counterparts. Nigeria was not as fragmented and disunited as it is today and our fathers got easily assimilated into their new homesteads. I knew of so many Mid-Westerners and Easterners who settled in Yorubaland and gave their children Yoruba names. There was no discrimination of any sorts. We received bursary awards from Oyo State Government as recent as 30 years ago. Therefore, I feel so nostalgic about the paradise that we've lost in Nigeria.

Our fathers from Edo State were particularly honest, loyal and dutiful. They were also very energetic, the reason they were called Ajokutamamumi (those who can grind stones in their mouths, swallow without drinking water). The new Nigerian Masters after the old colonialists departed loved to hire them as domestic staff, and they were never found wanting in their cores. Our people produced Nigeria's greatest labour unionists, from Pa Michael Imoudi to the present governor of Edo State, Comrade Adams Eric Aliyu Oshiomhole. We dominated and monopolised the labour sector for many decades and I was proud when this culminated in producing a unionist and former President of the Nigerian Labour Congress as a leading political leader in Nigeria and a beacon of hope for Africa. Unknown to many, it is not an easy task to metamorphose into a political figure straight from advocacy. Most radicals have never been able to translate their dreams and vision into reality.

Politics in Nigeria is a matter of life and death. And politicians often throw all lethal weapons into the battlefield. A lot of money and resources are needed to prosecute political ambition, which true radicals are not expected to have. This is why it is almost impossible for rabble-rousers to win elections in our country. They often underrate what it takes to run and win an election. Adams Oshiomhole belongs in that realm of exceptional human beings who have mastered not just how to defend the poor but also how to manage the rich. The poor hardly control any nation in the world. The only control they have is in a state of anarchy and true democrats must understand that governments only thrive in an atmosphere of peace, and a leader would have to ultimately govern the rich and the poor. It is a delicate balance which only few people like Adams Oshiomhole can maintain.

This is my first admiration for this tireless fighter for the rights of the common man. Even if his well-starched Khaki socialist suits have now yielded ways to well-cut elitist French safari suits complemented by Mauri ostrich shoes, it is all part of the process, and the reality of blending slightly with modern times. As Governor of Edo State since 2008, Comrade Adams has demonstrated infinite capacity for the highly combustible game of politics. In a nation ravaged by political godfathers, he has taken on the Mafia dons and defeated them on their own turf. Before he came to power, Edo State was a veritable play-ground for all manner of political gladiators who did not understand

### Why I Endorse Adams Oshiomhole [column]

that the market was over and serious traders have since retired home. It takes a smart man to read the game and respond with elevated wisdom. This diminutive but ebullient David dared the Goliaths and floored them mercilessly.

What we are witnessing today in Edo State is a return match. The godfathers are back with a vengeance. They are out to reclaim a glory they never had. It is a blind war of big ego than common-sense. Perhaps, they never read the play Kurunmi by Ola Rotimi. They would have known that "when the tortoise is going on a senseless journey and you ask, when will you return, he will say, not until I have been disgraced..." I'm willing to place a bet that we are about to see that happen in Edo State later tonight. Unknown to those who seek to unseat Comrade Adams Oshiomhole by hook or by crook, life has changed from what it used to be. An average Nigerian is now much more conversant with happenings around him. At the touch of a button, we can now reach far-flung places. Human beings are better informed.

Before Adams came on the scene in our blessed state, nothing was seen in terms of development. The godfathers ensured that the goodies were shared by a few warlords and their acolytes. It is a major ordeal to travel to Benin by road despite the billions allocated in the days President Olusegun Obasanjo. A prominent godfather from Edo State could not use his humongous power at the time on fixing the road from Lagos which continues to claim innocent lives till this day. The energy being dissipated on fighting the Comrade-Governor should have been expended on tackling the boys they turned into armed robbers on our streets through poor governance.

Any visitor to Edo State would see instantly the new looks all around. In four years, we have felt what we never saw since the time Of Chief Samuel Ogbemudia. A man who has started this process of restoration deserves more time to complete a good job. We all know Edo does not enjoy huge resources, yet the current Governor has managed to squeeze water out of stone. His is a promise that we cannot afford to derail. Voting for the candidate of the godfathers is a risk too big to take. It is like leaving certainty for uncertainty.

I don't know the main challenger well. I have even tried unsuccessfully to memorise his name. But I know one man with an impeccable track record. He's no other than the man of destiny, Comrade-Governor Adams Eric Aliyu Oshiomhole.

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2012

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## **Who Benefits When Citizens Bomb Citizens? [opinion]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

January 17, 2011 Monday

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**Length:** 946 words

**Byline:** Bob MajiriOghene Etemiku

### **Body**

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Bombs first became instruments of assassination in Nigeria on October 19, 1986. The target then was Dele Giwa, a journalist. According to available records, forty eight hours before, the SSS summoned him to their offices for questioning on allegations that he was smuggling arms into the country.

They said that his motive was to launch a social revolution. Two days after, someone delivered a parcel bearing the coat of arms of government. When he opened the parcel, Giwa was blown to shreds. Unlike today where all manner of persons and groups claim responsibility for detonating bombs at whim, nobody has done so about the Giwa bombing. Speculations were rife too that the order seemed to have come from the man atop the government then. For any intent and purpose, those who delivered that bomb got what they wanted and blazed the trail for the use of bombs to settle scores.

Because the perpetrators got away with it, the bombing option grew in attraction. From that day till today, bombs explode in Nigeria as if we are in a state of war, or as if it is Christmas where everyone can light a firecracker at whim. Toni Kan in an article on Nigeriansinamerica documented the frequency of bomb blasts since the Giwa incident thus: May 31, 1995, Ilorin Stadium just before launch of family support programme; January 18, 1996, Durbar Hotel, Kaduna; January 20, 1996 Aminu Kano Int'l Airport, Kano; April 11, 1996 Ikeja Cantonment, Lagos; April 25, 1996 Air force Base, Ikeja; November 14, 1996 Murtala Mohammed Airport, December 16, 1996, a blast rocked Colonel Marwa's convoy; December 18, 1996 a bus belonging to Lagos State Task Force on environmental Sanitation was hit by a bomb; January 17 1997, a bus belonging to the Nigerian army was hit; April 22, 1997 a blast in Evans square claimed 3 lives and injured several; December 13, 1997: Lt Gen Oladipo Diya escaped death at Abuja airport; May 12, 1997 Ibadan got its first dose in front of Federal Min. of Works and Housing at Eleyele Road, near Jericho Hospital. January 27, 2002; Bombs stored at Ikeja cantonment exploded leading to the deaths of over 1000 Lagosians fleeing in fear.

Again, these bombs and bombings remained unresolved just like the Giwa case. And just like the consequence of these unresolved cases, anybody with a grudge in Nigeria took to the bombing option. First was MEND, a group in the Niger Delta fighting against the Nigerian state for control of oil proceeds. At first, these bombings were used to draw attention to the environmental problems in the Niger Delta. The MENDers used to be in touch with the public and with the media, to the extent that they gave advance warning before their bombs went off. Their bombs were not targeted at innocent Nigerians but at oil installations. Perhaps that is why most Nigerians now believe that the organization has become a tool in the hands of politicians interested in causing mischief. There are allegations that

## Who Benefits When Citizens Bomb Citizens? [opinion]

several of its splinter groups have sympathies with the highest bidder to the extent that if a bomb goes off now, any of the groups on the payroll of these politicians claim it and declare, 'MEND takes responsibility!' Just take a look at the incident on Independent Day in 2010. If the people of the Niger Delta have 'their' man in power, what justifiable reason would they have to want to kill him if not that certain politicians are bent on discrediting him, or want to state that the man cannot provide us security? The scale and magnitude of bomb explosions in Nigeria escalated in recent times particularly with a situation where children who are supposed to be in school stuff their pants with explosives to blow planes up.

Let us look at this with the coming general elections in April. Rather than prepare for the elections by debating and campaigning, politicians are preparing for war. Who, among them, imported those bazookas and bombs from Iran? Who among them bombed and murdered innocent Nigerians on Christmas Day in Jos? Who organised the reprisals? Who is hurling the bombs in Bayelsa state? Which one of them hired the hands that wired the Mogadishu bomb? But these questions will not reveal much if we do not understand some things first of all. That whosoever is responsible for these atrocities is a Nigerian or a group of Nigerians. He is, or they are very rich [if they could afford the mercenaries who are delivering the bombs], have some sort of military background, are politicians and hell bent on killing everyone to get their hands on Aso Rock. They want to simulate a state of anarchy and instill fear in the minds of Nigerians and create doubt as to the ability of the government to provide security. After they have done dinning with the Devil, they should quickly wipe their mouths and come forth to begin to play mind games by saying, 'See now, the government is weak. It cannot handle security and instead of grappling with the situation, it is trying to implicate us as the masterminds behind these terrorist activities' [as least that's what anyone can say].

Some of its decisions of the government, particularly with how it handled certain issues last year, portrayed it as lacking the ability to take hard decisions and stand by them. Just like the way the Giwa bomb remained unresolved and opened up a vista of bombing incidents, so does the inability to take a stand as government, expose you to all sorts of 'rats and cockroaches'. I do not see any reason why those within the radar of government as suspects have not been hauled in. 'Ah, these are big people o! Ah this will bring a lot of wahala o! you might say, but haven't we all been wahalaad enough by the atrocities of these politicians?

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2011

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## Dimgba Igwe: Passage Of The Veteran

PM News

October 13, 2014 Monday

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Length: 783 words

### **Body**

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gBy Kola Johnson

I had known Dimgba Igwe by reputation, right from his "Day One", as a staff writer in the defunct Sunday Concord. I, however, had the opportunity of interacting with him personally, beginning from some 28 years ago.

The veteran journalist, Monzor Olowosago and Dimgba were colleagues in the Sunday Concord, then edited by Dele Giwa, the flamboyant media chief of blessed memory.

I was at that time Assistant Editor Oriwu Sun, the imperial wave making leader of community newspapers in the Nigerian journalistic firmament, founded by Monzor Dawodu Olowosago who prior to his advent into newspaper publishing was the production Editor of Sunday Concord in which Dimgba was a senior staff writer.

At that momentous inception of that pioneer leader of community journalism, colleagues of the publisher, who were obviously joyous about his vision, had ensured that they availed their quota of input in the drive to propel the experiment to the envisioned height of fulfilment.

Prominent in this category more than others, were Dimgba Igwe and Chuma Adichie also of Sunday Concord. Their more enduring input to the newspaper contrast with Mike Awoyinfa's whose involvement probably didn't transcend the pioneer stage of the newspaper.

Dimgba and Adichie were by this token, more regular spectacles in our office then. This aside, I had cause to relate on frequent basis with Dimgba usually on the premise of his regular editorial contribution to our newspaper at the Mafoluku location of his office at the then glorious but defunct National Concord newspapers where we not only undertook our production work, but also printed the newspaper.

With time, Dimgba receded in presence, ostensibly on account of his increasingly busy schedule, as Adichie featured more prominently, even to date.

While Adichie radiated an impressively personable airs, Dimgba from my own ken was diametrically contrary. Not too pleasantly at least on the face of it. This to repeat, might after all be a natural outward facade at variance with perhaps a more sublime inner nature.

My interpretative connotation of this whether rightly or wrongly was that it might be syndromic of the popular Pentecostal strain of born-aginism.

### Dimgba Igwe: Passage Of The Veteran

It was of course for this abstemious code of born-againism as one was apt to recall then, that the Oriwu Sun publisher Mr Olowosago would usually tease him: "Dimgba how Una girlfriend now?" to which Dimgba was usually indifferent in response.

As Dimgba rose through the rank from the National Concord to the Weekend Concord and later The Sun coupled with his extra-journalistic exploit in book authorship it would not be off the mark to suppose that it was the bold hand of God tellingly visible as a trademark consequence of the prophetic covenant of Divine prosperity of God, for the exclusively hallowed circle of his chosen.

Dimgba to be sure, soon attained the apotheosis of journalistic fame and glory. He had a happy family and was full of life, beans, vigour, vibrancy and sundry items converging to salutiferous robust health.

For a self-made man like this writer, who for whatever reason was devoid of the availing benefit of a first degree this was no mean achievement but an unusual kind, exclusively repository of the inner circuit of the beloved of the most high Divine.

For Dimgba, all things went well. Life was fine. Life for him, was the quintessential paradise on earth. Dimgba became a role model to all especially by those animated by the juxtaposition spirituo-temporal cross-current of professional accomplishment on one hand and the subliminal elevated spirituality of the higher Pentecostal hue.

It was against this background that when recently, the departed media notable was writing, in a tribute in the wake of the death of Dora Akunyili little did it occur of the imminence of his own passage. It was as if the dividing line, in the spatial frame of time, would amount to an eternity.

Can you imagine a man, who in a remarkably pathetic elegy as rendered in his regular weekly column in The Sun had narrated his sense of shock, in the face of the eventual but grim unfolding that he would have no option than to henceforth refer to Akunyili in the past tense.

However, not exactly three months after, the mourner himself is gone in a stupefyingly reminiscent motion picture fiction or fantasy-like fable of classic textbook yarn for the marines. Gone to be seen no more. What an intriguing humour in irony!

Whereas he was supposed to jog to live, considering the infinitely endemic benefit of jogging to life he jogged to death. An even grimmer humour in archetypal paradox. May his soul rest in peace.

gJohnson is a writer and Journalist

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2014

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## **Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect**

The Associated Press

April 28, 2012 Saturday 03:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**Length:** 825 words

**Byline:** By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

**Dateline:** ISHERI, Nigeria

### **Body**

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Nigeria journalists, already the targets of threats and bribes, face a new danger after a radical Islamist sect bombed the offices of a major newspaper in the country and vowed to "hit the media hard" in Africa's most populous nation.

The sect known as Boko Haram claimed the suicide car bombing Thursday at the offices of the influential newspaper ThisDay in Nigeria's capital Abuja and an attack on an office the publication shared with others in the city of Kaduna, violence that killed at least seven people. The sect later issued a statement via an Internet publication saying it would target media groups that published stories it found unfair, a major threat by a group known to have killed at least two journalists already in its ongoing sectarian battle with Nigeria's weak central government.

"It's no longer like it was before, when you could pick up your bag and stroll into town and start reporting," said Deji Bademosi, a *journalist* who supervises reporters at the private network Channels Television.

The press in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with more than 160 million residents, at times resembles the age of newspaper barons and yellow journalism in the U.S. Oligarch families and politicians own many of the major newspapers that circulate in the country, while military rulers previously handed out television broadcast licenses to trusted friends.

ThisDay is owned by media mogul Nduka Obaigbena, whose flashy events in Nigeria have drawn celebrities from former U.S. President Bill Clinton to rapper Jay-Z. Obaigbena also has strong ties to the country's elite and the ruling People's Democratic Party.

Outside of shortwave radio newscasts by the BBC and others, newspapers remain the dominant messenger in Nigeria, where electricity is scarce and most people live on under \$2 a day. Hawkers stroll through traffic in major cities waving newspapers with bold, screaming headlines. Those in Friday's editions ranged from "Media Under Attack" to "Now, news hunters become the hunted."

"This is a throwback to the military era, when journalists were hounded and hunted by security agents. It was a terrible era when a number of journalists were killed," reporter Emeka Madunagu wrote in Friday's edition of the

## Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect

widely published Nigerian newspaper The Punch. "The media has not fared better since the return of civilian rule in 1999, as journalists have been targeted and killed."

Journalists themselves remain woefully underpaid, sometimes seeing their salaries arrive months late. ThisDay suffered an embarrassment several months ago when someone took control of the publication's Twitter account and began sending messages demanding Obaigbena pay his staffers their overdue wages. The newspaper later deleted the messages.

The lack of pay has prompted many journalists to ask interview subjects for money to cover their "transport" and other expenses. So-called "brown envelope" bribes routinely get handed to reporters covering news conferences, with journalists sometimes writing down their absent colleagues' names to collect more money.

Despite those ethical concerns, Nigeria's press largely enjoys the freedom to publish what it wants. Columnists routinely take on powerful politicians and the country's elite. However, security agencies and thugs have harassed and beaten journalists in the past. A letter bomb killed prominent journalist Dele Giwa in 1986, which many believe the military government of the time orchestrated.

Since 1992, at least 10 journalists have been killed because of their work, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Eight others have been killed for unclear reasons. In recent months, Boko Haram killed two journalists. Sect gunmen shot and killed Zakariya Isa, a videographer for the state-run Nigerian Television Authority, in the northeast city of Maiduguri in October 2011. In January, sect members shot and killed Channels Television journalist Enenche Akogwu as he reported on an ongoing attack in the northern city of Kano that killed at least 185 people.

Foreign journalists working in Nigeria routinely travel with bulletproof vests and helmets, as well as medical supplies, when covering violence in the country. Others have hired advisers from private security companies to take along on assignments. However, their local colleagues rarely have such equipment, training or assistance. They also live with their families in communities where ethnic, religious and political violence remain common and police protection often remains inadequate at best.

At Channels Television, managers have repeatedly talked to reporters about working safely in the field, Bademosi said. However, he acknowledged some in the industry have begun considering "self-censoring" their reports about Boko Haram out of fear of being targeted next.

"As journalists, we have to be very careful," Bademosi said. "We have become targets."

Jon Gambrell can be reached at <http://www.twitter.com/jongambrellap>.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2012

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## Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect

Associated Press Online

April 28, 2012 Saturday 3:42 PM GMT

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## Chronicling Ordeal of Journalists [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

May 3, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1663 words

**Byline:** Emma Maduabuchi

### **Body**

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There is no doubt among informed Nigerians that the Nigerian *journalist* and his profession are currently under siege. Within three months, two journalists have been felled by assassins' bullets, some others have had attempts made on the lives, while a great number is labouring under threats.

There is no time like now, in the history of journalism in Nigeria, when a great many journalists had had reasons to consider their continuous stay in the profession. Many were greatly jolted since the evening of Saturday, April 24, the day that Edo Ugbagwu, a reporter with The Nation Newspapers, was murdered by assassins in his sitting room.

Ugbagwu, who was of the Judiciary Desk of his organisation, specifically covered the Lagos High Court, Ikeja. He hailed from Oturkpo, Benue State. Edo, as he is fondly called, was shot at close range in the presence of his younger brother.

Before now, journalists have had cause to lament what has come to be known as their intimidation, persecution and brutalization by governments and their agents. But today, it is the belief of many that things have now gone from bad to worse with added hazard of assassinations.

Since the past two years, journalists have become targets of assassins. At least, assassins' have felled three journalists within that period. Abayomi Paul, a member of the Editorial Board of Guardian was killed in August 2008. In September 2009, Bayo Ohu, Assistant Political Editor of Guardian Newspapers was shot dead on a Sunday morning, while at home with his family.

Explaining to Daily Independent how it feels to be a *journalist* in a time like this, Anote Ajeluorou said it felt terrible. According to him, one of the reasons it felt terrible was because the motives for the attacks were not known, while the second was the fact that none of past perpetrators of the heinous crimes were ever apprehended.

Pained by the development, Ajeluorou, a correspondent with Guardian Newspapers, lamented a situation where all facets of Nigerian national life had been destroyed. He stated that it does seem there is a sector of the Nigerian life that the people boast with in the international arena. It pained him that the country could not be termed a sane society any more.

Continuing, he called on the authorities to be up to their responsibilities, and not to abandon the people to such wicked fate, being designed by evil ones in society. "The authorities must begin to do their duties as regards to the

## Chronicling Ordeal of Journalists [analysis]

welfare and protection of journalists. We would not be doing our duties of reporting the ills of the society, while the authorities stand by and watch us killed constantly," he said.

Iheanacho Nwosu, Group Political Editor of Champion Newspapers, lamented the pain of seeing colleagues cut down by assassins' bullets, and explained that such has often put journalists in a situation of considering an exit from the profession.

"We found a situation where you love a profession, but the hazards are getting so high that once often has a thought of turning his back. But then that is not the solution, because in the end you see that what is needed is to stand and fight, hoping that one day we will overcome it."

The fallout actually is that being under siege from all fronts, many journalists are becoming apprehensive, and unable to write their stories. Before now, journalists wrote controversial stories without looking at their backs, but today few journalists do afford that leisure.

As a matter of fact, that is currency of thoughts in several newsrooms that the reason is the coming 2011 elections. The theory is that there is belief in political circles that rigging may not be easy in the coming elections and that there is going to be greater demand for transparency. And as a result of this, politicians want to start from now to cow the media, who are central to making revelations that would truncate many political ambitions.

This is why people like Nwosu insist that to jettison the profession now would amount to succumbing to blackmail, and shirking in the responsibility of bringing about a better society for the coming generation.

The major pain of those who spoke to our reporter is that none of the deaths involving journalists in Nigeria have been uncovered. Responding to this, President of the Nigeria Guild of Editors, Gbenga Adefaye, said the murder of Ugbagwu was one too many, coming after the 'unresolved murders of Godwin Agbroko of ThisDay, Bayo Ohu of the Guardian, Abayomi Ogundeleji (also) ThisDay newspapers, and others in recent times. In his words, the list was becoming frightening. He also said that the mounting murder of journalists was indication that the country was on free descent into backwardness.

He also saw the death of Ugbagwu as a pointer that time has come for a review of strategy by all concerned in the media business in order that they begin to go beyond the expression of outrage, and doing some tangible things about it.

"We must share information and collaborate in our own peculiar ways to fish out murderers of journalists obviously out to intimidate all of us away from the path of freedom." Adefaye, speaking further, saw it as a campaign that the media must undertake.

Some Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also reacted to the killing of Ugbagwu. For instance, Media Ethics Organisation (MEO), a group that seek to sanitise media practice, condemned the killing, and described the incessant killing of journalists as backward and a dent on the nation's image.

According to the group: "This ugly development does not portend any good future for our nascent democracy, especially now that electioneering for the 2011 polls has begun...The attack on defenceless journalist will further dent the image of Nigeria and render worthless the re-branding project."

We did not see why journalists should be targeting for gruesome death when their only instrument is the pen and laptops."

Indeed, a great number of journalists who spoke were of the opinion that the whole murder of journalists boils down to preparations for the coming 2011 elections, and that the intentions is to scare journalists enough to be wary of probing deep into peoples and developments, and writing about them.

Determined to do something tangible about the development, the Lagos Chapter of Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), scheduled a rally in Lagos yesterday with the endorsement of the national body.

## Chronicling Ordeal of Journalists [analysis]

Speaking concerning the rally, Usman Shu'aibu, National Secretary of the body explained that it was protest that would cover all the hazards the Nigerian journalists is being subjected to daily. He explained that such would include the murder of two journalists in Jos, Plateau State, by a mob.

The NUJ is not letting off in its campaign. On Thursday, April 29, the Abuja Chapter petitioned the police commissioner in the Federal Capital Territory, John Haruna, over a new threat to journalists. This threat came in the form of a text message which reads: "Gbenga Aruleba (AIT), Yusuf Ali (The Nation), Olusola Fabiyi (Punch), Chuks Okocha (ThisDay) all have no hiding place. U must be happy now that Prof. Maurice Iwu has been sacked due to ur bad stories and reports. We will deal wit u soon." The text told them to remember **Dele Giwa**, Bayo Ohu, and Edo Ugbagwu, and wished them good luck.

Danger for journalists dated from a long time in the past with sundry persecutions practised against journalists like that of a certain Amakiri who was shaved with broken bottles in the 70s by soldiers.

The hazards of Journalists practice entered another phase when **Dele Giwa**, founder Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine was killed in a letter bomb during the regime of military president, Ibrahim Babangida.

On December 22, 2006, Godwin Agbroko, 53, head of the editorial board of the ThisDay Newspapers was shot in his car in Lagos. He was winner of PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Prize in 1997. He was known to have edited many titles during the military era, from 1993 to 1999, and even though he was detained at least twice, there was no previous attempt on his life.

Because of Agbroko's, rating both at home and abroad, the Director General of United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Koichiro Matsuura had to condemn his murder, stating that it was a heinous crime and blow to private media in the country and to freedom of expression.

He added: "I trust that the authorities will spare no effort in investigating this case and in bringing the culprits to trial. This is all the more important in a country, which like Nigeria, enjoys a vibrant and diverse media that contributes to democracy and rule of law."

Unfortunately no such thing was done. The killers went free and all was quiet on the front of law enforcement agents. What followed next was the murder of three other journalists in quick succession.

There was also the death of Tunde Oladepo, a senior correspondent with the Guardian newspapers. He was at his home early morning in Ogun State when five masked men came into his house and shot him to death in front of his wife and children. Nothing was removed from his house leading investigator and analysts to conclude that robbery was not a motive.

The mounting hazards of what journalists go through can also be gleaned form the case of Bagauda Kaito, a **journalist** with The News magazine who disappeared in 1996 in suspicious circumstances.

At a time he was accused of terrorism by the police authorities, insisting that he was the brain behind a bomb blast at Durbar Hotel, Kaduna, in 1996.

Seeking reasons why serious attempts must be made to protect journalists, Adefaye insisted: "Every time a citizen, particularly a **journalist** is murdered and the security agencies act helplessly, the faith in the ability of the Nigerian state to protect its own is undermined. Whenever a **journalist** is killed, debate is muffled, free speech is trampled on the ground and the nation dives into the cave, into a state of fear and dances away from decency and civilisation."

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2010



## Al-Mustapha's acquittal

The Sun (Nigeria)

July 21, 2013 Sunday

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Length: 759 words

### **Body**

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After 14 years of trial, victory finally came the way of Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, former Chief Security Officer (CSO) to the late Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, and Alhaji Lateef Shofolahan, former aide to the late Chief MKO Abiola, following their discharge and acquittal by the Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos.

In the July 12 unanimous judgement, the Appeal Court quashed the conviction of Al-Mustapha and Shofalahan by a Lagos High Court over the murder of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, wife of Moshood Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the annulled June 12, 1993 election.

In the ruling delivered by Justice Rita Pemu, the Justices set aside the judgement of the lower court and held that the prosecution failed to establish the charge of conspiracy and murder against the appellants. They also ruled that it was foolhardy and unreasonable for the lower court to have convicted the appellants when it was evident that the prosecution had a bad case. The court averred that there existed a huge shadow of doubt in the case of the prosecution, which ought to be resolved in favour of the appellants. The Appeal Court concluded that "in a criminal trial, the burden of proof is beyond reasonable doubt and this is a chain that cannot be broken." It held, among others, that "the prosecution listed four witnesses - PW 9, 10, 11 and 12 - as witnesses which it intended to call at the trial, but never called any of them." It was, perhaps, based on these technicalities that the matter was resolved in favour of the appellants.

Expectedly, the ruling has elicited mixed reactions. While the victors' relations are celebrating and applauding the outcome, the same cannot be said of the Abiolas, who feel that the victim had not got justice.

It will be recalled that Justice Mojisol Dada of the High Court of Lagos had on January 30, 2012, found the accused guilty of the offence of conspiracy to murder Alhaja Abiola, contrary to Sections 324 and 319 of the Criminal Code of Lagos State. The High Court had relied on the evidence of Barnabas Jabilo (a.k.a Sgt. Rogers)

### Al-Mustapha's acquittal

and Muhammed Abdul (a.k.a Katako), the two prosecution witnesses, which she adjudged as credible and reliable enough to convict the appellants.

While it is good that this matter has been concluded, it is depressing that it dragged on for so long a period. That such a criminal matter lasted 14 years in our courts speaks volumes of our criminal justice system. Ordinarily, murder cases should not take so long to resolve. Keeping suspects in detention for 14 years is inexcusable.

It is also lamentable that the case, like many other high profile murder cases in the country, has neither established those who committed the murder, nor given justice to the victim. This judgement has not solved the riddle of who killed Kudirat Abiola. This accounts for the family's rejection of the verdict and their insistence on getting justice. Since the Appeal Court allows for appeal within a period of 90 days, aggrieved parties can explore such option in furtherance of their search for justice.

It is regrettable that the country's criminal justice system has been unable to unravel almost all high profile murders in the country. Perhaps, that can also explain why such murders still occur. If those behind earlier killings had been brought to justice, it would have deterred others from such high level criminality. Up till today, the justice system has not resolved many murder cases including those of former Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, Onitsha-based human rights lawyer, Barnabas Igwe and his wife, Amaka, and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain, Harry Marshall. The apparent foot-dragging on these and other killings, despite recent assurances by the Police High Command that the Force will reopen investigations on all high profile murders in the country with a view to resolving them, is not helpful at all.

It is, however, worth pointing out that many of the high profile murder trials failed to secure conviction of suspects based on technicalities. In this regard, it is necessary for our judges to consider the submission of the respected, retired Supreme Court jurist, Justice Kayode Eso, on the use of technicalities in deciding cases like these. In Udo vs State (1981), Eso held that "this court has said quite often now that technicalities should not inhibit the exercise of justice. This is more so in capital cases." It is time we resolved all high profile murders in the country to give substantial justice to the victims and their killers.

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2013

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End of Document

Journalists in Nigeria , long threatened, become target of radical Islamist sect Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect



## **Journalists in Nigeria, long threatened, become target of radical Islamist sect; Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect**

Canadian Press

April 28, 2012 Saturday 11:43 AM EST

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**THE CANADIAN PRESS** 

**Section:** INTERNATIONAL

**Length:** 827 words

**Byline:** Jon Gambrell, The Associated Press

### **Body**

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ISHERI, Nigeria - Nigeria journalists, already the targets of threats and bribes, face a new danger after a radical Islamist sect bombed the offices of a major newspaper in the country and vowed to "hit the media hard" in Africa's most populous nation.

The sect known as Boko Haram claimed the suicide car bombing Thursday at the offices of the influential newspaper ThisDay in Nigeria's capital Abuja and an attack on an office the publication shared with others in the city of Kaduna, violence that killed at least seven people. The sect later issued a statement via an Internet publication saying it would target media groups that published stories it found unfair, a major threat by a group known to have killed at least two journalists already in its ongoing sectarian battle with Nigeria's weak central government.

"It's no longer like it was before, when you could pick up your bag and stroll into town and start reporting," said Deji Bademosi, a journalist who supervises reporters at the private network Channels Television.

The press in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with more than 160 million residents, at times resembles the age of newspaper barons and yellow journalism in the U.S. Oligarch families and politicians own many of the major newspapers that circulate in the country, while military rulers previously handed out television broadcast licenses to trusted friends.

ThisDay is owned by media mogul Nduka Obaigbena, whose flashy events in Nigeria have drawn celebrities from former U.S. President Bill Clinton to rapper Jay-Z. Obaigbena also has strong ties to the country's elite and the ruling People's Democratic Party.

Outside of shortwave radio newscasts by the BBC and others, newspapers remain the dominant messenger in Nigeria, where electricity is scarce and most people live on under \$2 a day. Hawkers stroll through traffic in major

Journalists in Nigeria , long threatened, become target of radical Islamist sect Nigeria journalists become target of radical sect

cities waving newspapers with bold, screaming headlines. Those in Friday's editions ranged from "Media Under Attack" to "Now, news hunters become the hunted."

"This is a throwback to the military era, when journalists were hounded and hunted by security agents. It was a terrible era when a number of journalists were killed," reporter Emeka Madunagu wrote in Friday's edition of the widely published Nigerian newspaper The Punch. "The media has not fared better since the return of civilian rule in 1999, as journalists have been targeted and killed."

Journalists themselves remain woefully underpaid, sometimes seeing their salaries arrive months late. ThisDay suffered an embarrassment several months ago when someone took control of the publication's Twitter account and began sending messages demanding Obaigbena pay his staffers their overdue wages. The newspaper later deleted the messages.

The lack of pay has prompted many journalists to ask interview subjects for money to cover their "transport" and other expenses. So-called "brown envelope" bribes routinely get handed to reporters covering news conferences, with journalists sometimes writing down their absent colleagues' names to collect more money.

Despite those ethical concerns, Nigeria's press largely enjoys the freedom to publish what it wants. Columnists routinely take on powerful politicians and the country's elite. However, security agencies and thugs have harassed and beaten journalists in the past. A letter bomb killed prominent journalist Dele Giwa in 1986, which many believe the military government of the time orchestrated.

Since 1992, at least 10 journalists have been killed because of their work, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Eight others have been killed for unclear reasons. In recent months, Boko Haram killed two journalists. Sect gunmen shot and killed Zakariya Isa, a videographer for the state-run Nigerian Television Authority, in the northeast city of Maiduguri in October 2011. In January, sect members shot and killed Channels Television journalist Enenche Akogwu as he reported on an ongoing attack in the northern city of Kano that killed at least 185 people.

Foreign journalists working in Nigeria routinely travel with bulletproof vests and helmets, as well as medical supplies, when covering violence in the country. Others have hired advisers from private security companies to take along on assignments. However, their local colleagues rarely have such equipment, training or assistance. They also live with their families in communities where ethnic, religious and political violence remain common and police protection often remains inadequate at best.

At Channels Television, managers have repeatedly talked to reporters about working safely in the field, Bademosi said. However, he acknowledged some in the industry have begun considering "self-censoring" their reports about Boko Haram out of fear of being targeted next.

"As journalists, we have to be very careful," Bademosi said. "We have become targets."

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Jon Gambrell can be reached at [www.twitter.com/jongambrellap](http://www.twitter.com/jongambrellap).

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2012



## Tribute for Kunle Ajibade

PM News

May 31, 2018 Thursday

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**Length:** 896 words

### **Body**

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If you knew Kunle Ajibade in his early days of journalism, he would not invoke the image of a jailbird who had squawked fear down the entrails of military brutes. He was no political reporter or commentator. He was ensconced in books, especially of the type that traded in metaphors and sometimes cryptic narratives alien to those who ran affairs in the country.

But it is the nature of destiny that heroes do not come in predictable packages. Dele Giwa, for instance, did not want to be anyone's hero. Neither was Rosa Parks now fated to civil rights legacy. She was no more than just a passenger who wanted to get home. When he decided to resign from the African Concord with his colleagues to found The News, he was evolving like some of the full-blown characters he reviewed in Novels from Balzac to CamaraLaye. Like true heroes, he was not shy when the storm came.

I first saw him as a fellow student of the Obafemi Awolowo University. We never spoke. We were not even acquaintances. Kunle Ajibade I saw around and remembered as a youth of chiselled and parsimonious build, the lean and hungry look of a poet.

I was to build a friendship with him outside the provenance of school. I did not even know it was the same fellow with little flesh around his bones that was Ajibade when he and another with a potential for corpulence known as Dele Momodu took on a mainstay of the profession over plagiarism charges. He was introduced to me by Momodu in our African Concord days, and my first impression did not go beyond his ready affability and good humour.

Subsequently I saw he did not go to school just to pass literature exams. He was the real deal. But it was those early days when boys were trying to chart their ways in the world. We were in our 20's. I did not know Kunle had a few years over me. I did not see him for a while until I attended an event at the NIIA, and Ajibade materialised in a white shirt and what Americans called Chicago tie. His tie flew, in obedience to a tepid wind, over his shoulder and back.

As if anticipating my query, he chuckled, "Sammy, you see what they have forced me to wear. I don't feel comfortable in this attire." I chuckled in reply. Ajibade had landed a reluctant job as a copy writer in an advertising company. He was like an eagle trying to swim.

This month, as Ajibade turned 60, he is no longer small in any one's mind, even if Ajibade body has forsaken fatness. He is small in frame, but big in spirit. He has exemplified a potent force in engaging a misanthropic state: the power of the written word. In this enterprise, he has not allowed himself to be carried away by the scent of lucre, the languor of luxury, the seduction of power and the Mephistophelean opportunism of the upper class.

A major event that demonstrated his principle was the watershed crisis of his generation: June 12. IBB was the villain of the age, and followed by the butcher Sani Abacha who Buhari, in a seizure of gratuitous gratitude, is eulogising. I may even say elegising because Buhari will be the first leader in Aso Rock to praise that demon of our history as a hero. It was because of the fortitude of men like Ajibade that we

### Tribute for Kunle Ajibade

have democracy of which Buhari is a beneficiary without fighting for it. Buhari was quiet when men died and others fled to exile. He never said anything against Abacha's butchery and barbaric proclivities as long as his foe, IBB, was stepped aside.

It was hard to meet with Ajibade in those days of the June 12 crisis when he, along with Bayo Onanuga, Dapo Olorunyomi, (who turned 60 last year) Femi Ojudu, et al, locked themselves in mud wrestling with Abacha and his men. They did not stay at home. They lived in the suitcase, the SSS a step behind them. Ajibade was held and deposited in Abacha's gulag. They threw the key away and no one could reach him. We feared for his life. I recall an interview published in a newspaper in which his beloved wife said when she missed him, she took shelter in his library. So, we get it. He is a man of words. The words that twitted power, that wrinkled a highbrow army, that blossomed with yearnings of the people. He left jail and survived the barbarous scandal of that era, and he has remained in the bosom of progressive thinking up till today.

When I look back at the corporate spectacle of Ajibade at NIIA, I muse about how his life might have turned had he not changed course and clocked off that chapter with corporate Nigeria. Imagine him today, a CEO of a leviathan firm, suffocated in a Manhattan suite, his visage grave like that of Shonekan, his language about profit and loss, his temperament of the mercantilist sobriety of the masters of the universe. In the air, in a private jet. On earth, in a Rolls Royce. At home, a palace lord. It is hard to imagine him not at peace with banter and ideas, with Death and The King's Horse man or Things Fall Apart, or squaring off against Odia Ofeimun or waking me up in the morning about who won the year's Nobel prize. Or in my private struggle when I rankled a certain political family, he was the only journalist and friend who consistently rang into my ears that I should stick to my principle. His inner chronometer was not made for the showy grandeur of the upper crust. He found his calling. He found his voice.

For Ajibade, there is still a lot of gold to mine at 60. In Shakespeare's words, "the world is your oyster."

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2018

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'If I step foot in Nigeria , I'm going to die' – David Hundeyin



## **'If I step foot in Nigeria , I'm going to die' – David Hundeyin**

NigerianEye.com

September 21, 2023 Thursday

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**Length:** 179 words

### **Body**

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David Hundeyin, a Nigerian investigative journalist, hasclaimed that he would be killed if he returned to the country.

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The fugitive claimed that the federal government was afterhis life for exposing some confidential information.

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Hundeyin further claimed that the Nigerian government wrotea letter to the Ghanaian authority demanding his repatriation after he exposedan "internal communication within the Nigerian military ordering mobilisationof troops to Sokoto in preparation for operations in the Niger Republic."

;

He alleged that a jet was sent to bring him back to Nigeriabut he had already fled Ghana at that time.

;

He made claims in a recent podcast interview, The RENExperience.

;

'If I step foot in Nigeria , I'm going to die' – David Hundeyin

Hundeyin said, "I have written high-risk stories that I can't think of any Nigerian **journalist** alive or dead who has attempted... Okay, maybe **Dele Giwa**. And he paid for it with his life. He got a letter bomb and hedied. And that was one such story. I have done several.

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"So, there is a reason I can't step foot in Nigeria. If I step foot in Nigeria, I am going to die. That's a fact. I will die."

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2023

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## Seye Kehinde - the Rising Tale of a Magazine Mogul!

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 02, 2015

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**Length:** 783 words

**Byline:** Florence Amagiya

### **Body**

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The owner of City People Magazine,

, needs no introduction in the entertainment industry and to many Nigerians. His magazine, 'City People' is one of the most consistent magazines in Nigeria since 1996. Dr Seye's career as a **journalist** began in the university and hasn't stopped till date. Today, he is one of the major players behind the success stories of many reputable entertainers in Nigeria and in the diaspora. Recently, on his 50th birthday celebration held on Friday, 24th April 2015, many celebrities including politicians of repute were present. In this edition, I present to you, an icon, a **journalist**, the father of three children, and the publisher of City People Magazine.

Read on...

I am from Ogun state, but was born and bred in Ibadan. Then Ibadan was the capital of the old western state. I grew up with my parents who were civil servants. My childhood was an exciting one. I attended a Catholic school, Mary Hill Convent school. Then I had my secondary education at Remo Grammar School in Sagamu, Ogun state.

I did my A-Levels at Ogun state Polytechnic before I gained admission to study History and Political science at the University of Ile Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU). While studying, I worked as a freelance reporter for Herald Newspaper.

From that time, the seed of journalism was planted in me. I served at Kwara state Polytechnic Ilorin. During my service year, I shuttled between teaching History and writing articles for Newswatch Magazine. I didn't have to look for a job after youth service because I had worked for renowned newspaper houses in Nigeria already.

The Guardian and Tribune were some of the newspapers I worked with. I also worked with big names like the late **Dele Giwa** and so many others. I could also have easily chosen to stay back at Kwara state Polytechnic and become a Lecturer or a reporter at Herald Newspaper but I decided to move to Lagos state to write my own story.

I was part of the team that founded The News Magazine and Tell which were the two existing weekly magazines as at then. I also worked with Newswatch. But I had a dream to be my own boss some day. So one day, I called a few of my colleagues and told them that it was time I moved on. But I was careful enough to discuss my fears with them and that I may return if things doesn't work as planned. Through their support and prayers in November 1996, 'City People Magazine" was born.

### Seye Kehinde - the Rising Tale of a Magazine Mogul!

The best period of this job came ten years ago when we started gaining grounds and stability. Initially, when we started off in 1996, it was during the military era. There was a lack of civilian democracy; the media was under strict supervision from the government so we could not write just any news. But when the civilian government came in, we returned to a good level of stability and the economy became pleasant.

I would say the big break came from the fact that we remained consistent, I put everything I had into it. Thankful to goodhearted people, word went round that there was a new Magazine in town and supporters came out. Looking back, there was no particular breakthrough but the fact that we stayed fervent and hardworking made it a wonderful journey.

When I started, City People Magazine was located only in Lagos state but along the line, a few of my colleagues advised me to take it to the next level by cutting across other big cities in the country. As it was, we started sending copies to regions like the South West, and then expanded to Delta, Abuja and Port-Ha court. The response was massive and now we are one of the best.

### CHALLENGES

The resources were not always available but I was hopeful on the little money I was able to make. From the starting point, it was not rosy at all because the biggest challenge was funding. I am grateful to God that I had a few friends who were very supportive so we had to be diligent. Now the establishment is a success story.

I was so happy that people find me worthy of being associated with. It was a working day and I was honored that they could grace my ceremony with their presence, most of them stayed practically for the whole day.

### GIVE-BACK TO SOCIETY

Our focus is to make sure that something goes back to the society. Being into showbiz, we realized there was a setback in the industry. There are many talented artistes and entertainers who want to showcase their talent to the world and be appreciated but have no means or opportunity to do so due to numerous reasons.

The platform is what we have, so we can afford to collaborate with whoever comes our way for publicity and support. So far so good, we have helped a lot of people achieve their dreams by helping with album launches, movie premiere, and advice on management.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2015

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## **Journalists in the Throes of Insecurity [analysis]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

August 9, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1976 words

**Byline:** Emma Maduabuchi With Agency Reports

### **Body**

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Harassment of journalists is gradually but steadily becoming the trend in Africa.

In fact, the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), the African regional affiliate of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), is extremely disturbed and concerned by the growing tendency towards enactment and enforcement of more repressive, complicated and legal sanctions against journalists.

In Senegal, Cameroon, Tunisia and Burundi, journalists and their leaders face constant harassment and threats to their safety as part of a brazen campaign to curb the right to freedom of expression in Africa.

"African journalists are increasingly facing governments- inspired violence that is intended to silence the independence and credible voice of journalism. Increasingly, these assaults and campaign of elimination are also targeting human rights defenders and democratic forces that fight for journalists' and peoples' right to impartial and receive free information," says FAJ President Omar Faruk Osman.

On 10 July, the Senegalese First Cabinet of the Regional Court of Dakar summoned Abdou Latif Coulibaly, Chief Editor of the Weekly Gazette to answer charges of concealment of administrative and private documents. The judge ordered the indictment of the **journalist** but released him on bail pending conclusion of investigations. Senegalese journalists consider that the indictment, based on concealment of documents, constitutes in its content a serious attack to the principle of the right that guarantees under Senegalese substantive law an absolute protection for journalists' sources of information.

"This is the most shocking and reprehensible case to be conceived by the government's prosecutors in their blatant attempts to manipulate national laws against independent journalism. This case, initiated by a private company and supported by the authorities, sets a negative precedent against investigative journalism. This mischievous, politically motivated and deliberate act of harassment against Abdou Latif Coulibaly must stop," Omar Faruk said.

In Cameroun, Alex Gustave Azebaze, First Secretary of the National Syndicate of Cameroonian Journalists (SNJC) and also IFJ Executive Committee member, Thierry Ngongang, Editor-in-Chief of the privately-owned Spectrum TV; Annani Rabier Bindzi, **journalist** at Canal 2 International TV and Dr. Aboya Endong Manasse, Editor of the bi-monthly newspaper Africa Top Secret have collectively been facing a long, complicated, devastating and tiresome trial since January 2010. Their ordeal stems from their participation in a 2008 TV debate on the police investigations

## Journalists in the Throes of Insecurity [analysis]

of the "Albatross" saga, the failure to explain how a Boeing 727 purchased for the President's fleet was never received, six years after local journalists, led by Azebaze revealed the scandal while working for Le Messager.

"Our Cameroonian colleagues are held up and stranded in extremely dangerous and tiresome legal battle that meant to take away their time, energy and resources. Once they have been sufficiently worn down, they will be eliminated, freedom of the press will be further eroded and fear and self censorship will replace independent thinking in the hearts of media practitioners," said Omar.

"I reiterate our call for an end to these unjustifiable legal proceedings and once again demand the grave action of closing down their outlets be reversed and our colleagues are allowed to resume their normal and useful service to the journalistic profession," he declared.

"This is the longest legal action journalists' union leadership faces in Africa and we will not close our eyes to this facade of sham legal action."

Zied El-Heni, member of the leadership of the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) and the Steering Committee of FAJ has been followed unremittingly and painstakingly by security operatives of Tunisian Government for defending freedom of expression and campaigning for the release of detained colleague Boukadous Fahem who provided coverage of the uprising in the mining region of southern Tunisia. He was summoned by the Crime Squad on July 23, 2010 to answer charges of defamation, though he was released after four hours of detention after he insisted and defended the legality of his writings that have not violated the code of the press. On Tunisia's National Day, July 25, 2010, Zied published an open letter to the district attorney in which he expressed his indignation at the manner in which the Crime Squad had been given leave to investigate a matter of opinion. The next day, the Crime Squad called him to their offices.

"These repeated and unrelenting attacks against union leader, Zied Elheni, and the right to free expression is one example of the gross human rights violation that ordinary Tunisians endure daily. Security operatives in Tunisia are a major threat to journalists and have been responsible for several attacks against journalists. The Tunisian government has a duty to protect its citizens from brutal elements in the security forces and must ensure that this assault of journalists stops with immediate effect. The continuing attacks on Zied El-Heni, an elected African journalist's leader will only increase global attention to the deplorable situation in Tunisia. Our message is clear: stop going after our colleagues and allow them to express themselves freely and fearlessly," the FAJ President stated. Journalist Jean Claude Kavumbagu, Editor of Net Press news agency, Bujumbura, Burundi, was arrested from his office by Colonel David Nikiza, Police Chief in the western part of Burundi. He was arrested after he had published an article on July 12 in which he talked about

Somali extremists group Al-Shabaab's threats to attack Burundi and was critical of Burundian security forces. He was charged with treason and faces life in prison if convicted. When he was arrested, the police did not follow the proper legal procedures of Burundi and he is being held in contravention of Burundi's criminal procedure code, which states pre-trial detention of the journalists for limited situations. Interestingly the law under which Jean Cloude is charged only applies during wartime.

"This has no other explanation except a deliberate misuse of state institutions to harass journalists. All laws were bypassed in circumstances that can only be interpreted as vindictive action by officers abusing their positions to settle personal scores. Jean Claude never committed such a serious act of betrayal of his nation and there is no point in charging him with treason. We feel that he will not have a fair trial and we want him freed immediately," Omar Faruk Osman said.

The Federation of African Journalists is committed to devising new strategies to tackle the increasing abuse of legal processes and wanton attacks by security operatives against journalists.

In Nigeria, the situation is hardly cheery. Though, with the contemporary situation, harassment of media men by government agents seem to have gone down considerably, there still obstacles on the way of the average Nigerian journalist. Apart from a frustrating working environment occasioned by irregular and in most cases unpaid meager salaries, he is increasingly becoming vulnerable to certain untoward occurrences in the society. Recent events

## Journalists in the Throes of Insecurity [analysis]

concerning the kidnap of some officials of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), had in fact, thrown to the fore the mounting danger in the practice of the profession in Nigeria. The development had also exposed the vulnerability of the media practitioners to even the supposed ordinary people, who the average Nigerian **journalist** has shed sweat and blood in fighting for their cause.

On Sunday, July 11, Wahab Oba, Lagos State Chairman of the journalists' body; Adolphus Okonkwo, Zone D Secretary; Sylvester Okeke, Secretary to the Union; Sola Oyeyipo, Lagos based **journalist**, and Azeez Abdulraf, driver of the team were kidnapped on their way from their National Executive Council meeting in Uyo, Akwa Ibom. They were only released a week later.

While they were in captivity however, it fell on their friends, families and colleagues to bear the emotional pains of their absence.

Theirs was just a case in the ordeals of journalists in Nigeria. There is no doubt among informed Nigerians that the Nigerian **journalist** and his profession are as a result currently under siege.

On Saturday, April 24, Edo Ugbagwu, a reporter with THE NATION Newspapers, was murdered by assassins in his sitting room in Lagos. Since the coming of civil government in 1999, danger for journalists has heightened. Incidentally the last two years and half have seen more assassination of **journalist** than the past 30 years put together. At least, assassins felled three journalists within that period. Abayomi Paul, a member of the Editorial Board of The Guardian was killed in August 2008. In September 2009, Bayo Ohu, Assistant Editor in the organisation, was shot dead, while at home with his family.

The hazards of journalists practice entered another phase, during the regime of former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, when **Dele Giwa**, founder Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine was killed in a letter bomb, in October 1986.

On December 22, 2006, Godwin Agbroko, 53, head of the editorial board of the THISDAY Newspapers was shot in his car in Lagos. He was winner of PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Prize in 1997. He was known to have edited many titles during the military era, from 1993 to 1999, and even though he was detained at least twice, there was no previous attempt on his life.

There was also the death of Tunde Oladepo, a senior correspondent with The Guardian newspapers. He was at his home early morning in Ogun State when five masked men came into his house and shot him to death in front of his wife and children. Nothing was removed from his house leading investigator and analysts to conclude that robbery was not a motive.

The mounting hazards of what journalists go through can also be gleaned form the case of Bagauda Kaito, a **journalist** with THE NEWS magazine who disappeared in 1996 in suspicious circumstances.

As a result of incessant dangers that journalists face as a result of their profession, they had to organise a protest march in Lagos, the nation's commercial capital recently.

On Thursday, April 29, the Abuja Chapter had petitioned the police commissioner in the Federal Capital Territory, John Haruna, over a new threat to journalists. This threat came in the form of a text message to Gbenga Aruleba, an Africa Independent Television (AIT) presenter and other colleagues because for doing their jobs. One of such messages read: "Gbenga Aruleba (AIT), Yusuf Ali (The Nation), Olusola Fabiyi (Punch), Chuks Okocha (ThisDay) all have no hiding place. U must be happy now that Prof. Maurice Iwu has been sacked due to ur bad stories and reports. We will deal wit u soon." The men were told to remember the fate of late **Dele Giwa**, Bayo Ohu, and Edo Ugbagwu. Sundry persecutions practised against journalists even dates back to the colonial era when the nationalists in the media were being hounded.

There was also the case during the military era when a certain Amakiri was shaved by soldiers. There are Nigerians, who look at the hazards of the profession and the poor remuneration of journalists, and wonder why it is so. It is still quite incomprehensible to many, especially journalists, that a profession saddled with so much

Journalists in the Throes of Insecurity [analysis]

responsibility is neglected, while the journalists themselves who are making so much sacrifice for the growth of the country are so much neglected.

It is intriguing, many observe, that journalists are not insured; not well paid, and upon that often owed salaries running into months in some media outfits. Explaining the feeling of a *journalist* in a time such as this, Anote Ajeluorou, of The Guardian described it as being terrible.

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2010

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## **Bankole's Diabolical Sense of Humour [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

August 7, 2010 Saturday

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**Length:** 751 words

**Byline:** Elijah Ologe

### **Body**

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The renowned ***journalist*** and master of prose, the late ***Dele Giwa***, who first used the title above, must have the like of Dimeji Bankole, speaker of the House of Representatives, in mind when he did so in a sinister context.

How else should the mischief and conceit of the speaker be described when, without basis, he called on new state seekers to ensure the re-election of current members of the House of Representatives from the areas seeking new states to actualize their agitations?

Bankole reportedly told new state seekers that new members to the National Assembly may not command enough clout to get what their constituencies want, adding that the demand for new states is so intense that if the current members tenure is not renewed, the areas seeking new states do not stand any chance of actualising their ambitions. I beg your pardon, Dimeji!

One is, indeed, taken aback by the illogicality of the statement of a supposed speaker of the House of Representatives. To say the least, the statement lacks basis, as it is devoid of any rational thought and argument. It is rather an idea that is influenced by emotion and whim. There is no altruism in him. It is just his own clever ruse designed to deceive people and achieve selfish desires.

If one may ask, what has the so-called members of the House of Representatives, including those who have been re-elected, three times, and are still seeking to be returned for the fourth time, achieved for their constituencies? We know how wretched and poor some of them were before finding their ways into the House. But they have simply taken advantage of being in the legislature to systematically empower themselves financially that they have suddenly acquired the status of the nouveau rich. This is coming when the civilized world is advocating for strong institutions, rather than strong men. It was President Obama, who, indeed, spoke to Africa from Ghana on the need for the continent to build strong institutions.

Bankole spoke about experience? Is the experience in fighting in parliament or manipulating the system to achieve parochial intentions? Also, how much transformation has Bankole's experienced friends brought to their constituencies? Indeed, to those who know their onion, and truly appreciate the pitiable realities that their constituents face, their experience, by now, ought to have translated into tangible goodies otherwise called "democratic dividends" for the people.

### Bankole's Diabolical Sense of Humour [opinion]

It may interest Bankole to know that, in saner climes, a political leader that is being investigated for corrupt practices would have long left the office to allow proper investigations, not calling for additional tenure, when the one yet to finish is tainted with claims of corrupt practices. This call exposes the speaker as trying to be clever by half with his attempt to hoodwink the people and pave the way for an "unopposed" return of himself and colleagues who have performed woefully.

It must be pointed out that Bankole's statement runs counter to that of the Senate president, Senator David Mark, who has consistently assured new state seekers that those who genuinely merit, and meet the requirements for state creation shall have their requests granted "unconditionally" during the life span of this present dispensation.

Bankole's call is a pointer to how retrogressive the leadership of the House of Representatives has become and how conceited they are. The devious point that Bankole is trying to sell to the public is that state creation, which some Nigerians are passionate about and want to get as of right, can only be possible if they can rub the back of current members of the House with return ticket to parliament. This is tendentious manipulation of a process, and an abuse of position and authority. It is an improper use of influence and it is simply corruption and blackmail. This is really stooping low by our No. 4 man!

Nigerians, particularly new state seekers, must resist this dangerous self-seeking, self-serving and poisoned carrot being dangled by the leadership of the House for what it is: A campaign for reward and glorification of ineptitude.

Bankole's statement should be treated with ignominy and scorn. Candidates much more competent than them abound in all the constituencies who are go-getters. They deserve to be given the opportunity also to serve their people. Their constituents' power to change non-performing parliamentarians must be exercised to the maximum.

Ologe, a labour activist, is resident in Patani, Delta State.

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2010

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## Revisiting power abuse in Nigeria

The Sun (Nigeria)

August 1, 2013 Thursday

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Length: 767 words

### Body

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The recent call by former Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon (rtd), that all cases of abuse of power under the past military and civilian regimes in the country be reopened and investigated to do justice to the aggrieved, is meritorious, even though belated. The former Nigerian leader proffered this view in Lagos during the launch of the book, *The Tragedy of Victory*, written by Brig.- Godwin Alabi-Isama (rtd), one of the principal actors in the Third Marine Commando of the Nigerian Army Division that received the instrument of surrender from the Biafran Armed Forces at the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970. Gowon rightly observed that far from being an army problem, abuse of power is a national malaise that makes people in authority to use the weight of their office to hurt perceived personal enemies.

It is commendable that Gowon, who led the Nigerian side during the war with the breakaway Eastern Region, is the one calling for a revisit of instances of power abuse, which were particularly prevalent during that war and the subsequent military regimes, although our civilian governments have not been totally immune from the menace.

It is always good to investigate and address the grievances of victims of power abuse, including those that occurred in wartime. However, with regard to the Nigerian Civil War which theatre closed 43 years ago, it may be difficult to determine the exact locations, victims, perpetrators of many of the crimes and the weapons used, as will be required to secure their conviction in the courts. This is more so as many of the culprits and their victims have passed on. The effort to probe wartime power abuse may turn out a needless whipping up of old antagonisms and emotions that may do nobody any good.

But then, since Gowon did not limit his advice on a probe of power abuse in the country to any particular incident or period in the nation's history, the government should take up the gauntlet and investigate all verifiable instances of power abuse. It is indisputable that many human rights abuses were and are still being perpetrated in the country. It is important to bring perpetrators of these abuses to justice to serve as a warning to others. This will also give justice to their victims.

## Revisiting power abuse in Nigeria

Gen. Gowon deserves commendation for his forthrightness on the problem of abuse of power and office in Nigeria, many decades after leaving the seat of power. This is more so as he is most likely to be one of those to be charged for some of these infractions. His avowed interest in ensuring justice for victims of power abuse in the country marks him out as an iconic statesman.

Let the government take up this challenge and revisit all cases of power abuse in the country. Besides the pogroms against Eastern Nigerians in the Northern part of the country, the atrocities during the Nigerian Civil War and the Asaba massacre, we have had the Odi and Zaki Biam massacres as well. In addition, most high profile murders in the country have not been resolved while those behind such murders are yet to be unmasked and brought to justice. The killers of political actors such as Chief Bola Ige, Kudirat Abiola and Marshall Harry, and the notable journalist, Mr. Dele Giwa, are yet to be determined and brought to justice.

Revisiting these suspected instances of power abuse in the country, as Gowon has suggested, is the best way to ensure that past wrongs are corrected and old wounds healed. The country is the way it is today simply because we tend to cover past official misdeeds as if nothing untoward happened.

Government's effort to right past wrongs was demonstrated in the setting up of the Oputa Panel by the regime of former president, Olusegun Obasanjo. Unfortunately, the recommendations of the panel are yet to see the light of the day. This could well be responsible for the general insecurity in the country, since the failure to punish past offenders encourages others to toe the same line.

Let President Goodluck Jonathan summon courage and set up a panel that will revisit past power abuses in the country with a view to correcting them as well as serving as deterrent to others. It is necessary that we revisit our past to produce a brighter future. Living in self-denial is dangerous. For us to build the virile and egalitarian nation of our dreams, Nigeria must be based on truth and justice, and the present crop of leaders must avoid human rights abuses and general abuse of their office. No nation worth its name thrives in injustice and abuse of office. This is the time to revisit all past wrongs so that we can move on without malice.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2013

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## Killing of Journalists [editorial]

Daily Champion (Lagos)

April 29, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 732 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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THE recent gruesome murder of three Nigerian journalists, in two different attacks, have, again, exposed the increasing state of insecurity in the country and suggests that journalists may have truly become endangered species.

The chilling accounts of how the assassinations were carried out, in Lagos and Jos, show the general poor rating of human life in the country.

At about 6.30pm on Saturday, April 24, 2010, yet-to-be identified gunmen, invaded the Shasha, Lagos residence of Mr. Edo Sule-Ugbagwu, a judiciary correspondent of The Nation newspaper and shot and killed him.

Mr. Okloho, Edu's younger brother, who witnessed the killing, said the assassins first confronted him and asked him to bring 'the money.' But as he tried to explain that he had no money to give, Edu, his elder brother came in to meet them and the gunmen shot and killed him and walked away without stealing anything from the house.

Edu's wife, who was waiting for her husband opposite their house at the time of the incident, revealed that she was going out with Edu, when somebody called his mobile phone. Edu, reportedly gave the caller direction to their house and requested his wife to wait for him outside as he wanted to receive some visitors. But as he got back to his flat, Edu was shot and left to die in the pool of his blood.

Two other journalists, Mr. Nathan S. Debak, the Deputy Editor, Sunday and Mr. Gyang Bwede, a reporter, both of who worked with The Light Bearer newspaper, a publication of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, COCIN, headquarters, Jos, were also willfully killed in very chilling circumstances, this time in Plateau state..

The two reporters were on an assignment in the Nasarawa Gwom area of Jos North Local Government when they ran into rioters at Dutse Uku. According to reports, after pleading with the armed rioters and explaining that they were journalists on assignment, the killers stabbed them mercilessly and abandoned them to die at the scene of the incident.

Coming not long after several other journalists in Nigeria, like AIT's Efenji Efenji, Guardian's Bayo Ohu, and Thisday's duo of Abayomi Ogundehi and Godwin Agbroko, were killed in questionable circumstances and when their killers are yet to be tracked down and prosecuted by the police, Nigerians are worried whether the murderers of these latest three will ever be found.

## Killing of Journalists [editorial]

This worry is fuelled by the general concern over the increasing cases of unresolved murders in the country , including the parcel bombing of ace **journalist, Dele Giwa** and the brutal killings of political leaders and elders like Bola Ige, Harry Marshall and Alfred Rewane, to mention but a few.

While condemning the killings, we insist that the police must not treat this case like the other unresolved high profile murders.

The image of the police in particular and of Nigeria in general has continued to suffer great blows as a result of the piling cases of unresolved high and low profile murders and this must be reversed through resolution of these puzzles.

The task of resolving murders or other crimes should not, however, be left to the police alone. The public has very important roles to play, especially in the area of provision of information. .

Many citizens in Nigeria, however, still shy away from playing this vital role, primarily because of lack of confidence in the police .This has affected negatively the effectiveness of investigators, who, thus, have little or no clues to work with.

Also, the society is not so well ordered that there is a credible data bank of residents, including, at least, their addresses, vehicle particulars, telephone details and such like. Unfortunately, however, Nigeria is yet to fully complete the controversial National Identification Card project which would have been a step in the right direction.

Sadly, the reality suggests that the country is one big jungle where gunmen walk casually into people's homes in broad daylight, shoot their victims point blank and stroll away, unchallenged, unidentified and unidentifiable because nobody is ready to volunteer information. This must stop.

We, therefore, call on the acting President Goodluck Jonathan-led Federal Government to ensure that the killers of these three journalists are immediately caught and prosecuted. Also, if Nigeria wants to be taken seriously, time has come when the killers of similar murders must be fished out to face the law.

**Load-Date:** April 30, 2010

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## **Another Journalist Felled Amidst Insecurity**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

May 3, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 912 words

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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In brazen circumstances reminding one of the chilling insecurity in the land, Mr. Sule Edo Ugbuagwu, a law-abiding Nigerian and journalist with The Nation newspaper, was murdered on Saturday, April 24 at his residence in Lagos. His assailants, according to reports, took not an item from his home. He was aged 42. A highly enterprising journalist, Ugbuagwu is described by his close colleagues as a harmless gentleman. All have been puzzled by the motive for his killing.

We denounce this cruel cutting down of an innocent man in his prime. Ugbuagwu did not deserve to die the way he did.

Expectedly, his senseless murder by unknown persons has drawn a national outpouring of indignation and grief. Most of his relations, colleagues and friends who feel particularly outraged by the killing are demanding that the killers must be found. For, as we mourn the painful exit of this fine professional, we earnestly hope that this is one death that will not merely lengthen the list of serial killings in our country, for which the police are yet to provide an answer. We take exception to any consideration or possibility that this case might be passed off as another Gordian knot that the police cannot untie. It is one murder too many.

The handicaps of the Nigeria Police Force are well known; so also is the fact that, in peacekeeping operations outside the country, Nigerian police personnel have consistently given a good account of themselves, in contrast to the lamentable laxity and ineptitude they display at home. The present reality, however, is that insecurity in the land has reached alarming levels. Violent crimes like armed robbery, assassinations, armed abductions for cash, and cold-blooded murder now terrorise the populace nationwide on a daily basis. Hardly any succour is provided by the security agencies in the face of this criminal onslaught against the public. It may be said, in fact, that most Nigerians are walking corpses - just waiting to be plucked down at will by daring criminals.

If "the security and welfare of the people is the primary purpose of government," as the Constitution solemnly declares, then the present situation is intolerable. The government must rise to its primary constitutional duty in order to justify its existence and legitimacy. When violent criminals ply their evil trade with the certainty that they will not be caught or punished, as is now too often the case, then the polity is in trouble.

While the crime detection and prosecution capacities of the police must be urgently upgraded, some of the social roots of the problem must also be frankly confronted. Any society with Nigeria's current unemployment figures is courting disaster. An estimated 70 million Nigerians are currently jobless. In addition, about four million graduates of

## Another Journalist Felled Amidst Insecurity

higher institutions join the unemployment queues every year. Evidently, the grave security crisis in the land is tied to pervasive frustration among the populace. The government should urgently address the mass poverty and economic hopelessness among the majority of citizens, as a critical step towards tackling violent crimes.

Meanwhile, the police are afflicted by extreme corruption and systemic ineptitude. At a time when various state governments have set up special anti-crime outfits in their respective domains to assist the police, the nation has witnessed violent crime in its stark pervasiveness, brazenness and sophistication. Of late, chilling accounts of mayhem unleashed on the people by men of the underworld have become a dominant issue in the media. In some of these cases of violent killings and assassinations, policemen are repeatedly fingered. Sule Ugbuagwu's case joins a long list of ***journalist***-victims of murder, confirming the investigative impotence of the police: ***Dele Giwa*** (Newswatch), Godwin Agbroko (Thisday), Abayomi Ogundehi (Thisday) and Bayo Ohu (The Guardian), to name the most prominent. Their killers walk the streets as free men, perhaps menacing the society with fresh crimes, relishing their impunity.

Few watchers of the police force will not be appalled that the past eleven years of a democratic dispensation, with unprecedented oil earnings for the first eight years, have left the police in their virtually helpless situation. We dare say, in fact, that the disastrous quality of policing in the country, particularly the primitive state of forensic investigative capacity, provides the clearest proof perhaps of the criminal irresponsibility of the Nigerian ruling class. Especially offensive is the appropriation, by the same ruling elite, of large portions of well-armed and well-trained police personnel for its own protection, while the general public is abandoned to its fate.

While the government intensifies efforts to better the lot of the police, the force itself should also look within and resolve to plug those loopholes that make the force the scorn of the society. Furthermore, the structural constraints of the Nigeria Police should be tackled. There is need to reconsider, for example, demands for state and metropolitan policing structures as an alternative to the present unworkable, single-command, centralised structure. Nigeria needs a decentralized, people-oriented community policing system matching the democratic temperament of the current dispensation, and possessing the requisite intellectual, financial and fire-power to prevent and control crime. Let Mr. Ugbuagwu's tragic murder trigger a positive change.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2010

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## Journalism Under Attack [analysis]

Leadership (Abuja)

December 12, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 856 words

**Byline:** Aniebo Nwamu

### **Body**

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Julian Assange and WikiLeaks remind me of the good old days of journalism. Many of us who have taken to this profession or vocation were inspired by the need to expose evils committed by people in government.

Our role as the Fourth Estate of the Realm has, however, been eroded by other interests. And I'm not referring to the Nigerian media alone. All over the world - except perhaps a few nations like Russia, Mexico and Iraq where investigative reporting still blossoms - the unwritten rule seems to be: Support the government in power. An old colleague, commenting on the WikiLeaks release, says that American journalism has become fat and lazy. In the 1970s, he states, "the journalism motto was 'Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable,' but reporting now amounts to retyping press release disinformation -- it's no wonder US newspapers are on their death bed."

Since the WikiLeaks report broke, I have been following several discussions on the internet and am satisfied that more than 95 per cent of comments have been in favour of the internet whistleblower. Only those whose activities have been exposed are talking about irresponsibility and the threat posed by the revelations. Indeed, this is the latest global struggle for freedom of information. It reminds me of my teacher Prof. Sylvanus Ekwelie's constant reminder: authoritarianism is still alive.

To those who still don't understand the hullabaloo around WikiLeaks and its founder Assange, let me explain briefly: 39-year-old Julian Assange, an Australian, and his team founded the internet organisation in December 2006 with a mission to "keep governments open". WikiLeaks has servers all over the world. Anybody with useful information is encouraged to send it to WikiLeaks, which leaks it to the world through the internet. In the past four years, the medium has done very well. The latest leaking of US diplomatic cables, which exposes intelligence agencies, diplomats and governments, have got Assange and WikiLeaks into trouble. The website has been attacked from all fronts, but it is yet to be subdued. Assange himself has been arrested and charged, not with espionage, sedition, treason or libel, but with rape - an offence allegedly committed years ago in Sweden. Interpretation: there is no legal basis for attacking WikiLeaks.

The hypocrisy of western governments and western media has been unveiled once more. When WikiLeaks published exclusive photos and stories on the Kenyan elections, nobody took notice; now that America's "secrets" are being let out, we are witnessing Armageddon. I expect every *journalist* to rise in defence of WikiLeaks and Assange; freedom of information is under attack. Journalism has no meaning if it cannot defend the truth that WikiLeaks has been publishing.

## Journalism Under Attack [analysis]

The world has become a dangerous place today partly because there is too much secrecy in government and in business. Corruption is also blossoming across the world because cliques of human beings have constituted themselves into mafias that operate in secrecy to suppress the truth. These same people are the leaders of governments, big businesses and, most unfortunately, the media. In Nigeria, even what a senator earns is a secret. And that's why our lawmakers have refused to pass the Freedom of Information Bill. Whenever it suits our leaders' interests, they hide behind "official secrets". Under the military, journalists were jailed because they published the names of ambassadors-designate. Newswatch was proscribed for publishing a report before the military government's "approval".

More information will always lead to more truth, greater security and less corruption. And good information almost always comes from hidden sources. Insiders will forever remain the handmaid of good journalists. The man who leaked "Watergate," as a security agent in 1974, revealed his identity only three or four years ago when he was already 93 years. In 2006, many people wondered how this newspaper was able to expose Obasanjo's third term plan and even follow those who were sharing money among lawmakers around. Informants kept sending information; sometimes, they would drop pieces of paper in our premises and vanish. Had there been a medium like WikiLeaks in the country, perhaps, we would have since known the killers of **Dele Giwa** and the several other victims of political violence in this Fourth Republic - a repentant assassin could have gone to the internet to confess all and still hide his identity.

So, those denying what WikiLeaks has published about them are wasting their time. President Goodluck Jonathan, Pfizer and others cannot discredit WikiLeaks. They are losing the battle because truth is constant. Let's have many Assanges in our country. Through text messages, insiders can reveal the sources of stolen funds, the identities of assassins, election riggers and other criminals. But we simply lack leaders and agencies that can muster the political will to tackle corruption and crimes. The names of 80 Nigerians indicted in the Halliburton bribe scam are still on my laptop. They are all walking freely; some are even running for president.

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2010

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## **Laspotech Students' Initiative Towards Community Development**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

February 17, 2010 Wednesday

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**Length:** 838 words

**Byline:** Akinwunmi King

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Community development is said to be a structured intervention that gives communities greater control over the conditions that affect their lives. However, it does not solve all the problems faced by a local community, but it goes a long way in building confidence to tackle such problems as effectively. Community development also works at the level of local groups and organisations rather than with individuals or families.

Community development has to look both ways: not only at how the community is working at the grass roots, but also on how responsive key institutions see to the needs of local communities in which it operates.

The above explanations made the National Diploma (ND III Part Time) students of the Department of Mass Communication, Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu inaugurate a community development project recently. The students donated two pieces of lectern to the department of mass communication and four to other departments in the school. The purpose of the project according to the President of the organising committee, Moses Eluwa is to give back to their immediate community, which is the school that has given a lot to them in the last three years. "This inauguration of our community development project is part of the fulfillment of our final year for the certification of National Diploma. I would like everyone to know why individuals and organisations should contribute to community development in any area they find themselves.

"This helps a community especially the rural areas to grow faster than one can imagine, for organisations and corporate bodies in different environment in Lagos State that it is their duty to contribute their own quota to the development of any community," Eluwa stated.

Continuing, he said that it is not only the state and Federal Government that should bear the burden of making life better for the citizens, adding that people must support the government. "That is why we the ND III students of mass communication department deemed it fit to contribute to the development of the school to help our lecturers and the students themselves teach and learn in a conducive environment," he added.

The lesson to be learnt from the contribution according to Eluwa is that no matter how little one's contribution is towards the development of one's community or society; it goes a long way to meet the needs of some people.

### Laspotech Students' Initiative Towards Community Development

In order to know about the challenges ahead of them, the students invited two speakers from the legal and media profession. The first speaker, Abiola Peters from the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (Choice F.M. 103.5) Ikeja. He spoke on the topic "Career and Prospects for Mass Communication Graduates".

On career option in mass communication, Peters defined mass communication as the conveyance of a message from a source, comprising an individual or group through a channel to a heterogeneous audience. On the characteristics of a good ***journalist***, which include honesty, decency, fairness, objectivity, nose for news, courageous, integrity, confidence amongst other characteristics, he also told them how they can excel in the profession of journalism.

On his part, Olafimihan Fatoba, a legal practitioner who spoke on topic "The Media and its Role in Nation Building", stated that the media plays a major and fundamental role in bringing the society to the stage it is today. According to him, the media has the major responsibility of upholding the responsibility and accountability of government to the people, "the media is at the forefront of shaping the society towards its features goal. In the first, second and third republic and into the brutal years of military dictatorship, the media was prominent, strong and never retreating. The media have so remain even now that we have something in a resemblance of democracy

"It is therefore indisputable that the media in Nigeria against all odds have assisted in bringing the Nigeria society into the present state. Let me quickly say that in doing this, the media have paid the ultimate price. One may need to talk less about imprisonments, closure, proscription, intimidation and violence in the face of murder. Those who are behind the murder of ***Dele Giwa*** may just be breathing some air of relief on the passing away of Chief Gani Fawehinmi. Very fresh in our memory is the murder of Bayo Ohu, The Guardian Assistant News Editor, it is therefore incontrovertible to say that the media has played a major and fundamental role in bringing the Nigerian society to the position it is today", Fatoba stated.

The Public Relation Officer of the School, Lanre Kuye who represented the Rector at the event, lauded the ND III students for the project. He urged other students to emulate the ND III mass communication students. He also called on the Federal Government to listen to the striking lecturers of universities.

Highlight of the event was the unveiling of the six lecterns that was donated by the students, which was coordinated by one of the lecturer in the Department, Ifedayo Daramola.

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2010

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## Five Books for Media Persons [opinion]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

June 14, 2015

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**Length:** 1063 words

**Byline:** Eugenia Abu

### **Body**

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Many persons have asked me how I have managed to achieve the little I have in the media profession. I believe, first of all, it's the grace of God and secondly, passion and learning from my seniors in the profession, practice, reading, research, strategic thinking and finally learning from journalists in other climes. I have always loved television, watching Hawaii Five O, The Saint, Charlie's Angels, Canon from when I was very young.

I watched Khalifa Baba Ahmed of blessed memory, the late Uncle Bode Alalade, the late Ikenna Ndaguba, Bimbo Oloyede, Dr. Tom Adaba and the likes over the years. But I had no clue that I was going to work in television. I wanted to be a Lawyer. But God said this was my calling. I have been blessed to be a multimedia personality with experience in Radio, TV and the Print. It is truly a blessing. I read voraciously and listened keenly from Letters to America on BBC Radio to reading Mohammed Haruna to Dan Agbese to Dele Giwa and several other columnists and from a very young age, I read Reader's Digest, Time Magazine, Vogue etcetera. My father ensured he prepared me well so I had these magazines whenever I needed them. I was a bookie. I read everything. Today I wish to present to my readers the type of books that inspire me as a broadcast journalist, columnist and a professional. It is hoped that these books will give out something to aspiring media persons and validate those already in practice.

1. Barbara Walters has been an incredible international broadcasting icon. At 85 years old, she has paid her dues interviewed world leaders from Castro to Bush and also interviewed major world celebrities. When I saw her book, Audition, at an international airport, I had to have it. Audition is a fat memoir of her career, her life and her journey. In a New York Times Sunday book review, David Kelly reports, "In 1980, Barbara Walters was about to report that Ronald Reagan had selected George H. W. Bush as his running mate when another reporter at another network beat her to it. Walters says she "nearly went crazy" after losing "the scoop of the whole convention". Her colleague George Will simply looked at her "with disdain" and declared, "It's ONLY TELEVISION, Barbara". Heresy. "Audition" tells of a life lived on, in and never far from TV. This bulky memoir weighs in at more than 600 pages, falling midway, bulk wise, between "Oblomov" and "Ulysses". Unlike Marion (Molly) Bloom and Ilya Ilyich Oblomov, however, Barbara Jill Walters has never been content to lie around in bed all day. She's a woman of action who doesn't let anyone push her around... " All journalists in broadcast and print must get a copy of this book by a world-renowned broadcast journalist who has seen it all.

2. Ndaeyo Uko remains one of Nigeria's phenomenal journalists; cheeky, satirical and knowledgeable. He joined The Guardian Newspapers as a young French graduate and went on to become the enfant terrible of the print

## Five Books for Media Persons [opinion]

media holding down some of the most exciting coverages for many years and writing an audacious column in The Daily Times titled Rock 'n Rule, which later became a book. In this book he took a satirical look at Information Minister Alex Akinyele's moustache (which led to an uproar) and met President Babangida because of what he had written about him in his column. He has worked in newsrooms in the United States, United Kingdom and Nigeria as reporter, Columnist and Newspaper Editor. Now he is on the faculty of Monash University Australia teaching journalism. Friend, brother, adventurer, Dr. Uko's book Story Building, which he was kind to give me on a visit to Australia, demystifies the narrative style of writing by playfully undoing the knots of journalistic storytelling. And by Jove, he is more than qualified to write this book. Get a copy.

3. A.A Gill is a columnist and travel writer and I ran into his book Here and There through a recommendation in the British Airways onboard magazine. Just excerpts set me wanting more and I tracked down the book and got my copy. If you want to do travel writing, as I so badly want to, this is one of the books for you. Exciting, acerbic and highly entertaining, Gill leaves you in no doubt that he knows his onions. This is an engaging collection of Gill's travel tales around the world. Brilliant beyond compare, he is humorous and charming and also a touch controversial but I could not put the book down. Writing a weekly column for The Guardian of London and The Sunday Times with contributions to Vanity Fair and The New York Times. I just want to be A. A. Gill!

4. Oprah A Biography is the story of Oprah Winfrey, media mogul, entrepreneur and broadcaster. This is not the first time this book is appearing in this column but it deserves to be among the five that every journalist should read. I have read it twice. This is the story of her media beginnings and how she became one of the world's richest media personalities with businesses spanning studios, a magazine in her name and interests in movies and books. The story, as told by the famous biographer Kitty Kelley, is unauthorized as all Kitty Kelley books go, which makes it all the more delicious.

5. Orji Ogbonnaya Orji whose name has been synonymous with Radio coverages of particularly the State House has had extensive experience in broadcasting journalism, communication and public service spanning over two decades. His first book, Inside Aso Rock is interesting but my focus in this week's column is his second book, What They Don't Teach You in Broadcasting. This is a book that stands as the link between classroom teaching and field experience. This is a book I have been meaning to write in the last 10 years but trust me, one of these days; I will respond to all my fans and write a book that's akin. I am not letting the cat out of the bag just yet. Keep your eyes on this page. Get Ogbonnaya's book if you aspire to be a broadcaster/journalist. Learn from his many years of experience if you are already practicing.

These bonus books will set you thinking more like a journalist. They are all robust, thought provoking and amazing. Get them all.

- a) Talk Like Ted by Carmine Gallo.
- b) Africa Altered States, Ordinary Miracles by Richard Dowden.
- c) Burn This Book by Toni Morrison.
- d) We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families. Stories from Rwanda by Phillip Gourevitch.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2015



## Vignettes of Nigerian History [opinion]

This Day (Lagos)

January 10, 2016

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**Length:** 914 words

**Byline:** Yinka Olatunbosun

### **Body**

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In Nigeria, some on-air personalities who anchor the morning shows on radio have included "today in history" as part of the informative segment of their show. That singular act underscores the importance of history to the people. History makes us who we are. However, a few people are inclined to learn history when Google search engine can always provide needed information on-the-go. But not every story in history is resident online.

As interesting as learning about history is, it has become so esoteric that the idea of expunging it from the school curriculum was well-received by lazy students. To simplify history and make it accessible, a British-bred Nigerian who teaches Mathematics in Lagos, Ola Opesan dug into the archives of BBC News, British Library, Flashback Publishers, Google News Archive, New York Times, Reuters and several newspapers to etch out some facts that must be remembered by all young students of history. He assembled a collage of historical facts titled, "Nigeria in 101 headlines".

In the book, the author presents history in a readable, narrating manner using simple language, illustrations and pictures. It is an intriguing read that can make a nine year old discuss the circumstances surrounding the Nigerian Civil war, intelligently. Arranged in 202 chapters, some of the chapters include eye-witness accounts culled from newspaper interviews. For instance, the death of the journalist and co-founder, Newswatch Magazine, Dele Giwa by a letter-bomb was recounted in parts with Kayode Soyinka as a key witness.

Other interesting stories told in the 206 page book include Fela's marriage to 27 wives and the attack on Kalakuta Republic, the historical visits of Malcolm X, Muhammed Ali, President Carter, and Queen Elizabeth to Nigeria, the assassination of the former Head of State Murtala Muhammed, the various bloody coups and the failed ones, the Aba Women Riots, Nigeria's First University, Nigeria's Soccer Success Stories and the tragic loss of a footballer, Sam Okparaji; the composition of the National Anthem, the role of Wole Soyinka in nation building, the covert establishment of pirate radio, Radio Kudirat in advocating for a return to democratic rule, the use of radio as propaganda in the case of FRCN and Radio Biafra, the heroic fight against Ebola outbreak in Nigeria amongst others.

Although the author missed an ignoble number of typographical errors, he didn't miss significant events in Nigerian history. For instance, his eye-opening literary piece touched on music rivalry citing the examples of the fatal fall-out between two hip-hop giants, Tupac Shakur otherwise known as 2PAC and Christopher Wallace better known as Notorious B.I.G. Opesan points the reader back to Nigerian history where two great juju musicians, Ebenezer Obey and King Sunny Ade mirrored each other's career and fans were divided. In the end, they become brothers

### Vignettes of Nigerian History [opinion]

peddling the same trade. The lesson in the chapter is that sometimes, music rivalry is a creation of music promoters but there are situations where the rivalry is rooted in deep-set animosity fuelled by rumour mills as in the case of 2PAC and Biggie.

The ugly political terrain in the South-West region in the days of "Operation Wetie" was captured in the book. The author was carefully not to paint gory mental pictures that are too graphic for his young readers. No doubt, he is a story-teller, recounting vividly the final moments of Murtala Mohammed at the traffic light junction, Old Secretariat, Ikoyi near Bank Road.

A reader can picture himself as a by-stander as the bullets fired at the Black Mercedes Benz that was conveying the Head of State did the historical havoc. The book also serves as a pointer to the efforts made by past state administrators in Lagos to deal with the excruciating traffic situation in the state using the Odd-Even plate numbers strategy. How that policy fizzled out should teach future leaders on how to solve social problems with long-term projections in view. The book is also a revelation on how Nigeria got its name and other popular cities of the country such as Port Harcourt and Lekki.

The author also included thought-provoking questions in a box tagged "Consider" at the end of each chapter alongside bibliography to encourage further reading and verification of facts. All the chapters are arranged in sub-divisions according to the overall theme namely celebrities, constitutional, coups and rebellion, Dark days, Education, Firsts, General International Acclaim, Names and Sports with very minimal authorial intrusion. Every chapter is preceded by a headline while the content is arranged in sub-divisions such as the story, the background, resonance, tags, key terms. Timelines are also provided to help the reader memorise the dates in history. At the end of it all, all the stories in the book are arranged in chronological order to help situate the story in a sequential order in the mind of the student of history.

With illustrations done by Tosin Kajopelaye-Ola and Pere Frey, the book is a must-have in school and public libraries, and homes. Whether history is one of the subjects taught in Nigerian schools or not, Nigeria in 101 Headlines remains a valuable resource book for teachers and students as well as busy executives who want to know about Nigerian history but have limited time to conduct research. Opesan has taken off the burden of dusting off dogged-earned books to become grounded in history with his new literary effort.

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2016

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## **Why Journalists Should Be Suspicious of Politicians -Momoh**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

March 8, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 893 words

**Byline:** Emma Maduabuchi

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Veteran journalist,

, is currently a lecturer at Lagos Business School and a Director at the Public Relation Unit of Kwara State University. In this interview with

, Senior Correspondent, he lists the importance of Financial Analysis for every media practitioner, as well as the responsibility of the industry to the journalist, the publisher and the general public. Excerpts:

No! The society needs the media, just as it needs banks, the manufacturers. Are those things not businesses? So for as long as the media performs the role society wants it to perform, it must be successful on its own. And the first measure of success is financial success. So that is what I am saying. The media should be run as a profitable business so that media workers would be paid handsomely, with media products paid for profitably. Therefore with that profit the media gets stronger, and gets bolder and courageous in performing the roles society demands from it. So actually it is in the financial success of the media that the society benefits more.

It is like a dog. If you have a watchdog and the dog is a friend of the thief, can the dog watch it? So that is how it is with journalism and politicians. Politicians are appointed to allocate our national resources equitably and fairly to all of us. They are appointed to manage our resources, our economy and national resources. They are not appointed to selfishly take all, or take most of it and leave the droppings for us. And to the extent that they are not checked by the media, they feel free to amass as much of it as possible to the very small population that they are, and leave the rest of us with very little. So they are not performing their responsibilities.

The media should immediately know that anybody that goes into politics has a different intention from what society intended for it. So that is why the media should be suspicious of anything the politician says, does or thinks. Once a politician comes with a policy, let us look whether underneath it is a selfish motive, whether it is an intention to destroy society, and not to elevate society.

Oh yes! If the rape victim does not complain, the rapists will continue. So the media must always complain on behalf of society. In other words, the journalist should be public defender.

### Why Journalists Should Be Suspicious of Politicians -Momoh

In fact, there is a paper I am doing on media philosophy for any society. The philosophy of the media should be different from the philosophy of the owner. In management, in economics, there is separation between owner and management for business to succeed. You can see that the banks that ran into troubles are the banks where the owners are the Managing Directors -they cornered a lot of the money. The same thing, if the media owners are journalists, they would compromise the media. But journalists are running the media for the publishers. When they insist on their views and their standards, you will see that the owners will profit and the workers will also profit much from it.

So, that's why I am saying that publishers should not influence the media so much, because we are professionals, we are trained to defend the public, and by doing that the public now buys into our products, and the publisher makes money.

That would be the best thing that would happen to Nigeria. Look at Newswatch. Before Dele Giwa said that journalists should be able to buy themselves wine and wear the best shoes, journalists were being paid pittance. But when they got together as journalists and started the Newswatch, it became the best magazine in the country. It is not by accident that Tell is the best magazine now.

I support more journalists to come together and run their own medium. Look at what Channels is doing. John Momoh is a journalist, and so he is committed to the tenets of journalism, yet he wants to make money from it. He is not compromising money-making or the standard of journalism for it. That is one of the many reasons media practitioners should learn the act of financial analysis and financial management, so that they can begin to be strong enough to own and run media houses.

It is a necessity to move this country to the next level. The people against it are being primordial, and selfish. When they have problem they run to the media. But because they think the media would be strong enough to question them, they don't want to pass it. But the bill is not a media bill. This is the time that the civil society and all Nigerians should rise up and say 'this is a law that we require to ask questions, it is not a law for journalists.' Freedom of information is a law for everybody, it is only that journalists would seem to exercise that right more, on behalf of the public. All groups in the country should get up and say that they need this bill.

Yes, I have put them in a book, and hope it will come out quickly. That is actually why I came back into academics after 30 years of journalistic practice. So I am hoping that books will come that will develop journalism, because I am especially concerned about media performance. As a matter of fact, the problem with Nigeria is that we have not been focused on performance. Our focus has actually been on anything goes. We must bring every society to say, 'are you delivering?' where are you taking society to? These questions must be asked as to what is your contribution to the growth of society.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2010

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## **Nigeria; a museum of unanswered questions**

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

November 8, 2017 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1064 words

### **Body**

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Wetin goat day find inside aquarium-Question?

We the willing led by the unknowing are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done so much for so long with so little we are now qualified to do anything with nothing.

Voltaire says a man should be judged by his questions rather than his answers. The essence of this essay is to evoke thoughts, not court controversy but my first question, should be, isn't Nigeria one big controversy?

Maybe for the supporters of the ruling class all they need for us to do is continually ask the wrong questions, that way they don't have to worry about answers.

In recent years, I mean in 19years of 'democratic' experimentation, no one has been held responsible for ethno-political and socio-religious related killings. Guns are retrieved, suspects taken to court once or twice and no headway, why?

So, who are the Fulanis, the herdsmen, how about the Christians that are herdsmen, and the pagans amongst us?

**Dele Giwa** was a Nigerian **journalist**, editor and founder of Newswatch magazine and James Ajibola Idowu Ige, SAN simply known as Bola Ige was a Nigerian lawyer and politician. He also served as Federal Minister of Justice for Nigeria. He was murdered in December 2001. Both were killed, by who...why and what and really how remains all but conjectures.

How does a society move when it refuses to pay salaries to her teachers for six, seven and even a year or how is it that we have teachers that are teaching with their father's TCII certificate?

Life is filled with unanswered questions, but it is the courage to ask those questions that continues to give meaning to life.

## Nigeria; a museum of unanswered questions

Why is it, a child attends minimum of 16 years of formal education, factor in, 6 more years for the sciences and maybe law, the ASUU/NASU strikes and NYSC...that's 22 years of education with little learning, no job available and when it is available, the kid is ill-prepared?

Let me ask us, a silly question, indeed silly because questions are great, but only if you know the answers. If you ask questions and the answers surprise you, you look silly. So, is Nigeria a united nation, the Igbos don't 'like' Yorubas, the Yorubas don't 'like' the Hausas, the minorities and the majorities in the minorities and minorities in the majority, all because of the sharing formula?

How is it that you pay a service charge for five years on a billing meter at home and the meter is never serviced even for once and you pay thousands in bills for non-existent electricity?

Many of us have followed the Chinua Achebe and Awo squabble and while I say its a piece of history, the question is how much of the civil war history is taught in schools, other than the fabled Mungo Park discovered River Niger, what do we know of ourselves, is it not a fact that we rely on outsiders to tell us about ourselves?

Are we not bothered that young persons in a recent survey know more of Lionel Messi than Tafawa Balewa, more of Real Madrid than Zik, or Manchester United having more followers than our national assembly?

Why is it that kids now love, memorize and are more comfortable with Ben 10, Spiderman, superman, Xmen, sonic, Barney and friends etc theme songs and don't bother about our national anthem?

In the 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being' Milan Kundera says, "Indeed, the only truly serious questions are ones that even a child can formulate. Only the most naive of questions are truly serious. They are the questions with no answers. A question with no answer is a barrier that cannot be breached. In other words, it is questions with no answers that set the limit of human possibilities, describe the boundaries of human existence."

So maybe I should ask naïve questions like what is the relationship of Nigerian police and twenty naira, why is it that you visit a police station to report a crime, you asked to bring money to buy plain sheet and pen?

Can someone tell me would the grass cutting SGF be punished, how about the Ikoyi Currencies, and how about that Andrew Yakubu gift money. Is Kachukwu figure real or we have wished it away. The Aso Rock Clinic gist has come and will go like Burutai and the snake farm.

Okay, how did we get here, I mean the state which we currently find ourselves.

Questions, I've got some questions more, like how we became bothered about what Mr. President wears on his wrist or leg, his weight or speech, loosing focus of his abysmal performance index, and progress report full of positive figures while we are faced with reality of increased suicides, a once rare phenomenon?

From a point where kidnapping was a taboo, to taking expatriates hostage for money, now its wholesale and retail kidnap, how did we get to these all time low?

Do we not find it funny that state governors leave their domains, go to Germany spend weeks in the name of learning, bringing investors and bilateral talks, just asking, if its not laughable, I recall a governor from the East that went Ukraine and was speaking Igbo with his host simply because they were not speaking English...That same governor just donated a statue in his home state to a leader that watched as his countrymen suffered xenophobic attacks?

Is there Islamization, and how about Christianization, why is it that Christians poison crayfish and palm oil and send to the North and Muslims poison suya and inject oranges and apples to kill Christians...in the words of Miriam Toews depression is caused by asking oneself too many unanswerable questions."

As a people depression has set in, we are either willing and ready to check it or full insanity will manifest, already we are a bundle of contradictions, top five happiest nation, top five religious, top five kidnap, top five corrupt, we simply top the charts, a pot pourri of the very good, extremely bad, and wickedly ugly.

Nigeria; a museum of unanswered questions

Why should billions be spent daily on security and yet peanuts available for medical services, and education and still citizens are daily maimed and butchered as the different animals such as crocodile and snakes smile and dance.

Why do many people have to starve in satellite towns in Abuja, while there are surpluses rotting in fridges and dustbins in Maitama and Asokoro?

In conclusion, these are random questions, we need to find near satisfactory answers to them. Nigeria, delicately poised between near greatness and total failure and collapse...how we address these questions—Only time will tell.

Prince Charles Dickson PhD

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2017

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## **THE PAST OF TWO GREAT NIGERIAN GENERALS**

Nigerian Tribune

August 1, 2016 Monday

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Length: 984 words

### **Body**

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Two great Nigerian military generals are currently in the news and interestingly so. Of course, these two great generals have since retired from the Nigerian Army, our great Army that has seen interestingly rough and perilous times, including several successful coups and failed coups. The two generals in question clearly were forced out of our Army and their respective commands when they were not really set to quit, and at a time when their military mangoes seemed to be at their best season and geography of ripeness. Indeed, how succulent were their mangoes at the time compulsion compelled them to go - or, better put, at their seeming ripest hour of greatness when compulsion got rid of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, - my titled and untitled audience, my dear readers, my dear, dear readers of warmth, - who are our great generals in the news? Who are the great generals who have played more than sufficient roles in our military and political and economic affairs? Did I just say that the generals 'have played more than sufficient roles in our military and political and economic affairs?' How eagerly and mischievously wrong am I? Clearly, the said generals are still playing and will always play more than sufficient roles in our country from the 'ups and downs of politics,' the vicissitudes of commerce, economics and petroleum and the exigencies of military passions and sensibilities. And the thought expressed here, in this preceding sentence, must be one reason why the generals will always be in the news - as they recently are - until they engage in their final war against one another, a war that we shall find is not a camping party or holiday excursion or soldierly retreat of retired generals.

Let me alight from my soaring aero-plane of suspense. Our current civilian president, a seventeen months military head of state, in times past, and our one and only military president of above seven years, also in times past, are our two great generals recently in the news.

Our major newspapers, including the almighty Nigerian Tribune, this newspaper that rarely misfires/misfiles when it comes to news reports, gave us on Monday, July 25, 2016, an interesting summary of an exclusive interview published in the recent edition of The Interview Magazine relating to retired generals Muhammadu Buhari and Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. In the brief report, we read a pertinent glimpse of the past of the two preeminent generals. What happened between both military gentlemen thirty-one years ago has come to us in what my writing imagination is compelling me to call a precious time of 'moral equivalent of war'- actually the title of a recently re-read essay. President Buhari is waging a spiritual and moral war against corruption in our country. Whether or not his current war is partial or semi-partial or merely cosmetic or idealistic is not really important now. What I find moving as I shoot my memory and imagination to the past, the past that the afore-said interview has rekindled, is the legend of Buhari's 'integrity, honesty and fairness' that surfaces. As a national newspaper informs us, by way of reference to the cited interview, 'Shagari once exonerated Buhari of complicity in the coup that toppled his

## THE PAST OF TWO GREAT NIGERIAN GENERALS

government, saying, 'it was when those boys that overthrew our government were looking for someone with integrity, honesty, and fairness to be the head of their government, that was when Major General Muhammadu Buhari's name came in.' The names of those who played prominent roles in the Shagari-overthrow were given in the newspaper, Daily Sun, report. In fact, we were given the name of the general who recommended Buhari for the military mango job, a recommendation which all the major dramatis personae accepted.

But the catch of The Interview Magazine report paraphrased by the different dailies is this: 'Babangida overthrew Buhari to escape probe,' as newspapers, in various guises, put it. So Buhari is after all a truly daring warrior against corruption? Thirty-one years ago he dared his primary constituency, and the gap-toothed general and his fellow band of like-minds got rid of him before he got rid of them. What was rumoured thirty-one years ago has now come out of the very mouth of the moral general who is now in the prime position to reduce the mischievous betrayers of thirty-one years ago to the dreadful necessity of the present. If Buhari is legendarily right with respect to the legendary story of his legendary betrayal and legendarily repugnant overthrow, he should revisit the past without qualms. The ancient looters of our common-wealth, the hunting generals of yester-years who hunted us up and down must be part of the current permissible war and justice against corruption. It does not matter if Buhari's sacred war may inspire another war of the generals. What matters is that Buhari's justice will fetch us the ideal harvest - if what he recently reveals is correct.

And our honest and fair general - if we must believe Alhaji Shehu Shagari - must go the whole hog: He must re-visit Journalist Dele Giwa's death by a mystery bomb under his usurper's watch, and the Halliburton and plunders and other plunders in the land. If he can descend on the generals he is descending on now, is it the old, past band of generals he cannot flatten? The piratical generals of the past are no less guilty than the irrational generals of the present. The ensuing war my writing imagination is igniting is giving me an exotically exciting expensive fascination.

Maybe after reading this IBB and his fellow brethren of yester-years of voracious power will quietly go to 'General Integrity' and plead that bygones should be bygones. Or shouldn't the past bury the past? But we must sound this alarm: Retribution's law never fails, as it never ceases. Yes, but ultimately it is better to be a victim than to be a victimizer. I accept and applaud both choices.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2016

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## A lifetime of gratitude

The Nation (Nigeria)

December 27, 2018 Thursday

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Length: 1192 words

### **Body**

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I feel honored to be named as one of the recipients of this year's Lifetime Achievement Awards for Media Excellence by the trustees of the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence Trust Fund. I wish to express my deep gratitude to the trustees and in particular to Lanre Idowu, the supervising trustee of the group. Since I graduated into the club of the aged by becoming 70 in August, I consider this award as DAME's birthday present to an old man.

DAME has done a wonderful job for our industry by standing guard over the professionalism, practices and ethics of our journalists and recognizing excellence through its yearly awards to deserving journalists across the entire media universe in Nigeria. Their exertions are worthy of our gratitude and commendation. I salute them.

In 2016, my brother, friend and business partner, Dan Agbese, was honoured by DAME with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Dan and I graduated from the University of Lagos' Department of Mass Communication in 1973. Fate took us in different directions as we tried to find the markets where we would sell the words in our heads. Again fate paved a common path for us and together, in 1984, with two other friends, Dele Giwa and Yakubu Mohammed, we embarked on the Newswatch adventure at a perilous time in the life of our nation. Since then, Dan and I have been together and like a Catholic marriage, there has been no divorce; we remain together like gin and tonic.

During our last days in Unilag, we used to debate amongst us as to whether or not anyone of us might get a first class degree. We dismissed the idea outright on the ground that mass communication did not possess the precision of mathematics or engineering. It was perhaps a dissonance reduction formula on our part since in our hearts, and at our sober moments, we probably didn't think we had risen to that apogee of excellence. For our sanity it was better for us to say to ourselves that if none of us got a first class, it was because it was unachievable not because we were lazy or unintelligent.

And then the following year, 1974, a man called Olatunji Dare got a first class from that same department and proved us wrong. He went on to become a great columnist in The Guardian and a great scholar both in Nigeria and the United States. I am honoured to be receiving a lifetime achievement award with the great man today. I remember an article that Tunji contributed to the popular page 7 of Daily Times in 1978, titled 'The Bus Stop Man', a metaphorical excursion into the life of the urban underclass, the ghetto guy with obsessive qualities of rowdiness and gragra-ness. That evocative piece received a standing ovation nationwide. Tunji went on to establish himself firmly on the tablets of our minds as a great writer, humorist and satirist. Each time I tried my hands on satire I always came short. Satire has its perils. Some think it is some form of Afghanistanism, a flight from a fight or from a

### A lifetime of gratitude

direct hit, a weapon of the artful dodger, an excuse not to speak uncomfortable truth directly to power. These assertions belong apparently to those who are intellectually challenged. Satire is an admirable genre that has endured and those who have mastered it as Tunji has deserve an ovation.

In March 2010, I was given a Lifetime and Inspiration Award by the Nation Media Group in Kenya, publishers of the Nation newspaper. The paper was 50 years old then and at 62 then, I was 12 years older than the paper. Four other journalists from Eastern, Central, Northern and Southern Africa were also honoured with the award on that occasion. On that occasion I felt like the man who was asked the simple question, 'How are you?' And he answered with a parable, 'The ground is not even but I am standing on it.' By this time Newswatch had gone through the bruising cycle of birth, death and resurrection as a corporate entity. Its founders and staff had been thrown into jail a few times and these multiple hammer blows, these hard knocks, had taken their toll on the organisation's corporate health. The recognition was deeply appreciated but I wasn't in the mood to break into song and dance because the responsibility of running a media organisation in Nigeria with all the uncertainties, the asphyxiating operating environment and the hostility of officialdom to truthful journalism were enough to take your attention away from considerations of jollification.

Now I am free from those enormous pressures even though as a retiree without pension or gratuity, I don't even have the opportunity to stay on the queue like most pensioners-and collapse now and again-as they wait for the favour of being paid their legitimate entitlements. What a country! But I am happy that I am able to keep myself physically fit and mentally agile by continuing to engage in matters of the mind through column writing and mentoring some young minds in our profession.

I didn't know I would live to be 70 because life is a perilous adventure and in Nigeria it is even more perilous. A petrol tanker can fall and spill its dangerous content near where you work or play or live and you are dead. A house badly built by an irresponsible, a get-rich quick, corner-cutting landlord can collapse and kill you. The fumes from your neighbour's I-better-pass-my-neighbour generating set can send you to the grave. A trigger-happy policeman can shoot you because of N100 and blame it on accidental discharge. A million other silly happenings in this country can take your life away. Living to be 70, therefore, is largely by the grace of God. Personally, I have been tried for murder because I wrote an article that officialdom didn't like. The offence of murder carries a death penalty. I have been tried, along with Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed, for mutiny for publishing an interview that officialdom didn't like. That offence carries a death penalty. In these two instances, God and the judiciary delivered me from the jaws of the lion. So you can see why I owe DAME a lifetime of gratitude for this award.

Now let us interrogate ourselves. How did it happen that a Nigerian ***journalist***, Jones Abiri, was in detention for two years and we did not know or if we knew, we did not care until foreign journalists raised the issue during the IPI conference in June? Was it absentmindedness, a cover-up, the failure of memory, the decline or death of investigative journalism, the fear of officialdom or the assassination of our collective conscience? Whatever it was, we bear the blame and the shame in full as professionals.

Now the campaigns are here and soon the elections will be at our door, will we do our duty to Nigeria by being fair, fair, fair? The fairness doctrine in journalism is the ultimate doctrine, the philosopher's stone, the elixir, the cure all, the miracle drug, the measuring rod, the sounding board for professional and ethical journalism practice. But fairness comes with courage, not just knowledge. In the midst of temptations to be partisan, let your courage shine through. I ask you to be fair because that is the highway, the paved path to a fair, progressive, just and egalitarian society. Partisanship is not.

**Load-Date:** December 28, 2018



## When a 'Senior Advocate of the Media' Departed

Daily Trust (Abuja)

November 03, 2013

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**Length:** 921 words

**Byline:** Desmond Ikemefuna Mgboh

### **Body**

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A great journalist, Augustine Madu-West, has departed. For 30 years or more, he practised the profession with uncommon flair. He lived for it, morning and evening, day and night. But only last month, he decided to take a leave of an exciting career. He decided to part with journalism, the things of this world, his friends and family, to the silence of the other world.

We will miss him in so many ways. Journalists in Kano and the entire North will surely miss this doyen, who retained the spotlight of excellence for so long, who severally taught us to face the truth and write about it in an everyday style that excites and delights our readers across the country.

We will miss his insights on nearly every human topic under the sun, the same way we will long for his wisdom on how to get the best of news stories and hit the front pages. But it is his calm disposition; no matter the shock and uncertainties; that we will miss most.

He epitomised an unstressed personality at every turn of the things of this world. Rain or sun, none terrified nor provoked him. He remained the same: Augustine Madu-West. In the end, he died the easy way, on the night of September 12 at his residence somewhere on Dakata Road in Kano State.

When I met him about 22 years ago he touched my life with friendship and profound words. I had always wanted to be a journalist. I had written severally in my university days, edited the leading campus magazine, memorised the names of reputed professionals and learnt by heart, the writing styles of such erudite writers like Dele Giwa, Edwin Madunagu and Olatunji Dare; but West strengthened my resolve to go for journalism and proof my worth.

How time miraculously flies away like a dove in the sky! It looked like only yesterday, but it is a long time gone; time gone forever.

In the years that went by, he was my brother and abiding friend. We ate together severally. We drank water from similar cups. We also laughed a lot. And surprisingly, we disagreed on a number of topics and times. But we rarely fought in the open, no matter the pressure.

Though we worked as colleagues and laboured on the news beat together, he had the upper hand and dictated the pace of work. Importantly too, he assisted my graceful exit as editor of Arts and Life at the Triumph Newspapers, Kano, to my first real stint as a reporter and correspondent.

### When a 'Senior Advocate of the Media' Departed

In those days, as younger correspondents, excited by every byline attributed to us, each morning, we assembled in his office at the Punch in Kano. Each day broke with a traditional visit to the newsstand where we saw the headlines for lead stories. It was pure joy to lead your paper. Augustine Madu-West led the northern edition of the Punch like no other writer had ever done nor will ever do. At times, especially in times of national upheavals, Madu-West would remain for days on the front pages of the Punch.

Those were the best of times for this towering media spirit. Nothing distracted his attention. He was happy!

Among his numerous stories, he delightfully remembered how he reported the death of Gloria Okon. It was a celebrated drug saga uncovered during the reign of General Ibrahim Babangida. He was at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano when the drama unfolded. The second was the gruesome murder of the late Igbo trader, Gideon Akaluka by Islamic extremists in the ancient city of Kano. Like others, he was angered to no end when he saw the head of the victim hung on stick on the street of Kano.

Like most journalists, he reported for other media houses, including the Daily Independent and National Mirror, where he worked until his death. And while the Punch was proscribed, West wrote under the pen name, Ben Green.

His friends and contacts grew in number; hence he was respectfully addressed as a senior advocate of the media.

On the day he died, I saw angels come alive in countless persons and faces. Among gloomy faces at his home I saw those who were employed because he dropped a note, those who paid their last school fees with his additional N3, 000. I also saw relatives whose future had become uncertain because he is no more. We were truly heartbroken.

But more than these lessons, I also learnt from Madu-West that it pays to be a nationalist. He was one. He did not remember tribe, region or religion. He would rather make sacrifices to other groups so as not to disrupt the love and friendship of a united people. He would always say, "At my age there are things I should not be doing."

I remember that Harmattan season, some eight years ago, when all the non- indigenous journalists practising in Kano State revolted against political marginalisation in our chapel. We spoke in one voice, wrote petitions to Abuja, fought for our rights and were listened to, at least partially. The only person that truly remained neutral in the course of the struggle was Augustine Madu-West. He refused all persuasions to join the fray.

Today, he is mourned by all and sundry, but mostly by the Hausa/Fulani and Muslim journalists in the state who have been crying more than his kinsmen.

Today, as I look back to those good old days with a heart full of nostalgia, all I have is the pang of irreplaceable memories and a wave of shocking grief. Augustine Madu-West, as you await your final journey to mother earth on November 15, 2013, I hold it to be true that one day we shall meet again. And when that day comes, I will gladly be your friend again. Adieu, the Chief!

Desmond Ikemuefuna Mgboh is a staff member of the Sun Newspapers in Kano.

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2013

Master of coup on receiving end of armed challenge for power: Nigerian rebellion comes after years of despotic rule where criticism can end in death



## **Master of coup on receiving end of armed challenge for power: Nigerian rebellion comes after years of despotic rule where criticism can end in death**

The Guardian (London)

April 23, 1990

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**Length:** 783 words

**Byline:** By PATRICK WILMOT

### **Body**

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GENERAL Ibrahim Babangida is Nigeria's most accomplished coup maker, no mean feat in a country which has experienced scores of successful and unsuccessful coups in its 30 years since independence.

He confessed (some say boasted) to Nigeria's Newswatch magazine recently that he had participated in all the successful coups except the first, the January 1966 insurrection in which most of the civilian leaders of the first republic were killed.

He was also presumably well equipped to prevent coups, and boasted that the coup in which he overthrew Major General Mohammed Buhari in August 1985, was the final coup, the coup to end all coups.

One of his justifications for executing General Mamman Vatsa in March 1986 and the 10 other alleged coup plotters was to teach ambitious officers that coup making was serious business.

Previously the unwritten rule was that coup attempts in which no blood was shed should not be punished with death, and the evidence indicated that Vatsa and the other accused had barely got to the talking stage of coup plotting, a far cry from the confessed successes of the coup master himself.

What the killing of Vatsa established was that Gen Babangida could not be removed in a bloodless coup, since failure meant death. This served as a double-edged warning, not only to the challengers to the power of the President, but also to the President himself, that the gloves were off.

Prior to Vatsa's execution, Gen Babangida had listened to, and manipulated, critical views, earning himself the ambiguous epithet of Maradona, after the celebrated footballer.

After the Vasta incident, he became increasingly intolerant and paranoid, crushing all opposition and cultivating an army of sycophants.

The Nigerian labour congress, academic staff union of universities, national association of Nigerian students, and Newswatch all felt the presidential boot. A legal critic, Gani Fawehinmi, who accused senior security officials of

Master of coup on receiving end of armed challenge for power: Nigerian rebellion comes after years of despotic rule where criticism can end in death

murdering a journalist, Dele Giwa, spent most of last year in jail, and other journalists were interrogated by the state security service.

The government voted to set aside vast amounts of money to pay campus informants and vigilante groups who threatened and harassed alleged critics. Many lecturers were dismissed, deported, and jailed for bizarre crimes, such as purchasing a gallon of petrol to set fire to a convocation square of solid concrete where Gen Babangida was supposed to preside.

Gen Buhari and Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon, Gen Babangida's predecessors, were ousted partly because they boasted about their toughness and contempt for human rights and freedom of speech. Gen Babangida continued in this repressive tradition, further undermining whatever legitimacy his regime might have hoped for through manipulation and control of the media.

He employed the machiavellian principle that men must either be crushed or pampered because they are able to revenge minor injuries but not fatal ones.

Gen Babangida's generosity was legendary even before he became president. He assiduously cultivated the loyalty of his lower ranks through judicious gifts at marriages, funerals, and birth ceremonies.

However, this bartered popularity began to wear thin when his biting austerity programme intensified the poverty of the poor and effectively destroyed the salary-earning middle classes, leaving the spectacular corruption and flamboyance of the instant millionaires and uniformed nouveau riche to mock the severe hardship of the vast majority of the population.

Like heads of state before him, Gen Babangida surrounded himself with a cabal of praise singers who made him increasingly unpopular, while at the same time leading him to believe that he was a very popular leader.

These men and women are now doubtlessly congratulating him on successfully crushing the latest coup attempt, without considering how the politically illiterate rebel group of junior officers could have succeeded in creating the confusion it did.

Twenty years after the end of the civil war, a group of Nigerian soldiers still do not accept the unity of the country. This says little for the moral leadership of the regime and casts further doubt on the right of the military to rule, even for a limited period.

Twenty-one years of military rule have shown no benefits commensurate with the suffering inflicted on the Nigerian people.

If Gen Babangida truly wants to be the last coup maker, he would do himself and his country a wealth of good by handing over power to a democratically elected government as soon as possible, and convincing his military colleagues never to interfere in politics again.

Gunsmoke is hazardous for the health of nation and military alike.

**Load-Date:** June 12, 2000



## A toast to Reuben Abati at 50 by Toni Kan

PM News

November 7, 2015 Saturday

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Length: 988 words

### **Body**

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Reuben Abati

If you give me a space, I occupy it. If you expand the space, I expand myself." Reuben Abati

The first car Dr. Reuben Abati bought was a Datsun or some Nissan product. Back then, when a popular actor or musician or, especially a journalist bought a car, it was news and I am talking about a second hand, tokunbo car.

Things were a lot different in the 90s. We had Abacha but we didn't have MTN or Glo or Airtel showering money on musical artistes the way they do now. Nigerian Breweries hadn't even thought up Star Trek.

So, when a star musician or actor bought a car and when I say star musician I mean Ras Kimono, Orits Wiliki, kind of star, the magazines of the day like Fame, HINTS or Prime People would report it.

So, when Reuben Abati, star columnist, bought his first car, it was big news and then he lost it.

He had gone to Niteshift to let his hair down and when he came out the next morning, the car was gone, as in, disappeared.

Dr. Abati was so distraught he was searching for his car inside the refuse bin.

I have told this story to show how far Dr. Abati has come from the 26 year old PhD holder who started off lecturing at Ogun State University before becoming a nationally celebrated columnist and then cabinet member of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

That morning, when he came out and saw that his car was gone, Reuben Abati must have felt devastated in way words cannot even describe. That car, which must mean nothing to him now, must have felt to him like the sum of his wealth, the circumference of his big boy-ness.

Did he realize that The Guardian would offer him a brand new car as official car in his capacity as Editorial Board Chairman? Did he realize that he would one day own over 5 cars in his garage? Did he even imagine that one day he would hold a cabinet level position?

The story of Reuben Abati's rise from grass to grace is a story that must inspire and motivate because it shows how one can pull himself up literally by the bootstraps and achieve beyond his wildest dreams.

### A toast to Reuben Abati at 50 by Toni Kan

I met Dr. Abati in 1992, after his friend, Kayode Ajala, who was editor of Hints magazine offered me a job at Hints while I was still a sophomore at the University of Jos following an introduction by my friend and roommate Ralph Bruce.

Dr Reuben Abati soon became a mentor and big brother, encouraging my writing, offering words of advice and supporting my career as referee to all the jobs I ever applied for. He even helped pay for the printing of my friend, Helon Habila's first book.

In the year 2000, when I took 3rd prize at the MUSON poetry festival, (Helon Habila was first and Tade Ipadeola was 2nd) the art journalist Mike Jimoh did a lovely piece in Thisday which he called "Bards of the same feather."

Hours after the piece appeared, Dr. Abati wrote me a lovely letter congratulating me and I still have a framed copy.

I saw Dr. Abati morph from just a brilliant young man with a gift for writing into an accomplished man of letters who became without a doubt the most read and respected columnist in contemporary Nigeria.

Until GEJ happened to him.

But first allow me two stories: At about the time that I became editor of Hints magazine, Reuben Abati came to live in Ojodu Berger, in an estate right behind the expansive Hints magazine compound and I used to go to his house to drink brandy and shoot the breeze with our conversations ranging from literature to politics and many things in between (and he had an uncanny facility for drinking, conversing and writing his column at the same time.)

One afternoon, we were having a drink when his younger brother came in breathless with excitement.

He had gone for an interview at a big multinational, he said, and the moment they saw his name they asked whether he was related to Reuben Abati. When he answered yes, they told him the job was his. JUST LIKE THAT!

Did his name as referee on my CV help me get jobs? I don't know, but I was glad to have him as a referee.

I remember another incident when I realized that my egbon' (elder brother) was no longer just Reuben but a bonafide public intellectual and national figure.

Many years ago, billionaire business man Razaq Okoya had a party at his Lekki redoubt. It was such a huge party that it left the whole road blocked for hours causing untold hardship for commuters.

Reuben Abati addressed the issue in his column the next week and ended with a call on Razaq Okoya to apologize. The billionaire subsequently took out a full page advert to apologize.

There was no Nigerian columnist with Reuben Abati's talent or facility with the language or sagacity or all round swag. To think about his writing is to recall the best of Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu and Olatunji Dare at the height of their powers. I recall that many people who usually didn't buy newspapers bought The Guardian on Fridays and Sundays just to read his columns.

Then the GEJ appointment happened and Reuben Abati lost his mojo. He lost that trenchant tone, that elegant prose, that scathing wit, it was as if government dulled his ardor, left him shorn of his talent like a denuded sheep.

He was vilified, cursed, blamed, and then flayed on social media. Like many friends complained, Dr. Abati did not take my calls too while at Aso Rock but do I hold a grudge? No. And the reason is simple, I have known him for 23 years and he was with GEJ for about four years. So, if I bitch on account of four years where do I chuck the goodwill of 19 long years?

The GEJ era is over and my mentor, Dr. Reuben Abati, is back on Civilian Street'. But this piece is not about GEJ and what Dr. Abati's time in government did or did not do to him. This piece is about celebrating a great man at 50. A wonderful mentor and encourager.

A toast to Reuben Abati at 50 by Toni Kan

Dr. Reuben Abati, aka Awodi Oke, (the eagle that soars high) I wish you a happy 50th birthday. I wish you many years of accomplishments. I wish you long life, I wish you good health and I look forward to reading your columns again.

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2015

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## **'Writer's block is an illusion'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

January 21, 2017 Saturday

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**Length:** 2360 words

### **Body**

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In continuation of his nation-wide tour and public reading of his prose fiction, *My Name is Okoro*, basically focusing on the place of the minorities of the South-South during the Nigerian civil war of 1967 – 1970, Mr Sam Omatseye, chairman of the editorial board of The Nation Newspapers, was at the Obafemi Awolowo University, (OAU), Ile Ife, Osun State last week, where he used the opportunity to tackle myriad of burning national issues raised by the book and other attendant exigencies of nationhood. Edozie Udeze was there. The popularity and the high sense of craftsmanship and witticism embedded in Mr Sam Omatseye's *My Name is Okoro* has continued to spread and raise more topical issues and points of conversation on the problems of the nation-state.

And as an author, he has consistently emphasized the fact that the story of *My Name is Okoro* emanated because he wanted to establish the voices of the minorities of Southern Nigeria who were not only traumatized by the pogrom of the 1960s, but were equally adversely affected by the civil war itself (1967 – 1970). Last week at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, where the department of English facilitated the reading of his book, Omatseye read an emotionally-suffused portion where Okey, one of the minor characters displayed one of those rare but inevitable gallantry and courage that often trailed some of the scenes that took place before the advent of the war proper. The story places Udeze, Fidelis, Okoro, Okey and his mother squarely in the scene that lead to more happenings which expose the role of some of the major characters in the novel.

Fidelis said: "I was with Okey when they came that night. We were playing Ludo game in their parlour. Suddenly Udeze ran into the house and said they are coming in Igbo language.

"Consequently, Okey brought out his gun and the game of the survival of the fittest began. This is the portion of the book where the author craftily re-establishes contact between Okoro and the circumstances surrounding the escape of some of his in-laws from the obnoxious scene of the pogrom in the North.

This is necessary because Okoro's wife, Nneka, is Udeze's sister and Okey who volunteers to defend the family finally pays with his life, while Udeze escapes with their mother to the East. In another section, Omatseye drew attention to the drama between some returnee Biafrans and the soldiers at the head bridge, Asaba. Deliberately done, it was to show the level of frenzy displayed by those who went home to prepare for a new Republic and how it took its toll on the people.

Thereafter, he teased the audience with the birth of Udeze and how he was nicknamed Omalicha to show how hairy and handsome he was at birth. For Omatsye, the occasion of the reading was like a child coming back home after many years of sojourning outside the shores of his land.

## 'Writer's block is an illusion'

OAU being his Alma matter, Omatseye was not only filled with that unbridled spirit of nostalgia, the students and their teachers were very much eager to welcome him as Omoluabi (the child who returned). And so the atmosphere became electrifying, exciting and rewarding as the students pelted him with questions on the issues of the war, the reasons for the novel, whether the undercurrents that necessitated the call for Biafra in 1966 and more still persist today.

In his usual characteristic artistic style and brilliant sense of presentation, Omatseye, chairman of the editorial board of The Nation newspapers and a multiple award winning columnist, said, "Yes, what inspired My Name is Okoro Interestingly a number of things inspired it. I said I read the book by General Alabi Isama That was the immediate tonic.

I have also read other books on the civil war But I discovered that the minority narrative and perspective was not prominent. So that was why I decided to do it.

You people stated pertinently in your question that I didn't mention the Ijaws and others. Yes, I didn't set out to write about the Ijaws, but to write about the minorities.

I wrote about the Urhobos and the Itsekiri's and the Mid-West where I was conversant with. So, I used them as metaphor, even though I have some characters which are minor from the other side.

" Even though as an author, a well-grounded novelist, poet and playwright Omatseye's primary intention was to ensure that the story fulfilled its mission. He went on to say, "I wanted the conversation to be a bit more broad-based so that people wouldn't say it is one-sided.

There are plenty of Igbo characters in the book who also belonged to Biafra Even Okoro himself spent more time in Biafra And that in itself was a way of also trying to elucidate the idea that the minority even suffered within Biafra He (Okoro) was true Igbo when he was in the North and when he came to Biafra in Igboland, he was not Igbo enough. So, that is the character and the kind of dilemma I wanted to create in the novel.

" He reiterated that his story is not just on the Urhobos and the Itsekiris, it is about the Nigerian crisis, that has refused to ebb or peter out. "If you read the book" Omatseye explained, "you will notice that most of the characters are Igboes.

My most interesting character was a man named Chukwu who was killed by Udeze. And the next interesting character for me was Nkechi, the girl who confronted the Hausa soldier, Abdullahi She ended up committing suicide.

However, I have another work that was set in the North. Not all my works were set either in the South-South or in the South-East", he said.

As a writer who does not have literary fixation or limitation or boundary, Omatseye's literary world-view is often very encompassing, wide and far-flung. His spectrum of knowledge in his works goes beyond his immediate clime and clan.

He noted therefore that, "I wish I have that kind of ambiguity as well. But there's nothing wrong if I want to write only Urhobo stories.

For me, that is fine, but that's not the case Then to the question of when will Nigeria ever going to learn from history I don't know whether human beings are stupid but at least they tend to act stupid. That's what we are.

We have not learnt from history because we have never asked any question. In my latest poetry collection here, Scented Offal, I attempted the narration of the Nigerian history up to the civil war (1967 - 1970).

The issue of Nigeria whether it is ethnic, whether it is the economy, whether it is inter-ethnic crisis, whether it is education or the issue of North or South or even the issue of the civil war, we have never resolved any issue. And if you have never resolved any issue it will never go away.

## 'Writer's block is an illusion'

" The students were deeply worried too that the lopsidedness of the Nigerian setting is not helping for concerted progress. Omatseye however, continued with his antidote on how to safeguard the society today for the progress of tomorrow.

"The cracks are still there and that is why we have not resolved any problem And that is why we keep rigmarolling and have not learnt from history. And history will never come to an end.

The issue of ethnic crisis, ethnic suspicion, will never come to an end. The civil war itself, the issues that started the civil war are even more prominent today than when the civil war erupted in 1967.

Whether in the past or now the reasons for Biafra were and are still justifiable. Government should engage agitators in a dialogue, whether in the Niger Delta, South-East or somewhere else.

Dialogue is the answer So, we have not resolved the issue and therefore we cannot talk of solution. The questions are already there.

Nigeria is about a question. When I was in the US, somebody asked me the question on why Nigeria is underdeveloped why since independence, we have not really developed? Well I said that in 1960, Nigeria was a country of great potentials.

At that time it was 2004 2005 when I was attending a symposium Then I said Nigeria is still a country of great potentials. So that is that" Omatseye nonetheless, counseled those who wanted to become writers or reporters but have the fear of the unknown lurking in their hearts to pick the necessary courage to be what they want to be in life.

He reasoned thus. "I also had that problem being a journalist.

But once you have a dream, don't let anybody stop you. In fact, the problem with most of us as human beings is that we forget what we really want to do or become.

And we want other people to decide for us what we want to do whether they are our parents, our wives, husbands or children, they want to tell us what to do whereas your body is aching to go for something else. So, you better follow your dream do what your body tells you to do because it will give you more psychological fulfillment and job satisfaction.

You are happy and healthier when you do what your mind tells you to do. If you have to die like Dele Giwa, it is better to be happy and die like Dele Giwa than to live a thousand years, aching and dreaming.

When I was here at OAU, my heart used to be in Literature even though my major was History. One of my classmates used to tease me thus: 'Sam Omatseye, the eminent literary scholar in the wrong department.

' Then when I left school, I discovered I was still being fascinated with literature". Basically an interface between the students and the author, Omatseye could not also fail to ginger them on on how to persevere and begin on time to show which direction they are headed in life.

"Yes, I don't really believe in a writer's block. I think Achebe said that once.

For me, I write every week and I have not failed to do so in more than ten years of The Nation. I have written my column on Monday from different places in the world.

Just sit down and write. If you are a writer, then write.

Inspiration is often an excuse. Go and write you have no reason not to, if you want to write.

If you have the discipline, you won't give any excuse not to write or being worried about a writer's block. So there's nothing like writer's block it is individual block", he said grinning and causing endlessly ripples in the audience.

## 'Writer's block is an illusion'

With the Auditorium II of the Faculty of Arts, venue of the programme packed to capacity, the students were highly elated to see a product of their school who has attained an enviable height not just as a writer, but as a multiple award winning ***journalist***, well-respected all over the world. Present also were some top academics of the faculty.

They included the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Gbemisola Adeoti, the head of the Department of English, Professor Adeniyi Okunoya. Others were Professor Wale Adegbite, Professor Chima Anyadike and Dr Chijioke Uwasomba who handled the question and answer session of the programme.

Uwasomba described the session as an opportunity to see to the success of this show "which is not only good, but for us to engage Sam who has done a good job here." For Anyadike who taught Omatseye, the author has matured over time and he is still young to produce more books for the good of mankind as time goes on.

He said, "Even though Sam read History, his mind was always in Literature. He was a special student, fond of engaging both his teachers and fellow students in dialogue, discussions and conversations.

He was good at interrogating knowledge. This was what he was best known for and today he has turned out to be a pride to humanity.

" He charged the students to always remember that it is what they put in today that they will reap tomorrow. For Adeoti who was a ***journalist*** before, this was the best time to shower encomium on Omatseye not only as an author but as someone who has dared where others feared to thread.

"He is a brave professional. But as for you students you should endeavour to take from this knowledge as much as you can.

" Short of describing Omatseye as an eagle on the Iroko he teased them that "by the time you are through with this, your life will never be the same again. This is why he has come back home from Lagos to share from his fountain of knowledge with us all.

" Adegbite who tried to circumvent some aspects of the show which the student anchors had already posited to be a symposium, explained that English is the language of communication and therefore has to be taken seriously not just by the students alone, by others who tease and taunt them that after all they merely teach English. "What is in English?, they often taunt us," Adegbite averred.

"But they forget that when we go into the ingredients of linguistics, we also encounter some professional jargons like they do. Please keep encouraging one another to keep the language ever high and great," he implored them. The students who were in very high spirits were made to perform different portions of their poetry renditions.

Their themes dwelt mainly on justice, fairness, love, reincarnation, freedom, change, redemption and more. "Don't look down on me," one of the lines intoned.

"You know nothing of my pain. You made us a caravan of slaves.

I need freedom from corruption as I hear that small voice, speaking, saying, redemption. Redemption is what I need.

Redemption is the answer" In response to all these Omatseye reminisces of his old days at OAU immediately came to the fore. "I must say that as I stand here now I feel a little bit eerie.

The last time I was here in this hall, I was in the hall there like you students. I never knew I'd one day stand at this side addressing people on the other side, more so students.

Therefore, I feel a bit weird about this. Mrs.

Bisi Anyadike sitting over there, we were students together And at the department of Literature in English, where I took my electives I was more involved in literary works than I was in History, my major It feels real, real good that I'd

'Writer's block is an illusion'

be here not to discuss a book of History but fiction. And one of the things I will never forget about Professor Anyadike was his infinite capacity to seamlessly simplify a text in one sentence.

" The outing was obviously the most hilarious gathering recorded by My Name is Okoro. It shows how topical and punchy the theme and storyline symbolize for Nigeria, particularly now that Nigeria needs more conversation and dialogue to survive.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2017

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## **Southern Kaduna massacres on my mind**

The Sun (Nigeria)

May 1, 2017 Monday

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**Length:** 1137 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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Notice: Undefined index: layout\_id in /var/www/vhosts/sunnews/wp-content/themes/fastnews/library/front.php on line 1663

By Sufyan Ojeifo "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and, therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." John Donne Southern Kaduna is a microcosm of Nigeria. It is, by any stretch of the imagination, emblematic of our collectivity. The people, who are marooned...

By Sufyan Ojeifo

"Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and, therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." John Donne

Southern Kaduna is a microcosm of Nigeria. It is, by any stretch of the imagination, emblematic of our collectivity. The people, who are marooned in their Troublous ancestral Kaduna locale share a common civilization with us who are, somewhat, liberated in the ambiance of the expansive Nigerian-nation. Therefore, the killings of southern Kaduna indigenes by Fulani herdsmen, for whatever reasons, are nothing but fatal assaults on the humanity in all of us.

The south of Kaduna has, historically, become a minefield of mindless genocide that has left the people immersed in eternal fear. Scores of indigenes have been killed by installments. Unfortunately, many more will, painfully, be victims of Fulani herdsmen's fatal rampages as there are yet no verifiable foolproof measures in place to avert the incessant cold-blooded massacres that have been the tragic narrative of the hapless people.

## Southern Kaduna massacres on my mind

One is continuously diminished by the killing of a man or woman, youth or child in southern Kaduna, an enclave that is predominantly occupied by Christian population. "One life taken in cold blood," according to the late inimitable journalist, Dele Giwa, "is as gruesome as millions lost in a pogrom."

Every life wasted in southern Kaduna is humanity wasted; and, too many lives have been lost. Those alive are living on the tenterhooks; and, to live on the tenterhooks in one's ancestral home is not the best way to live.

But that has, essentially, been the lot of the southern Kaduna people. Morbid fear has gripped the minds and defined the atmospherics of their homeland. Their sense of longing for and belonging to the homeland is violently attacked. Their foes have consistently taken advantage of their non-violent nature to inflict substantial damage on their lives, positions and livelihoods. There is understandable agony in the hearts of the people over brazen attempts by belligerent aliens to subjugate them in their land.

There is even a greater anguish over the seeming complicity of the state government in the unremitting spate of deadly attacks by the Fulani herdsmen. The governor of the state, Malam Nasir el-Rufai, has been blamed for waging an unrelenting media campaign against southern Kaduna people. He is said to have failed in his responsibility to maintain the peace and order in the area as the state's chief security officer.

Fearless Catholic bishop of Kafanchan Diocese, Reverend Father Joseph Danlami Bagobiri was on point when, recently, he accused el-Rufai of taking sides with the armed herdsmen, thus failing in his responsibility as a true statesman; and becoming, therefore, a biased umpire who, according to the priest, "blames and criminalises southern Kaduna victims as the cause of the mayhem."

Perhaps, if the governor had shown sincere empathy, he would have acted proactively to avert the latest attack of April 15, 2017 in Asso Village in Jema'a Local Government Area, in which no fewer than 13 people, including a parish priest, Reverend Father Alexander Yayock, were killed. He should have deployed the paraphernalia of security apparatuses and his security votes to mobilize thorough surveillance based on credible intelligence report of potential flashpoints.

Close watchers of developments in southern Kaduna are inclined to conclude that the state government may have decided, for reasons best known to it, not to care about the entire population facing real threat of annihilation. This must have, perhaps, prompted the alarm raised by the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Dr Samson Ayokunle, over the inability of the federal government to stop the killings in southern Kaduna.

All the attacks that have taken place in southern Kaduna have been executed with precision, leaving devastations in their trails. Both domestic and international observers have been shell-shocked at the persistent ease with which these harbingers of death stealthily make their ways into the communities and villages in southern Kaduna, unleash mayhem therein and egress to celebrate the slaughter of the so-called infidels.

Paradoxically, while the Fulani herdsmen and sympathisers of their religion loathe the infidels who populate southern Kaduna, they love their heritage, their grazing land, and would gleefully take their cattle through their farmlands to graze. They do not only graze, they also kill the owners of the land. And this destruction of fellow humans has been indulged by the Kaduna state government for too long.

To be sure, Ayokunle's indictment of the federal government at a press conference held Friday, April 21, 2017 in Abuja ahead of the 104th annual session of the Nigerian Baptist Convention came on the heels of the launch of Harbin Kunama II (Scorpion Sting) at a forest between Kagoro and Kafanchan, southern part of Kaduna State by the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Tukur Yusuf Buratai.

The Operation which, according to the Army, would last for a month is aimed at addressing the issue of insecurity in southern part of Kaduna state and parts of Kano, Plateau and Bauchi states. Ayokunle must have, in the meantime, been circumspect about the sincerity and success of the operation.

The extent to which the operation will go to put a stop to the massacres in southern Kaduna is yet unknown, given its ad-hoc nature, which targets a one-month period. Fulani herdsmen should be credited with some strategic

### Southern Kaduna massacres on my mind

intelligence. They can suspend their surprise attacks for that long, wait for the military to pull out before launching fresh hostilities. The operation should be sustained until the chances of further attacks by the armed herdsmen are either rendered very slim or completely eliminated.

As the Army plans to lock down some forests of Kano, Plateau and Bauchi states in the operation, more attention should be paid to southern Kaduna given the peculiarity and the nature of the constant tragic attacks by armed herdsmen. The area should be the launch-pad to drive the operation to other identified states. And, as positive results are yielded, the operation may well renew the people's hope and confidence in government's ability to protect them.

Ojeifo writes from Abuja via [ojwonderngr@yahoo.com](mailto:ojwonderngr@yahoo.com)

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## **The journalist as endangered specie**

The Sun (Nigeria)

September 24, 2017 Sunday

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**Length:** 1194 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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By Ayo Oyoze Baje "Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again; The eternal years of God are hers;

By Ayo Oyoze Baje

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;

The eternal years of God are hers;

But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,

And dies among his worshippers"

- William Bryant

Truth is their first target. The next is the truth teller. The perpetrators of pure evil would go to great lengths to deploy all imaginable machinations, in a bid to armtwist, cover up or out rightly drown the truth in the vast ocean of grand deceit. But, truth is eternal, incontrovertible, beyond the devious manipulations of any mortal. If only the power monger, be he a tyrant, dictator or some desperado democrat knows. He does not! So, emboldened by the devilish desire to maintain a semblance of innocence, after some hideous crimes must have been committed, he strikes. And not a few patriotic journalists have fallen easy preys to their antics.

One is talking about the vile and vengeful vampire rulers (not leaders) that dot our global landscape. In the line of duty, to their nation and mankind, some journalists have become the voiceless victims to this set of people, drunk on the heady intoxicant called political power. Some have been beheaded by ISIS. Others languish in Syrian jails. Indeed, some have had their skulls broken, their faces lacerated and their limbs decapitated. Records abound of

### The journalist as endangered specie

those brutally raped or bruised and battered to a state of coma. In fact, victims still lucky to be alive have gory tales to tell. In this group are journalists suffering the trauma of persisting high blood pressure, lingering muscle pains, excruciating back ache and mind-bending insomnia.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 2,297 journalists have been killed since 1990. Amongst the deadliest countries listed in the statistics since 1992 are Iraq (184), Syria (111), the Philippines (78), Russia (58), Colombia (47) and India (41). On its part, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has recorded related deaths in targeted assassinations, cross-fire incidents and bomb attacks, including 112 who lost their lives to violence in 2015, 93 who were killed in 2016 and 25 so far murdered in 2017. Sectorially, those covering politics took the highest figures at 48 per cent, followed by war (38%), human rights, (21%), corruption (20%) and crime (15%). Though the number is lower than previous years, the IFJ has warned against complacency and continued impunity. But why, you may ask? Justice has been served for only four percent of journalists killed worldwide!

But before you breathe easy, delighted that Nigeria is not amongst the deadliest countries so listed, think again. According to the media advocacy organization CPJ, "Nigeria and Somalia are among the worst nations in the world in combating deadly anti-press violence, our 2013 Impunity Index has found. Five journalists have been killed with impunity in Nigeria since 2009. However, 13 Nigerian journalists were killed in 2012 alone in active service, making it the highest in the history of the country since independence in 1960".

We recall, with deep pains, the brutal murder of the two Nigerian journalists, Tayo Awotunsin and Krees Imobibie, who disappeared in August, 1991 in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, while reporting on the civil war. Also, more than thirty years after, patriots still agonize over the cruel and callous killing of Dele Giwa, the pioneer Managing Editor of Newswatch Magazine through a letter bomb on October 1986. That of Bayo Ohu, a reporter with the Guardian Newspapers on September 20, 2009 and Channels Television reporter, Enenche Akogwu shot on January 20, 2012 in Kano still remain as scary scars on the conscience of the nation. They are indeed, a dark reminder of how far desperate power poachers could go in an attempt to cover the trails of their bloody footsteps. Are we done?

Not just yet. On August 29,2017 it was reported that security personnel attached to Kogi state government house went on rampage and beat up Channels TV reporter, Segun Salami. Outraged by this untoward attack, Governor Yahaya Bello promptly tendered an unreserved apology to the media house. But again the operatives of the EFCC unleashed mayhem on workers at the Sun Newspapers as reported on September 21, 2017. A statement from the paper stated that: "For one grueling hour, EFCC operatives subjected our staff to crude intimidation, psychological and emotional trauma. The development had more to do with suffocating free press in Nigeria than law enforcement."

In a similar vein, a score of soldiers on Operation Python Dance against members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, stormed into the Nigerian Union of Journalists press centre in Umahia on 12 September, 2017. Some journalists were beaten up, with the seizure and smashing of their cameras , smart-phones, computers and other equipment containing newly-shot photos and video.

Truth be told, we do not want to go back to the dark days of military dictatorship when seasoned journalists including the likes of Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles-Obi, George M'bah, Onome Osifo-Whiskey and Babafermi Ojudu saw hell in Sani Abacha gulag. According to Reporters Without Borders journalists covering the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East axis of the country live under constant fear.

Baje writes from Abuja

Members have witnessed the murder of one journalist, the killing of another with no proof that it was linked to the victim's work. There were nine assaults, seven arrests and three journalists threatened.

It would be noted that even before the controversial, Hate Speech issue came to the public space, attempts were made to muzzle freedom of expression by some lawmakers. In a curious twist of political events, many of those who used the same social media platform to climb to the pedestal of power became uncomfortable about its

### The journalist as endangered specie

overwhelming influence. That was not too long ago. The way forward is for journalists to be insured as being championed by the Nigerian Union of Journalists, (NUJ), though not taken seriously by some members. They should be trained in the areas of job security, journey management and how to ensure their mental health. Safety training for them should have in attendance their employees, to drive home the message of protection of their lives and provision of enabling environment to thrive. In 2016, the theme of the World Press Freedom Day was: "Job Hazards And Implications For Journalists" as organized by Safety and Security Watch Magazine. As the speakers rightly noted, there should be sustainable partnerships between the NUJ and the Institute of Safety Professionals . Freedom of expression is clearly stated in Section 39 (1) and (2) of the 1999 constitution (as amended). It is in sync with the fundamental human right, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . If we want our democracy to be sustained and strengthened there should be no more undue harassment, torture or the senseless killings of our law abiding journalists. As truth tellers, their rights must be protected by all. .

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2017

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## **Boko Haram Names Buhari, Five Others As Mediators - \*FG Welcomes Move, Buhari Cautious**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 01, 2012

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**Length:** 909 words

**Byline:** Emmanuel Aziken, Political Editor, Ben Agande and Ndahi Marama

**Dateline:** Maiduguri

### **Body**

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Leadership of Jama'atul Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also called Boko Haram, has named the former Head of State and presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, CPC, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), among six prominent northerners, to mediate between the group and the Federal Government.

The Federal Government in a statement by Dr. Reuben Abati, Presidential Spokesman, Thursday, welcomed the move.

Boko Haram, however, said that for the group to observe ceasefire, the Federal Government must heed its demand by arresting and prosecuting the former Governor of Borno State, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff.

Governor Ibrahim Shettima of Borno State also, Thursday, said security agencies should be allowed to do their job on those they suspect are sponsors or sympathisers of the Boko Haram sect.

Shettima told state house correspondents after a meeting of the National Economic Council that the security challenge in the country required the efforts of all Nigerians to overcome.

Meanwhile, spokesman of the group, Abu Mohammed Ibn Abdulazeez, who doubles as the Second-in-Command (Amir) to their leader, Imam Abubakar Shekau, made the group's intention known in a tele-conference with journalists in Maiduguri, Thursday.

Abdulazeez said other people, who could mediate with the government if its conditions were met, include Dr. Shettima Ali Monguno, former Yobe State governor, Bukar Abba Ibrahim, Ambassador Gaji Galtimari and Hajia Aisha Wakil and her husband, Alkali Wakil.

He insisted, however, that such dialogue must not take place in Nigeria, but Saudi Arabia.

According to him, the choice of Saudi Arabia was informed by the insincerity of the Nigeria government for dialogue and its betrayal in the past.

## Boko Haram Names Buhari, Five Others As Mediators - \*FG Welcomes Move, Buhari Cautious

Abdulazeez insisted that for the group to ceasefire completely, the government must not only apprehend, but prosecute Senator Modu Sheriff according to the laws of the land as well as compensate members of the group and rebuild their places of worship destroyed during 2009 uprising, which led to the alleged murder of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf.

The Boko Haram spokesman further stressed that, all their members, who were arrested and are under the custody of security agencies must be released immediately, just as their wives and children who were displaced following the crises should be rehabilitated into the society to allow room for the much talked about dialogue with the Federal Government.

Commenting on the series of recent killings and destruction of property in Maiduguri, Abu Abdulazeez dissociated Boko Haram from the action, saying such attacks were not only politically-motivated, but carried out by those seeking power in the Borno Emirate council or in government.

He stressed that recent killings and destructions in Maiduguri were against the ideology of the sect, which he said was fighting the cause of Allah.

Abdulazeez also said the burning of old and newly-constructed primary schools witnessed across the state were not carried out by the sect, insisting that they were perpetrated by aggrieved politicians who were denied contracts by the state government.

Last February, the group had also nominated Monguno, Bukar Ibrahim, Aisha Wakil and Jinadu Idris as part of a team to mediate between it and the Federal Government, but the negotiation never got off.

Thursday, was, however, the first time the group would be proposing Gen. Buhari as part of a mediation team between it and the Federal Government.

Buhari, who returned to Kaduna from Daura, Katsina State, yesterday evening, said he was yet to be formally contacted on the development.

Buba Galadima, an associate of the former Head of State speaking on behalf of the General said: "His first reaction is that he has not heard about this news and nobody has contacted him."

"He said he wouldn't want to say anything on this matter that has not yet been authenticated, but he remains prayerful that peace and tranquility will return to this country."

Meanwhile, Sheriff, who spoke in Abuja on the issue of the involvement of politicians with Boko Haram, said: "I think it is within the realm and the responsibility of the security agencies to unearth the truth."

"I am more of a developmental politician and I am more interested in addressing the core issues that make our society vulnerable to the antics of religious bigots and all sorts of misfits that are indoctrinating our young ones to these things."

"I don't want to dabble into the realm of the security agencies neither do I want to respond to allegations and accusations from any quarter."

"But it is the responsibility of security agencies to unearth those behind Boko Haram."

A veteran **journalist Dele Giwa** said an evil done by man to man will be rewarded if not now then later, if not by man then certainly by God. But the day of evil over good is only temporary.

"I think the problem at hand goes beyond politics. The underlying factor is poverty. The most important thing is how we can resolve this problem and restore harmony, peace and how to eradicate endemic poverty which is the underlying factor of the whole crisis."

Boko Haram Names Buhari, Five Others As Mediators - \*FG Welcomes Move, Buhari Cautious

"I want to solicit for the media not to dwell on sensationalism but proper conflict resolution and move our society forward. Its pains me if a single person is killed by Boko Haram, when innocent souls are lost.

"Its sheer hooliganism. Its sheer madness for anybody to burn a place of worship. These are the issue agitating my mind and I don't want to dwell on politics for now."

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2012

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## Soyinka's Demonisation of Jonathan

Daily Trust (Abuja)

December 14, 2014

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**Length:** 1151 words

**Byline:** Dan Amor

### **Body**

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In a feat of acerbic verbal tantrums, Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka Tuesday December 2, attacked President Goodluck Jonathan and likened the Nigerian leader to Nebuchadnezzar the Biblical autocrat and king of Babylon who initially denounced the Living Supreme God. Soyinka, who addressed a press conference on the state of the nation at the popular Freedom Garden in Lagos, said that Jonathan is tyrannical because the Inspector-General of Police Suleiman Abba stopped the attempt by the defected speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal to enter the Green Chamber of the National Assembly with thugs. The respected professor of dramatic literature who is clearly biased in his recent pronouncements given his current alignment with top leaders of the opposition political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) said so many unprintable things against the administration of President Jonathan.

Indeed, the distinguished playwright is entitled to his opinion especially in a wide democratic space in which freedom of association and of speech is the norm. But it is unfortunate that the renowned literary icon could allow his judgment to be beclouded by ahistorical considerations. By this recent act of likening Jonathan to Nebuchadnezzar, Soyinka has come down from his Olympian height as a global citizen and statesman to the sheer pedestrian rabble of petty villainy and rancour. It is a pointer to the fact that every great intellectual has his weak points. Our own Kongi is no exception. Even with the unsavory political development in Anambra State in 2004 which led to the unfortunate withdrawal of the security personnel of former Governor Chris Ngige after his attempted abduction by the police, no Nigerian, not even Professor Chinua Achebe who rejected former President Olusegun Obasanjo's national award due to that crisis, went as far as comparing the former President with Nebuchadnezzar.

For the benefit of the reader who might not know the ancient/biblical story, Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who reigned c. 605BC-562BC. He was said to have constructed the Hanging Gardens of Babylon (now Iraq) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar II was the fourth king of the Second Dynasty of Isin and Fourth Dynasty of Babylon who ruled for 23 years. One very notorious fact about him is that Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize the existence of the God of heaven and was basically tyrannical. But he later bowed to and worshipped God when he saw the efficacy of God's mysterious powers as demonstrated by Daniel the young Jewish believer. Given Jonathan's antecedent and pedigree as a faithful adherent of the tenets of the word of God whose administration strictly adheres to the fundamental principles of the rule of law, Soyinka's attempt to demonize him is wicked and unacceptable. In the

## Soyinka's Demonisation of Jonathan

light of the above statement that Nebuchadnezzar did not know God and the reality that Soyinka does not believe in the God of heaven, Soyinka and Jonathan, who is like Nebuchadnezzar?

Every discerning Nigerian who can read between the lines knows where Soyinka is coming from. His recent outburst is yet another pure political statement by an APC sympathizer meant to rattle the President and sway the sympathy of Nigerians from his administration. Suddenly everyone who thinks he has something to say has now turned to a primary school headmaster wielding a big stick to whip the leader of the world's largest Black Country. "Jonathan Bashing" is the name of the game. Soyinka who relishes controversy, who enjoys being primed in the fantasy of the media has cooked another meal to attract acclamation. But the applause he received in Lagos in the name of Jonathan-bashing to humour Nigerians was a soured one. It is a grand, though disingenuous alibi not only for parrying the barbs of those who see him as hobnobbing with the opposition, but also a ploy to curry favour from Nigerians for those who vowed to make the country ungovernable and still are planning to form a parallel government if Jonathan wins in 2015.

Of course, Soyinka has always been tactless in his political (mis)adventure and intellectual overbearingness. Yet, it is unthinkable that Soyinka is now on the side of the feudal forces still determined to keep Nigeria in perpetual medieval servitude. Without necessarily alluding to his rapport with the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida whom he described as an autocrat soon after IBB refused to grant their (he, Achebe and J. P. Clark) petition to spare the life of the poet/soldier Mamman Vatsa, and he burnt his fingers, Soyinka has not always been ideologically so refined as to escape the crudity of the orthodox left. In spite of everything, those of us his younger admirers still manage to ask ourselves: why did Soyinka abandon his search for the killers of Dele Giwa, the colorful Nigerian journalist who was bombed in his study on October 19, 1986?

As a renowned statesman and global citizen, Soyinka's words should act as a soothing balm which would heal this troubled land of ours instead of taking sides in petty partisan showmanship thereby heating up the polity. It is absolutely absurd and anti-intellectual for Soyinka to circulate that a man like Jonathan, who cannot hurt a fly, who is so mild and apolitical that even the opposition branded him "clueless" is worse than Nebuchadnezzar. If the truth be told, just as Jonathan has dwarfed the achievements of past administrations in terms of infrastructure, so is also his achievements in the area of fundamental human rights. Jonathan is the most abused and attacked President in the annals of this country, and if not for his humane temperament Nigeria would have been worse than Sudan by now.

Yet, how many Nigerians or even his political opponents are unjustly harassed or languishing in gaol? How many are reported killed as a result of political vendetta or envenomization? How on earth would a man like Jonathan be branded an autocrat, not even by those who have an open agenda to pull him down but by a respected international figure such as Soyinka who claims to be the conscience of humanity and yet hobnobbing with corrupt politicians? Why has Soyinka not condemned this eerie act of *déjà vu* called political defection, which is being used to tear the country apart by politicians of all shades?

How right can Soyinka be if he encourages the opposition to take up arms against the Jonathan administration as they seem ready to do? Why would the police allow Tambuwal to invade the National Assemble with political thugs? When has thuggery become constitutional because it favours a particular political party that has the support of the Nobel laureate? Nigerians of goodwill should condemn Soyinka's attempt to demonize President Jonathan.

Amor is an Abuja-based journalist and public affairs analyst.

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**Load-Date:** December 16, 2014



## **Budget Impasse, Executive Excesses - National Assembly to Blame**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

April 24, 2016

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**Length:** 1005 words

**Byline:** Monima Daminabo

### **Body**

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It is at a time like this that fans of late Afro beat maestro and social critic Fela Anikulapo Kuti must be lamenting his demise on August 2nd, 1997. Indeed it is interesting to speculate on how he would have reacted to the present state of the nation, given the unending medley of twists and turns which daily living has turned out to be for most country men and women. Yet an informed guess will be considered correct if it sees him defining the present mood of the country as "suffering and smiling"; a flash back to one of his classic musical works of the 1980s, which parodied life in Nigeria with uncanny, graphic accuracy.

It is no more news that the 2016 budget is coming out late - very late, just like its predecessors; at least since the return of the country to civil rule in 1999. The year is already at the tail end of April, the fourth month and the budget whose statutory life span runs from January 1st to December 31st 2016, is not yet out. The implication is that the budget will remain compromised on arrival, with grave implications for businesses and sundry investments both in the public and private sectors. The hope now is that it should not also end up as a non-performing budget also like the previous ones, at least since 1999. It is on record that none of these recorded an implementation level of more than 30%. And even at that the figure is usually the amount of money disbursed, and not the quantum of service delivered.

It is not that Nigerians, who as the late frontline ***journalist Dele Giwa*** once said have been pushed 'beyond shockability' by the serial failure of successive leaderships, see budget delay or even non implementation as a big issue. To many Nigerians it is the usual way of doing things in the country. In fact as evidence bears out, past budgets at every tier of governance have proven to be mere academic exercises in fulfilling statutory procedures associated with disbursement of public finance. Little wonder that budget provisions in the country hardly impact on the life of Nigerians, but remain hollow promises.

As things stand, the 2016 budget is facing a delay that many did not anticipate, given the gusto with which the administration came on board. And the reasons for the delay are as varied as they span the divide between the valid and the mundane. For instance firstly was the drama over a budget padding scandal, which the erudite Mahmud Jega rightfully treated in his column in the 'Daily Trust' last Monday as the 'pork barrel' syndrome. Later came other issues including the latest, testy stand of the President that he will not sign the already passed national budget until he screens the details to his satisfaction.

Seen in proper context, many Nigerians would have wished that President Buhari did not identify himself with such a position which in the eye of the constitution and reality remains unfortunate. While the position gained attention

## Budget Impasse, Executive Excesses - National Assembly to Blame

largely because he advocated it in far away United States of America during his recent tour to that country, the truth is that President Buhari is not in a position to personally vet the details of a budget document that is over a thousand pages long. Where would he have the time off his official schedule of meetings with his cabinet members, foreign dignitaries and other important personalities, not to talk of his frequent trips abroad for international engagements?

Hence whatever opinion he forms about the budget remains what his aides feed him with. In the same vein his stand on vetting the budget details before assenting can also easily be seen as sponsored by such aides for reasons that may not be altruistic. If the English proverb which says that every 'dog is a lion at his master gate' is considered then the President may unwittingly be protecting interests that may be capitalizing on the 'magic' of his name to feather their private nests.

Meanwhile, even as the budget drama lasts and Nigerians wallow in privation, the fact seems to be lost on the Presidency that the situation is only what it is just because the National Assembly has not acted in exercise of its powers. It is the legislature that should screen and supervise the executive arm and not the other way round. The constitution grants sweeping powers to the legislature with which to act in ensuring good governance. These powers include control of the nation's purse, and determining who serves in the government. Against such liberties, the legislature cannot be excused for allowing untoward developments in the country, including inchoate fortunes for the budget as is ongoing now. At least it has the power to act in the interest of the public by overriding the presidential assent if it does not come within reasonable time.

The legislature is not intended to be an advisory body, but an organ that serves as the melting pot of the varying shades of interests in the country, pursuant to developing action plans for the executive arm to carry out. If it loses its voice, the country loses its voice. And with the state of affairs in the country many Nigerians are asking if the legislature still has its voice intact.

Questions over the slacking in the role of the legislature are not confined to budgetary matters. Even in many other areas of national life where agents of the executive arm demonstrate excesses in exercise of their powers and the legislature is expected to rise to the occasion, the institution has often failed. For instance, the country is witnessing perhaps the longest lasting fuel crisis now in its third month, and not a few Nigerians would have wished some more affirmative action from the legislature.

Just as well, now that the country is facing indeterminate prospects for the 2016 budget, questions are being raised over the role of the legislature in leading the way forward as it should be doing at all times.

For instance, if the President Muhamadu Buhari refuses to grant assent to the budget bill can the National Assembly find the muscle to veto it even when such is in the national interest?

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2016

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## **Dimgba Igwe: Nigeria and the hit-and-run syndrome**

Nigerian Tribune

September 12, 2014 Friday

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Length: 924 words

### **Body**

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NIGERIA has always been a victim of hit and run. From politicians who rob us blind and run away at the slightest mention of "fellow countrymen," only to come back after the dust had settled seeking to seize another chance of looting, to Liberian diplomats who come into the country bringing Ebola, sneaking away from quarantine, resurfacing in Port-Harcourt, infecting more victims and disappearing into thin air. Hit and run.

This is a country where Boko Haram seems to have come to stay, gnawing at our Achille's heels and hiding in Sambisa forest after perpetrating attacks against military bases and escaping with ammunition. They even abducted more than 200 of our girls and boasted they would sell them in the open market as if they were goats. We only mourned and hope we would one day bring back our girls while the criminals remain at large. Hit and run.

So when the news broke that veteran **journalist**, Dimgba Igwe had died while jogging somewhere near his house, killed by a hit and run driver, the first thing that came to mind was hit and run again? But then, at what time of the day did it happen? Weren't there some passers-by who saw what happened, someone who could offer immediate help?

Unfortunately the tragedy took place at about 10am in broad daylight. 10 am? One would have thought it happened in an exclusive and deserted area but no. So how come the crazy driver did the havoc and was fast enough to escape from the scene? Was nobody around at 10am?

In saner climes, a CCTV camera might not have captured the image of the driver but would have definitely given us picture of his vehicle, the colour and probably the registration number anything which could have helped the police trace the culprit. Though the police have vowed to arrest the offender, that is a hard sell, something in the mould of finding out who killed **Dele Giwa**.

As is often the case in journalism, whenever there is a similar tragedy, close relations and friends are the best bet to give a true picture of who the deceased was. Many people may not know Dimgba Igwe's wife or siblings but there is one person whom many know as his next of kin, in fact his 'twin brother': Mike Awoyinfa. He did not disappoint in his tribute to his soul mate.

From Awoyinfa's tribute one could see that Dimgba Igwe was a good man. "... the Dimgba Igwe I know, will forgive the man who killed him," Awoyinfa wrote adding that: "Pastor Igwe must have prayed that morning. His first act at the break of every new day is to go on his knees. He sings in praise of God, blesses the name of the Lord, speaks in tongue and prays for the Lord to deliver him from all evils. But on that Black Saturday, the devil struck."

## Dimgba Igwe: Nigeria and the hit-and-run syndrome

Obviously bad things happen to good people. Many have asked: 'why do bad things happen to good people? but nobody has been able to provide a precise answer. However, what is clear is that bad things actually happen to good people. Awoyinfa's tribute also shed more light on the final hours of Igwe: "For four hours, he was bleeding on the road to Golgotha. No ambulance. No oxygen mask. No Samaritan hospital. From St. Raphael Hospital to the General Hospital Isolo where there was no surgeon to attend to him, it was the story of Nigeria's systemic failure as a country. He finally gave up at Lagos State University Hospital, Ikeja."

Even in cosmopolitan Lagos with ambulances stationed at strategic places, Igwe's life could not be saved. In other climes, you only need to dial 911 and an ambulance would surface but here there was no ambulance, even the available ones could be held somewhere in the thick Lagos traffic. What a shame.

Dreams die fast. Now all the future that Igwe and his 'twin brother' envisaged together had vanished into thin air. The expected launch of their 50 World Editors, a book put together in the course of their travels together as editors has been stalled.

ack to the question: Why do bad things happen to good people? This is actually a question based on Harold S. Kushner's book: When Bad Things Happen To Good People. The book is an attempt by the author to make human beings see or make meaning out of sufferings and losses. To know that God is not the author of tragedies and that even when tragedies happen, God is there and the negative situation could turn around through personal will and determination and that which we think is a catastrophe, is actually a stepping stone to greater heights and better things.

The tragedy with the Nigerian situation is that the causes of the Dimgba Igwe's death would never be used to turn things around. The status quo ante remains and life continues until another tragedy occurs, more tragic than Igwe's. No lessons learnt.

Crazy drivers will continue to overspeed in residential areas where in better climes there would be road signs stating the speed limit allowed in specific areas. New estates would spring up where residents are not taken into considerations in terms of planning and design. Pedestrians will continue to struggle with motorists and okada riders for right of way. In nearby Cotonou, motorbikes have their own small road specifically designed for them in other places pedestrians have their own 'road' too. Not here in the country that prides itself as 'the giant of Africa.'

Predictably more hit and run drivers would continue to operate. Hit and run drivers such as oil thieves, pipeline vandals, scammers all sorts of characters who are never caught people whose toes are too sacred to be stepped on.

Alade is on the staff of the Nigerian Tribune. ([bayoalade@yahoo.com](mailto:bayoalade@yahoo.com)

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2014



## **SPECIAL FEATURE: Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria**

Nigerian Tribune

November 1, 2018 Thursday

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**Length:** 1483 words

### **Body**

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The killing of Saudi **journalist** Jamal Khashoggi on October 2 has continued to draw global outrage, especially at a time when journalists and the media are under increasing attacks.

Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi government and columnist for The Washington Post, was assassinated at Saudi Arabia's Consulate in Turkey in what has been described as premeditated murder.

There have also been growing protests against Khashoggi's disappearance and at allegations of 'state-sponsored murder' of the **journalist** as his disappearance was directly linked to his criticism of Saudi policies.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) says between 2006 and 2017, more than 1,000 journalists were killed, often for simply doing their job of uncovering something that someone wants to stay hidden - an average of one death every four days.

Analysts have, however, criticised the way world leaders have reacted to Khashoggi's killing.

A human rights activist, Dr Kayode Ajulo, says 'there is a sharp and sad irony between the Khashoggi case and if the killing had taken place in Nigeria.'

'In the former's situation, a life is lost, yet cry against it was loud. In Nigeria, killings happen in torrents and thousands; with impunity too'.

Analysts say Khashoggi's killing has also renewed safety concerns for Nigerian journalists who have also had their unfortunate share of attacks.

The Coalition of Nigerian Media and Civil Society Groups, while protesting Khashoggi's killing at the Saudi Consulate in Abuja, also asked the Nigerian government to re-open similar cases of journalists killed by suspected government officials.

The group during the protest said: 'Just as we call on the Saudi government, so also, we call on the Nigerian government to put an end to impunity for crimes against journalists'.

The group, particularly, recalled the killing of the Nigerian foremost investigative **journalist** and publisher of Newswatch Magazine, Mr **Dele Giwa**, via a parcel bomb in 1986.

## SPECIAL FEATURE: Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria

The group asked President Muhammadu Buhari to 'order the reopening of impartial, independent and transparent investigations into the killings of all journalists in the country and ensure their killers don't go unpunished".

Mr Simon Kolawole, Publisher of TheCable, online newspapers, says Khashoggi's death has again refreshed one's mind of the sad memories of what Nigerian journalists went through in the hands of the military.

'The murder brought back the sad memories of military dictatorship in Nigeria. Khashoggi's fate is a reminder of the dangers journalists still face," Kolawole said.

Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria compels 'the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media too, at all time, be free to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people".

However, while Section 22 gives the media the responsibility of holding government accountable to the people, it is not justice-able, as it neither empowers nor protects the media to discharge its duty.

In his view, Mr Kakuna Kerina, Programme Coordinator for Africa at the Committee to Protect Journalists, says the Nigerian press is the continent's most prolific and vociferous, setting the standards for media practitioners throughout the region.

'But in the 1990s, they met their match in the late Gen. Sani Abacha's regime which set new standards of abusive treatment of the press with tactics such as indefinite detentions without charge.

Other inhumane treatments meted out to Nigerian journalists and workers in media houses under the junta were secret trials by military tribunals, torture by police and state security agents, disappearances, office bombings and bans and seizures of publications," he observed.

He said further that the Detention of Persons Decree No. 2 allowed indefinite, incommunicado detention of citizens, while the Offensive Publications Decree No. 35 of 1993 allowed the government to seize any publication deemed likely to 'disturb the peace and public order of Nigeria".

He also observed that the Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree No. 29 of 1993 was used in 1995 by a special military tribunal to convict Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, George M'bah and Ben Charles-Obi as 'accessories after the fact to treason" for reporting on an alleged coup plot.

In that regard, Mr Bayo Onanuga, Managing Director, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) was exiled and The News magazine, TEMPO, PM News and other media outfits were prescribed, birthing the guerrilla journalism.

Recounting his ordeals, Onanuga said: 'I left through the usual 'NADECO route. Before I left Nigeria, I had to go and shave. I used to have some Afro hair on my head.

'I dressed like a farmer and bought some eye-glasses. I dressed more like an old school teacher and just carried a few things and headed towards Ghana".

Onanuga regretted that his employee, Bagauda Kaltho, was killed by the state, while his colleague, Babafemi Ojudu, was arrested at the border while coming back to Nigeria from a conference in Kenya.

'Kunle Ajibade was already jailed for life. Dapo Olorunyomi was on exile. Seye Kehinde had floated City People. Jenkins Alumona, our editor was in detention. So many other people had been arrested at that time," Onanuga said.

But analysts say the threats during the dark military era for Nigerian journalists are still with the members of the pen profession even after the return to civil rule.

Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based non-profit, nonpartisan organisation that monitors press freedom globally, had reported serious reservations about Nigeria's government press relations in 1999.

## SPECIAL FEATURE: Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria

It noted that 'although a new constitution was promulgated on May 5 (1999), it was modelled largely after 1979 Constitution and offered the media no specific protection", identifying about 20 anti-media decrees in the amended 1999 Constitution.

Punch Newspaper, in a recent editorial, said 'in September 2017, more than 50 soldiers besieged the Nigeria Union of Journalists Press Centre in Umuahia, Abia State, beat up journalists and damaged iPads, laptops, tape recorders and furniture".

Midat Joseph of Leadership Newspaper, Samuel Ogundipe of Premium Times, the Elombah brothers - Daniel and Timothy - with elombah.com, and Jones Abiri of Weekly Source, were recent victims.

Other recent victims in the line of duty also include Friday Olokor of Punch Newspapers, Taiye Edeni of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and Enemaku Ojochigbe of the African Independent Television.

Mrs Ifeyinwa Omowole, National President of the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), has, however, advised journalists to learn from Khashoggi's killing by prioritising their safety.

'The lesson from Kashoggi is that all of us in Nigeria have to be trained. There is no spare life. You don't deliberately walk into a danger zone.

'Even though Kashkoggi had gone for a pre-meeting, according to his girlfriend, from all indications, the guy had a feeling prior to going in there; he knew he could be facing death.

'We are not immune to attack; in fact, we are more vulnerable to attacks because most times, the journalist is seen as the supposed enemy to the political class," she said.

The NAWOJ leader called for periodic training for journalists to learn new trends in issues of security.

'There is a Life Insurance policy in Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) which costs less than N7,000 annually and a lot of us do not even subscribe to it," she said.

Omowole tasked the government on the protection of every citizen saying, 'if in the course of duty we sometimes have to face danger, then it behoves on the government to find a way to protect us.

'Security personnel need to be trained on the schedule and responsibility of journalists. So if they know, they will not see us as threats, they will see us as partners".

Also, a group of independent, UN-appointed human rights experts have urged governments to take firm steps to ensure accountability for violence and attacks against journalists.

Mr David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and Bernard Duhaime, Chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, express concern about the safety of journalists.

They note that high-level international commitments such as a resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2018 exist, calling on world leaders to implement such resolutions.

However, UNESCO launches a new campaign, 'Truth Never Dies" on November 2, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

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SPECIAL FEATURE: Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria

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## **Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria**

Nigerian Tribune

November 3, 2018 Saturday

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**Length:** 1485 words

### **Body**

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Khashoggi's killing renews calls for journalists' safety in Nigeria

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## The Media and 2011 [column]

Leadership (Abuja)

May 19, 2010 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** Kunle Somorin

### **Body**

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"The media's power is frail. Without the people's support, it can be shut off with the ease of turning a light switch" - Corazon Aquino

I have heard many feats ascribed to journalists, including the power to make and mar. It is not impossible that the journalist himself or herself thinks he's the next mystique after the almighty. In Nigeria, journalism has assumed a confounding status that most men of power often bow and tremble before pen pushers.

In 1983, at the height of the political apostasy that culminated in the landslide victory of the then ruling party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), one of the beneficiaries of the flawed process that was eventually mitigated by a military interregnum, Chief Victor Omololu Olunloyo, laid flat before media practitioners to underscore his trepidation at the awesome power of the pen.

At the trajectory of history of political evolutions, the media has found it's both as a tool for eventuating the good and the bad in political actors and institutions. Some people would argue, that but the pioneering media networking of Nnamdi Azikwe, the Enahoros, Davies and Obafemi Awolowo, our dream of an independent Nigeria as a corporate entity could as well have been a pipedream.

What is incontestable, is that the media has been a malleable instrument with which political inform, misinform and aggregate or disaggregate unity and progress. That is why, where the media functions well, the lives of the reporter is always in jeopardy. Our country has been fraught with unresolved murder of journalists - Dele Giwa, Godwin Agbroko, Bayo Ohu, Abayomi Ogundehi and lately, Edo of The Nation newspaper.

It's the fear of more murders that compelled me to honour an invitation to a Media Roundtable on Electoral Reform on Tuesday. Held at the instance of the International Republican Institute (IRI), and facilitated by two expatriates, Prof. Ivor Gaber and Jesse Roberts from, of all places, Institute of War and Peace Reporting! I was alarmed at the name of the institute, but was consoled that the facilitator preached peace rather than toe the life and death stance that political warfare has assumed in our country.

Beyond the yawning gap in terms of capacity and disposable income compared to the politicians, who the public love to distrust, the journalists are increasingly becoming endangered species as most of them earn't's the fear of more murders that compelled me to honour an invitation to a Media Roundtable on Electoral Reform on Tuesday unpensionable salaries, chased by goons and mollified by the people.

## The Media and 2011 [column]

Unfortunately, these are the only set of professionals that the constitutions ascribed responsibilities to as gate-keepers of the commonwealth. How can they wade through the mesh of ethical, societal, financial and moral inhibitions that daily trail them? The Media has come to join the judiciary, in the unanticipated duty of returning electoral verdicts and legitimizing polls.

We dissected the challenges in achieving fair and unbiased coverage of elections. Utopia, as the ideal, is the journalist has a role to play. The reporter, it turned out could be likened to the devil on the cross, most of the reporters own up to the challenges posed by biased owners, whose interests are less than altruistic. Because most of their employers are partisan or have been compromised by pecuniary or to be more charitable, commercial interests, certain class of 'friends of the house' are treated as sacred cows. Impediments are thus created for a level-playing reportage of candidates and parties.

Since, most newspaper proprietors and electronic media owners don't pay their workers as at when due and where they do, they are grossly underpaid and reporters have to resort to underground dealings by chasing adverts, becoming part-time media managers to political parties, politicians, heads of election monitoring agencies are those they should ordinarily maintain oversight responsibilities over.

The big question is how do you take gratification without obligation? Clearly, an underpaid journalist, who fellowships with a corrupt public office holder or aspiring leader, he is himself not credible. If you cannot give what you lack, it goes without saying that a journalist or media owner without integrity is himself without integrity and by that very fact, part of the malfeasance that plagues our electoral process.

The quest for credible, free and fair election places a burden on the reporter. Self-examination of that constituency and the need to set guidelines for practitioner, a regime of sanctions and motivation for noble ones should therefore be emplaced if the 2011 elections would be successful. Concerned that many journalists are falling victims of mindless killings, the Roundtable urged the authorities to tackle the issue of public security as a desideratum for reform of the electoral system, while ensuring that people entrusted with to be umpires in the elections have no antecedents like their immediate predecessors.

The battle line has been drawn between those who are patently bent on using the journalists to achieve diabolical end through planting and mischief making. And that's where the issue goes beyond legislating rigging out of existence. Fine legal instruments could assist, the media could be empowered and exert self-control measures through regulatory authorities, but the onus will be on the desire of the citizenry to hold dear the tenets of democracy and embrace value re-orientation. Anything short of that we mean, no lessons have been learnt and business as usual.

The rabid display of infantile exuberance by the House of Representatives, I tarry to say, the House, which I had all along thought to have equal stake as its Senate counterpart deserve the slothful description of a Lower House. I couldn't understand what manner of shenanigans came over a few of them as they chorused and sang like members of the Students Representative Council of a Polytechnic or College of Education, while the were solemnly requested to consider for confirmation, Arc. Namadi Sambo as Vice President of the Federal Republic.

Compared to the conduct of Senators, I was greatly appalled at the way and manner some of them floundered the historic opportunity. I know understand that immaturity was a good enough ground for them to resist sitting jointly with the distinguished men of the Upper Chamber to review the 1999 Constitution. A lot more need to be done in building the capacity of some of our legislator whose ineptitude has no comparison in our country's history. And that's where to reform the polity, because these are ordinarily the closest people to the electorate.

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2010



## **GANI FAWEHINMI; Lawyer and activist who fought for human rights in Nigeria**

The Independent (London)

September 8, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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# The INDEPENDENT

**Section:** OBITUARIES; Pg. 30

**Length:** 923 words

**Byline:** Shola Adenekan

## **Body**

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Gani Fawehinmi who has died aged 71, was one of the most famous figures in Nigeria. Fondly referred to as "the people's lawyer" and "Senior Advocate of the Masses", he used his legal training and resources in fighting for justice for the Nigerian people.

Along with the likes of the Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, Fawehinmi became the loud conscience of 150 million people, a man for whom silence was never an option, and for whom there were no tyrants too big to be challenged. For over three decades he endured imprisonment, harassment and the climate of assassination created by the successive military regimes in battling causes which, even though they did not always succeed against totalitarian governments who controlled the organs of the law, served to focus national and international attention. He also took on the villainy and corruption of civilian governments, highlighting their illegitimate means of coming to power.

Fawehinmi was not everything to everybody. You either liked him passionately or hated him intensely. This was because of his boundless and sometimes suicidal energy with which he tenaciously and uncompromisingly pursued and crusaded his beliefs, principles and ideals for the untrammeled rule of law, undiluted democracy, all-embracing and expansive social justice, the protection of fundamental human rights and respect for the hopes and aspirations of the masses who are victims of misgovernance.

One of his most notable fights was the mysterious killing of Nigeria's leading newspaper editor Dele Giwa by a parcel bomb in 1986. Fawehinmi openly accused the ruling military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida of being complicit in the journalist's murder. Fawehinmi took the case through to the Nigerian apex court, the Supreme Court, but lost. For this, the regime tried to humiliate him publicly. Babangida, when asked why his regime had detained the lawyer, told a magazine that it would have been out of place not to because all regimes before him had done the same.

**GANI FAWEHINMI** Lawyer and activist who fought for human rights in Nigeria

Fawehinmi fared no better under the military regime of General Sanni Abacha in the early 1990s. Fawehinmi led the fight against the cancellation of 12 June 1993 presidential election and the subsequent detention of the election's victor, Chief Moshood Abiola. His passport was subsequently seized on many occasions; his residence and chambers were ransacked several times. He was beaten up repeatedly and was exiled from one part of the country to another to prevent him from being listened to by the masses. Some of his books which the military junta did not like were confiscated and one of his Lagos houses where his law books were kept was about to be set ablaze when the would-be perpetrators were caught and apprehended by neighbours. Yet he was undaunted and until his death he continued to take on the ruling class, filing a law suit against the current civilian administration just a few weeks ago.

Ganiyu Oyesola Fawehinmi was born in April 1938 to a prosperous family in the town of Ondo, western Nigeria. His father, Saheed Tugbobo Fawehinmi, a leading traditional and Islamic figure in western Nigeria, was a timber magnate, philanthropist and an opponent of excessive taxation of the poor. His grandfather, Chief Lisa Alujanu Fawehinmi, took on the British in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While Ganiyu was in secondary school, his headteacher wrote a note to his father stating that the young Fawehinmi would make a brilliant lawyer, and after secondary school he travelled to Britain in 1961 to read law at Holborn College, University of London. Before he could completed his second undergraduate year his father died, however and his source of finance quickly dried up. He worked as a toilet cleaner to finance his degree.

He was called to the bar in 1965 and quickly set up a practice in Lagos. The practice soon grew and he became a mentor to many left-leaning lawyers and academics. His friends and allies included the celebrated musician Fela Kuti and his human-rights crusading brother, the late Beko Ransome-Kuti. But controversially, Fawehinmi supported the candidature of a former Nigerian military ruler, General Mohammed Buhari in the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections. Fawehinmi had fought Buhari over human rights abuses when the general was in power in the early 1980s.

In 1993, Fawehinmi was awarded the biennial Bruno Kreisky Prize, an honour given to international figures who have advanced human rights causes. In 1998, he received the International Bar Association's Bernard Simmons Award in recognition of his human rights and pro-democracy work. In 1994, he and some other notable Nigerians formed the National Conscience Party of Nigeria and he stood for the 2003 presidential election in 2003 under its aegis.

But Fawehinmi was more than an activist; he was also a philanthropist and a sharp legal mind. He gave scholarships to many poor Nigerian students and revolutionised law reportage in Nigeria with the establishment of the Nigerian Weekly Law Reports in the late 1980s, the publication becoming a valuable tool for law students and practitioners alike.

He was elevated to the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), the highest legal title in Nigeria in September 2001. In 2008, he rejected one of the highest national honours, the Order of the Federal Republic, in protest at the many years of misrule since Nigeria's independence.

Ganiyu Oyesola Fawehinmi, lawyer and human rights campaigner: born Ondo, Nigeria 22 April 1938; married twice (several children); died 5 September 2009.

**Load-Date:** September 7, 2009



## **Guns Against the Journalist [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

May 5, 2010 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1147 words

**Byline:** Bib Anikwe

### **Body**

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It was as if someone poured cold water over me the other day when I read from a friend's posting on Facebook that Tayo Lukula, a *journalist*, was murdered, somewhere in Ogun State.

I do not recall ever meeting Tayo face-to-face, but I remember him with pleasure as one of the most reliable reporters during my tenure as News Editor of The Guardian.

Tayo was then a correspondent based in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Like all versatile reporters, he did his best to satisfy desk editors in the newspaper group, contributing general and specialist news and features, something that is still alien to most state correspondents.

It never occurred to me that he was not from that area because, in a typical newsroom, what matters to the professional editor is the fat, juicy, distinctive copy and not the ethnic background of the by-liner. In retrospect, we did record excellent results from some of the reporters operating outside their ethnic origins - Tayo Lukula in Port Harcourt, Ransome Emenari in Kano, Saxhone Akhaine in Kaduna, and Bayo Ohu in Katsina.

Now in quick succession, two of these very good reporters that I knew and was fond of - Bayo Ohu and Tayo Lukula- have been gunned down by yet-to-be-identified assassins. I mourn with families that have been deprived of their breadwinners in such a violent, brutal, and senseless manner.

I grieve over the fact that certain of our country's young men and women (Bayo was allegedly shot dead by a woman), are now accepting that becoming hired guns is a possible answer to the question of growing unemployment in our country.

I marvel that our country's young men and women would accept money, for whatever reason, to train their guns on those who struggle every day, through their pens and microphones, to right the oppressive system that created the unemployment situation in the first place.

Journalism in Nigeria is currently challenged by two realities - the desire to hire those with excellent writing skills, regardless of their professional preparation, and the desire to use willing, unprepared recruits to wage the war against impunity and arbitrariness ravaging our political system. The result is that efforts to tame the monster of arbitrariness and impunity have produced excellent results, and horrible unintended consequences for the profession.

## Guns Against the Journalist [opinion]

The excellent results are the many occasions when fearless practitioners, some operating underground in guerrilla-like fashion, were able to bring down cabals and powerful individuals that intermittently rise to seize and hold Nigeria hostage, bringing her to the edge of the cliff at certain points in our history.

The horrible unintended consequences are the many assault, jailing, and murder that journalists have had to suffer in the course of challenging the monster.

It is largely through the efforts of journalists that the military's 28 years of power stranglehold over our country was broken.

The media war waged by radical journalists from the early 1980s provided the impetus and support for civil society organisations to come into being and join in this fight. The haste with which Generals Obasanjo (1979), Babangida (1993), and Abdulsalam Abubakar (1999) either stepped aside or handed over power to civilians is partly credited to the dogged efforts of the radical media, aided by the civil society groups that they encouraged and empowered.

This may in turn explain why journalists, more than the civil society groups, bore the most brutal brunt of the counter-assault from the monster. Too many journalists were creatively or crudely murdered for daring to challenge the oppressive status-quo, beginning with the letter-bombing of **Dele Giwa** in October 1986.

In the year 2010, the monster appears to be returning to Nigeria. It is manifested in two realities. The first is the return of the "expelled" actors into powerful political reckoning. The second is the return of the murder of journalists as a pastime in political or business gamesmanship.

I do not imply that there is a link between the two, but I believe we could use our memories of the recent past to advise ourselves, as journalists, on how to approach or challenge the new, unwelcome order. If it requires us to return to the trenches, we should approach the matter like professional editors and go beyond ethnic bylines to objectively identify, challenge, frustrate, and contain the monster (or monsters) that harm our profession and retard our nation.

I say this because certain actors in our better-forgotten era of impunity and arbitrariness appear to have made full recovery and transformation, as they now control the political establishment in agbada. Whether in the leadership of the National Assembly, the Board of Trustees of the most powerful parties, the advisory committees of an acting presidency, or jockeying for prime spot on the 2011 presidential platform of both the ruling and "mega" parties, the actors appear to be back in "respectable" mode. Still a leopard never changes its spots: only in a few instances did their ascendency conform to democratic standards.

Nigerian journalism may need to transform and renew, once again, to keep pace with the new ways of power. I do not pretend to know how this can be done, but we could start from basic, time-tested tenets of our profession. How many of our current practitioners are prepared for this job?

To be prepared means undergoing a basic training in journalism and ethics that equip them with the professional skill to handle written or spoken words with care and caution, approach every story as an independent investigator not beholden to an interested party, hold the country's interests (especially her national security and economic stability) as sacrosanct, challenge new attempts to mount the throne of arbitrariness and impunity, and for the sake of our profession, carry out the necessary spadework to find out why our colleagues are being killed, rather than leave the job to the police alone.

All too often, we are obsessed with the "who?" whenever a colleague is murdered, even though in journalism, the meat of the story is in the "why". I have since found out that as it is in journalism, so it is in police investigation: Any investigation that fails to solve the "why?" (motive) never progresses to the point of revealing the "who?".

In our environment, an investigative **journalist** is probably more equipped with the skills and goodwill to identify the "why" faster than the police. Therefore, part of the proposed transformation could be to use our investigative skills to assist and empower the police, especially when our colleagues become victims of political, business, or other interests.

Guns Against the Journalist [opinion]

This could be one way to unravel the identity of journalist killers and bring them to justice. At any rate, such findings would certainly educate us on what we need to do to clean house, should this be what is called for.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2010

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## **Khashoggi's murder sparks calls for safety of journalists**

The Nation (Nigeria)

November 2, 2018 Friday

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Length: 1534 words

### **Body**

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THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will today launch a new campaign tagged: 'Truth Never Dies'.

It is part of programmes to commemorate this years' 'International Day to end impunity for crimes against journalists'.

This is as the October 2 killing of Saudi reporter Jamal Khashoggi continued to draw global outrage, especially at a time journalists and the media are under increasing attacks.

Khashoggi, a critic of the Saudi government and columnist for The Washington Post, was assassinated at the Saudi Arabia's Consulate in Turkey in what has been described as premeditated murder.

There have also been growing protests against Khashoggi's disappearance and allegations of 'state-sponsored murder' of the journalist as his disappearance was directly linked to his criticism of Saudi policies.

According to UNESCO, more than 1,000 journalists were killed between 2006 and 2017, often for doing their job of uncovering something that someone wants to stay hidden - an average of one death every four days.

Analysts criticised the way world leaders reacted to Khashoggi's killing.

An Abuja-based lawyer Kayode Ajulo said: 'There is a sharp and sad irony between the Khashoggi case if the killing had taken place in Nigeria.'

'In the former's situation, a life is lost, yet cry against it was loud. In Nigeria, killings happen in torrents and thousands; with impunity too."

The analysts said that Khashoggi's killing has also renewed safety concerns for Nigerian journalists who have also had their unfortunate share of attacks.

The Coalition of Nigerian Media and Civil Society Groups, while protesting Khashoggi's killing at the Saudi Consulate in Abuja, also asked the Federal Government to re-open similar cases of journalists killed by suspected state officials.

The group, during the protest, said: 'Just as we call on the Saudi government, so also, we call on the Nigerian government to put an end to impunity for crimes against journalists".

## Khashoggi's murder sparks calls for safety of journalists

The group recalled the killing of the Nigerian foremost investigative ***journalist*** and publisher of Newswatch Magazine, Mr. **Dele Giwa**, via a parcel bomb in 1986.

The group asked President Muhammadu Buhari to 'order the reopening of impartial, independent and transparent investigations into the killings of all journalists in the country and ensure their killers don't go unpunished".

TheCable, online newspapers Publisher Simon Kolawole described Khashoggi's death as a refresher of the sad memories of what journalists went through in the hands of the military.

'The murder brought back the sad memories of military dictatorship in Nigeria. Khashoggi's fate is a reminder of the dangers journalists still face," Kolawole said.

Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria compels 'the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media to, at all time, be free to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people".

However, while Section 22 gives the media the responsibility of holding government accountable to the people, it is not justice-able, as it neither empowers nor protects the media to discharge its duty.

The Programme Coordinator for Africa at the Committee to Protect Journalists, Kakuna Kerina, described the Nigerian press as the continent's most prolific and vociferous, setting the standards for media practitioners throughout the region.

Kakuna said: 'But in the 1990s, they met their match in the late Gen. Sani Abacha's regime which set new standards of abusive treatment of the press with tactics such as indefinite detentions without charge.

'Other inhumane treatments meted out to Nigerian journalists and workers in media houses under the junta were secret trials by military tribunals, torture by police and state security agents, disappearances, office bombings and bans and seizures of publications."

He said further that the Detention of Persons Decree No. 2 allowed indefinite, incommunicado detention of citizens, while the Offensive Publications Decree No. 35 of 1993 allowed the government to seize any publication deemed likely to 'disturb the peace and public order of Nigeria".

He also observed that the Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree No. 29 of 1993 was used in 1995 by a special military tribunal to convict Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, George M'bah and Ben Charles-Obi as 'accessories after the fact to treason" for reporting on an alleged coup plot.

It was under the military administration that the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Managing Director, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, was exiled. His outfit - The News magazine, TEMPO and PM News - and other media organisations were proscribed.

The proscription encouraged guerrilla journalism.

Recounting his ordeals, Onanuga said: 'I left through the usual 'NADECO route. Before I left Nigeria, I had to go and shave. I used to have some Afro hair on my head.

'I dressed like a farmer and bought some eye-glasses. I dressed more like an old school teacher and just carried a few things and headed towards Ghana."

Onanuga regretted that his employee, Bagauda Kaltho, was killed by the state agents, while his colleague, Babafemi Ojudu, was arrested at the border while coming back to Nigeria from a conference in Kenya.

'Kunle Ajibade was already jailed for life. Dapo Olorunyomi was on exile. Seye Kehinde, had floated City People. Jenkins Alumona, our editor was in detention. So many other people had been arrested at that time," Onanuga said.

## Khashoggi's murder sparks calls for safety of journalists

Not a few of the analysts described as unfortunate the threats that was the hallmark of the military era for journalists still thrive with the members of the pen profession, almost two decades after the restoration of civil rule.

New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, a non-profit, non-partisan organisation, monitoring press freedom globally, reported serious reservations about Nigeria's government press relations in 1999.

It noted: 'Although a new constitution was promulgated on May 5 (1999), it was modelled largely after 1979 Constitution and offered the media no specific protection", identifying about 20 anti-media decrees in the amended 1999 Constitution.

An Ogun-based newspaper wrote in one of its editorial articles that 'in September 2017, more than 50 soldiers besieged the Nigeria Union of Journalists Press Centre in Umuahia, Abia State, beat up journalists and damaged iPads, laptops, tape recorders and furniture".

Midat Joseph of Leadership Newspaper, Samuel Ogundipe of Premium Times, the Elombah brothers - Daniel and Timothy - with elombah.com, and Jones Abiri of Weekly Source, were recent victims.

Other recent victims in the line of duty also include Friday Olokor of The Punch, Taiye Edeni of NAN and Enemaku Ojochigbe of the African Independent Television (AIT).

National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) President ifeyinwa Omowole urged reporters to learn from Khashoggi's killing by prioritising their safety.

She said: 'The lesson from Khashoggi is that all of us in Nigeria have to be trained. There is no spare life. You don't deliberately walk into a danger zone.

'Even though Khashoggi had gone for a pre-meeting, according to his girlfriend, from all indications, the guy had a feeling prior to going in there; he knew he could be facing death.

'We are not immune to attack; in fact, we are more vulnerable to attacks because most times, the **journalist** is seen as supposed enemy to the political class."

She called for periodic training for journalists to learn new trends on security issues.

'There is a Life Insurance policy in Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) which costs less than N7,000 annually and a lot of us do not even subscribe to it," Mrs. Omowole said.

Seeking security cover for reporters, she said: 'If in the course of duty we sometimes have to face danger, then it behoves on the government to find a way to protect us.

'Security personnel need to be trained on the schedule and responsibility of journalists. So, if they know, they will not see us as threats, they will see us as partners".

A group of independent, UN-appointed human rights experts also urged governments to take firm steps to ensure accountability for violence and attacks against journalists.

Members of the group are: David Kaye (Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression); Agnes Callamard (Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions) and Bernard Duhaime (Chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, express concern about the safety of journalists).

They note that high-level international commitments such as a resolution on the safety of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council in September 2018 exist, calling on world leaders to implement such resolutions.

The UNESCO will today launch a new campaign tagged: 'Truth Never Dies", as part of programmes marking this years' 'International Day to end impunity for crimes against journalists'.

Khashoggi's murder sparks calls for safety of journalists

The UN agency has called for media partners to support the campaign by publishing stories on, or by journalists killed as a result of their work, to coincide with the commemoration.

The Day was instituted after its endorsement by the UN General Assembly in 2013.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2018

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## **Al-Mustapha and a Defective Justice System [opinion]**

This Day (Lagos)

August 08, 2013

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**Length:** 2276 words

**Byline:** Femi Falana

### **Body**

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gives a curious account of how Major Hamza Al-Mustapha exploited the loopholes in the criminal justice system to secure freedom

Under the Ibrahim Babangida junta, politically motivated killings were rife in several parts of the country. The refusal by the police to investigate such killings lent credence to allegations of official involvement. The gruesome assassination of a prominent *journalist*, Mr. *Dele Giwa*, through a parcel bomb in Lagos, on October 19, 1986 was covered up by the junta. The gallant attempts by the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN, to ensure the prosecution of those who were suspected to have masterminded the nefarious deed were officially frustrated.

However, the Sani Abacha junta devised a dubious method of shielding official assassins from being exposed. Whenever any opposition figure was killed by the Strike Force, fingers were quickly pointed at the family members or political allies of the deceased. Thus, sequel to the brutal murder of Mrs. Kudirat Abiola, in Lagos on June 4, 1996 by unknown gunmen, some members of the Abiola family and chieftains of the National democratic Coalition (NADECO) were hurriedly arrested, detained and interrogated by the police on suspicion that they committed the heinous crime.

The Indictment of the Murder Suspects Upon the restoration of civil rule in May 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo instituted the Special Investigation Panel, which probed the murderous activities of the Strike Force from 1993 to 1998. Some of the operatives made confessional statements on the murder of Mrs. Abiola, the attempted murder of Chief Alex Ibru, Chief Abraham Adesanya, Mr. Isaac Poubeni et cetera. In particular, it was disclosed by the suspects that they carried out the iniquitous crimes on the orders of Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, the ex-Chief Security Officer to the late maximum ruler, Abacha.

Upon the completion of investigation, the Police charged the former Chief of Army Staff, General Ishaya Bamaiyi; the former Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mr. James Danbaba; Major Al-Mustapha; Mr. Mohammed Abacha and Mohammed Aminu with the murder of Mrs. Abiola before an Ikeja Chief Magistrate Court in November 1999. The prosecutor in the matter was Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, who later became the pioneer chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The case was taken over by the Lagos State Ministry of Justice in 2000 which terminated the matter at the Magistrate's court and charged the defendants with the same offence at the Lagos High Court. In his oral testimony before the Honourable Justice Ade Alabi, the star prosecution witness, Sergeant Barnabas Jabila (a.k.a.Rogers),

### Al-Mustapha and a Defective Justice System [opinion]

gave a vivid account and description of how he collected two uzi guns from Major Al-Mustapha. He also disclosed that Alhaji Lateef Shofolahan, gave information on the movements of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola while Mr. Mohammed Abacha, lent his Mercedes Benz car and allowed his driver, Mr. Mohammed Abdu (a.k.a Katako) to drive the killer gang to the scene of the crime.

Although Mr. Mohammed Abacha did not deny the fact that he also gave \$20,000 to two members of the killer squad to flee the country (to escape arrest and prosecution), the Supreme Court set him free in a split decision of 4-1. Before the judgment of the Supreme Court was delivered on July 11, 2002, Sergeant Rogers had appeared before the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa Panel on Human Rights Abuses which sat at the old National Assembly building at the Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos. In the detailed evidence given by him sometime in 2001, Sergeant Rogers confirmed that he fired the shot that snuffed life out of Mrs. Abiola, as part of the atrocities perpetrated by the Strike Force on the orders of Major Al-Mustapha. He revealed that General Jeremiah Useni who was in the hall visited him and other members of the Strike Force in North Korea when they were training on how to kill the "enemies of Nigeria". When asked by the Honourable Justice Oputa if he regretted his action, he said he did and he proceeded to ask for forgiveness as he burst into tears. Curiously, Major Al-Mustapha and others who were indicted by Sergeant Rogers could not challenge the witness even though they were present at the proceedings.

**The Delay Tactics by the Defendants** Based on the unassailable evidence led at the trial court and at the Oputa panel on the brutal assassination of Mrs. Abiola, the defendants decided to prolong the trial by resorting to various dilatory tactics. After the prosecution had led seven witnesses in evidence in the case the defendants applied for several adjournments. The trial within trial lasted for over a year. Many interlocutory appeals and applications for stay of proceedings pending the determination of appeals were also filed by the defendants. In dismissing one of the bail applications fought all the way to the Supreme Court the defendants and their counsel were cautioned by the Justices to cooperate with the trial court to bring the murder case to a speedy end "in the overall interest of the administration of criminal justice in this country."

When it became clear that the trial judge wanted to proceed with the case, the defendants suddenly turned round to accuse him of having taken a bribe of \$10 million to convict them. They also petitioned the National Judicial Council (NJC) which decided to investigate the allegation. In the circumstance, the murder case was suspended sine die to enable the panel set up by the NJC to investigate the alleged misconduct of the judge. At the end of the investigation which lasted for over a year the NJC committee found that the bribe allegation was a fluke as it could not be substantiated. The NJC gave the trial judge a clean bill of health and directed him to proceed with the trial.

On resumption of hearing, the trial judge was requested by the defendants to withdraw from the case on the grounds that he was likely to be biased having been falsely accused by them. At that juncture, Justice Alabi reclusive himself from the case and it was assigned to another judge. Through such diversionary tactics, the case lasted 13 years in the docket and was handled by five judges at different times before it was eventually concluded by Justice Modupe Dada. .

**The Conviction and the Acquittal** After the trial had lasted for over a decade due to ceaseless adjournments mostly at the instance of the defendants, Justice Dada rejected all fresh strategies designed to frustrate the trial. Curiously, the witness protection arrangement put in place by the federal government was discontinued. Not unexpectedly, some of the witnesses who had earlier testified, however, refused to show up in court. The star witness, Sergeant Rogers testified but decided to contradict himself by alleging undue influence on the part of the prosecution.

In his own defence, Major Al-Mustapha alleged that the trial was politically motivated by two former heads of state. The late Pa Abraham Adesanya (who narrowly escaped Sergeant Rogers' bullet) and Chief Bola Ige (who was gruesomely assassinated by unknown gunmen in December 2001) were alleged to have collected millions of pounds, dollars and naira from General Abdulsalami Abubakar to betray the June 12 mandate. But when the video recording of the much touted bribe was shown during the trial it turned out to be a ruse deliberately designed to divert the course of justice.

In her considered judgment, Justice Dada rejected the retraction of the confessional statements of the two prosecution witnesses in line with many decisions of the appellate courts to the effect that a trial court can still

### Al-Mustapha and a Defective Justice System [opinion]

convict on a retracted confessional statement as long as the *judex* is satisfied with the truth of the statement. Having watched the demeanour of the witnesses when they testified before her, the trial judge came to the conclusion that the prosecution had proved the case beyond reasonable doubt that both defendants were guilty of the murder of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola. Accordingly, her ladyship convicted and sentenced them to death by hanging. Completely dissatisfied with the verdict both convicts challenged it at the Court of Appeal.

Upon a critical review of the case, the Court of Appeal found that the prosecution's case was riddled with contradictions which ought to have been resolved in favour of the appellants. While condemning the shoddy investigation conducted by the police in the case, the Court discharged and acquitted the appellants. As if that was not enough, their ladyships descended on the trial judge for "allowing herself to be caught in the web of the conflict".

But convinced that justice has not been done to the deceased, the Court of Appeal concluded thus: "Assuming the culprit is at large, there is nothing hidden under the sun that will not be exposed. The Law of the Lord is perfect. His judgments are true and righteous altogether- Psalm 19:7-9".

With profound respect to the Court of Appeal it does not appear that "the culprit is at large". Hence the Court criticised the prosecution for fielding Sergeant Rogers "as a prosecution witness instead of being charged with murder" when he had initially confessed to the shooting of the deceased. In *Abacha v the State* (*supra*), the Supreme Court had equally noted with dismay that "the criminals have not been charged". In particular the court observed that "Sergeant Jabila (a.k.a Rogers) gave a graphic description of his involvement that if voluntary must amount to confession.

He has not been charged with any offence". While the Lagos state government has indicated its wish to challenge the judgment of the Appeal Court in the Al-Mustapha's case at the Supreme Court it is high time that Sergeant Rogers and the members of the killer gang were charged with conspiracy and murder of Mrs. Abiola. After all, there is no statute of limitation with respect to the offence of murder.

**Beyond Al-Mustapha's Acquittal** Some members of the public who were not privy to the deliberate frustration of the trial by the defendants joined in the political campaign for their release while the trial was in progress. As impunity has become the order of the day the Lagos state Attorney-General was under tremendous political pressure to file *nolle prosequi* with a view to aborting the trial. No doubt, the judges and the prosecutors should be blamed for allowing the defendants to exploit the loopholes in the criminal justice system to drag the trial for 13 years. Ironically, following their conviction by the Lagos high court, the defendants ensured that the appeal filed against the judgment of the trial court was heard and determined within 15 months in spite of the congestion of cases in the Lagos division of the Court of Appeal.

It is however pertinent to note that the Al-Mustapha trial has compelled the Lagos State government to amend the criminal procedure law. Thus, under the Lagos State Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2011, stay of proceedings, pending appeal has been prohibited while the courts are precluded from entertaining preliminary objections filed by defendants until the prosecution has closed its case.

Furthermore, confessional statements made by suspects are required to be video-recorded to avoid retraction by the defendants which often leads to trial within trial. Adjournments by parties designed to prolong criminal trials have also been banned. It can therefore be said that the case has put an end to the brazen manipulation of the criminal justice system by rich defendants and their lawyers.

**Conclusion** Those who have expressed genuine concern over the discharge and acquittal of Major Al-Mustapha and Mr Shofolahan should be reminded of the fact that General Ishaya Bamaiyi, Mr James Dambaba, Mohammed Rabo Lawal and Mohammed Aminu who had been tried for the attempted murder of Chief Abraham Adesanya and Chief Alex Ibru had been freed due to the fact that the witnesses who had made confessional statements decided to make a u-turn.

In the same vein, those who were charged with the assassinations of Pa Alfred Rewane, Chief Bola Ige, Harry Marshal, et al, were left off the hook on the grounds that the charges brought against them were not proved beyond reasonable doubt. With respect to the cases of **Dele Giwa**, Bagauda Kaltho, Jerry Agbeyegbe, Toyin Onagoruwa,

## AI-Mustapha and a Defective Justice System [opinion]

Aminasoari Dikibo and several others, the police did not even charge any suspect to court. Since the criminal justice system of the neo-colonial state has virtually collapsed, serious cases involving rich criminal suspects are usually lost in court due to either shoddy police investigation or prosecutorial irresponsibility. But suffice it to say that under the criminal justice system, only the poor are successfully prosecuted for murder and sundry offences because they lack the resources to manipulate the system. Ours has become a banana republic that is managed by a ruling class which cannot even protect the lives of its own members. As for the rest of the society, it has become a case of everyone for himself and God for us all.

Hence, extra-judicial killing of unarmed citizens by security personnel and unofficial killer gangs are on the ascendancy. Instead of resigning to fate in the circumstance, concerned individuals and organisations should be prepared to struggle for the establishment of a new society where impunity will be consigned to the dustbin of history. And the struggle should begin with a call on the federal government to disarm and disband the Strike Force and other killer groups set up by the State and well connected politicians for the violent elimination of their political opponents.

Falana, SAN, is a Lagos-based lawyer

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2013

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How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa



## How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

The Sun (Nigeria)

August 29, 2015 Saturday

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### **Body**

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BY HENRY AKUBUIRO There is a tendency for those who have made it in their chosen fields to luxuriate after giant strides, but not Mike Awoyinfa, a media icon. Just as he did in Sunday Concord as the editor, where sales ratcheted to an unprecedented high, he brought the same Midas touch to bear at [...]

BY HENRY AKUBUIRO

There is a tendency for those who have made it in their chosen fields to luxuriate after giant strides, but not Mike Awoyinfa, a media icon. Just as he did in Sunday Concord as the editor, where sales ratcheted to an unprecedented high, he brought the same Midas touch to bear at The Sun more than a decade ago, pioneering the highest selling paper in the country. But Awoyinfa isn't given to temporary gains. Together with the late Dimgba Igwe, his deputy in The Sun days, they wrote book after book. From journalism to corporate Nigeria, they always reached for the stars. 50 World Editors, their latest offering, is just off the shelf. At 628 pages, it's a journalistic whopper. Just as the size exacts attraction, so is its contents. In this interview, Awoyinfa talks about the rigours that went into writing this book, his forays into books, his travels and collaborations with Dimgba Igwe, not forgetting the grimace on his face one year after his death.

You have many book titles to your name. How did you take to writing books?

Like all enterprise, if you have a good vision, you have the money, you have a good product, you are focused and you give the market what it wants, you will make it. What I do basically right now is to write books. My training as a reporter has been very helpful. It's not easy. I started book writing (together with the late Dimgba Igwe), many years ago when we were together at Sunday Concord. Dele Giwa had left and Sina Adedipe was our editor. We just

How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

scanned the future ahead of us, and we asked ourselves "Where are we going?" We looked at the hierarchy of things and asked ourselves again, "When are we going to be editors?" I mean, I was ambitious and Dimgba was also ambitious –there is nothing wrong with a person being ambitious. With the ways things were going on, we told ourselves, we might rot in the newsroom. "Let's do something", we told ourselves.

We were wondering what to do and we said, "Let's write books. So, we debated on which book to write, either on reporting or features. So, we agreed on features. We called the book The Art of Feature Writing. We approached it the way every reporter would approach it. We assumed we didn't know anything about feature writing. We went out there talking to other journalists, talking to all the big names in journalism then. We went from one media house to another, interviewing the greats, including Ray Ekpu and May Ezekiel, who saw me and asked, on seeing my tape, "Have you finally released your album?" (laughter). Those days, I used to be crazy about becoming a pop star. I used to delude myself that I could become a musician. I thought I had a good voice, but my voice is not the type anybody wants to listen to. Still, I loved to compose music. We did not want to claim to know it all by assuming we know the art of feature writing. So, we went to the masters.

You have a new book, 50 World Editors. What are the criteria you used in arriving at these editors?

When we finished The Art of Feature Writing that became a bestseller –we hear everybody who went to journalism school read it, and we made some money from it. After that, we wrote 50 Corporate Nigerian Strategists...

In addition to that question, how does a book idea come to you? You seem to be preoccupied with diverse issues in different books...

When we were writing the first serious book, 50 Nigerian Corporate Strategies, it just occurred to us – I mean, the idea just came through thinking. Maybe, it's God who drops ideas to people's mind. We scan the environment and we decide on what to do. For instance, in writing that book, we scanned the country and discovered very great managers, CEOs who have stories to tell about the art of doing business in Nigeria: people like Ohiwere, Kolade, among others.

We believed they were not writers, unlike us. If we went there and put a tape and ask them questions concerning their lives, how they got into business, how they were trained as managers, how they rose to the top, the challenges of running business in Nigeria, how does the "Nigerian factor" impact on business, who mentored them, etc, it would help us, too, because we were journalists. All journalists care about is reporting and writing; we don't bother to get trained as managers. That was the arena in which Dimgba and I mastered our businesses. We talked to many business leaders and at the end of the day, we got 50 of them, Nigerian managers, all sharing their experiences. The book also became a bestseller. We pegged the price at N10,000 a copy and everybody was buying.

Really?

Yes. Some would buy and complain (laughter), why the book sold at such price. This house (his current residence) was a product of that book.

So, there is money in being an author, after all?

Yes, if you write the correct book.

Back to the new book, 50 World Editors. What was the yardstick in selecting them?

There was a book I was trying to write, called Editors Talking Journalism. I have a passion for journalism. I felt I didn't know much –what's news; what's reporting, etc. So, I talked to the editors to tell me what journalism is all about. I was the one who started the book initially, but, somehow, the manuscript got missing. When we got to The Sun, every year we were travelling out to international press conferences like IPI (International Press Institute), World Association of Newspapers –you need this kind of networking if you really want to advance on the job, because you have to really know the state-of-the-art of journalism. You meet other journalists [there]. I recommend

How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

these conferences to every **journalist**, because every profession, whether it is law, business, or whatever, always have their own conventions.

There is no year we miss these conferences. I don't just go there to listen to conference talk; we also do other things. I had the dream of meeting editors all over the world, writing their stories, asking them to tell me what got them involved in journalism, the stories they have reported, their definition of news, their challenges and journalism in their country.

Each time we went for the conference, I would look for the big names: editors of the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, International Herald Tribune, Financial Times, etc. These big names always come to the conference to deliver papers. Immediately they finished, I would approach them, introduce myself and ask them few questions. The idea was to leave a legacy in my profession so that younger journalists would get a book they can read; they will be able to read about the lives of other journalists, and be inspired by what they have done. If you go through the book, you will see most of the global icons in journalism.

One of them is the man called Sir Harold Evans, the biggest name in journalism in England. He is a legend of sort. They call him editor of editors. He made a big name in one of the tabloids in England. I think he works for Harold Maxwell. He also became the editor of the Sunday Times. While an editor with Sunday Times, he wrote a journalism memoir that became a bestseller all over the world. I have been following that man. So, when he came to Edinburgh, Scotland, to present a paper, I saw it as an opportunity to talk to him. I remember the night I was going to interview Harold Evans. I was so nervous. It should be in 2008, or thereabout. In the hotel, I had to kneel down to God, asking God to intervene: "This is the man; this is the big fish; don't let me miss this interview..." Luckily, I got him, and he granted me the interview.

That was one of my happiest moments. When I asked him what prompted him to come into journalism, he said, "Sex and money". I, then, asked him, "What has sex got to do with journalism". And he said, "I am still asking myself that question". I found him a very humorous human being. He is one man I see as my role model. He has really made his mark. When he was fired by Maxwell, he left England for America. In America, he reinvented himself and made a name for himself by writing two big books, including *The American Century*. I met so many people while writing this book, including the lady who became the editor of New York Times. Jane Abrahams. She is also featured in the book.

What of African editors?

I met an editor from The Nation newspaper, the biggest newspaper in Kenya. In Nigeria, I brought in about four Nigerian editors, people like **Dele** Olojede, who won the Pulitzer Prize; Bayo Onanuga (who was among those who started guerrilla journalism during the Abacha days; Segun Osoba (a great reporter who made a name during his days; he was the one who discovered the corpse of the assassinated prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, during the first Nigerian coup and above all, Alhaji Babatunde Jose, who is the father of journalism in Nigeria. For me, this book is a compendium, an encyclopedia of journalism in Nigeria. I am pricing it N10,000 (laughter). This is the Rolls Royce of Nigerian journalism. I am not begging people to buy. minister, Tafawa Balewa, during

That reminds me, your book published many years ago, was N10,000. Why does the price remain the same for this one? Why not an increment?

No, no, no. It's because journalists are poor (laughter).

But journalists are not the only ones who are going to buy the book...

I think N10,000 is the price I have decided for it.

You are fascinated with the number "50". Your previous book was 50 Corporate Managers; this one is 50 World Editors...

How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

That's our brand. Every time, we look for 50 –50 Nigerian Corporate Strategists, 50 Marketing Memoirs, 50 World Editors.... I mean it's not easy putting together 50 people. It's very tough. If anything is tough and nobody else wants to do it, that's the kind of thing we like doing. It means it's good.

Are you going to write more books after this?

This is my last journalism book.

Why?

After interviewing 50 world edi-tors, what else do I want to prove? I have written Art of Feature Writing; I have written Biography of Segun Osoba; we have written 50 World Editors. I want to go into corporate Nigeria. There is no money in jour-nalism. I write to make money. I don't want to waste my time. What I have written is enough; let other journalists write. At least, I have satisfied myself. In my profession, I have done my best. Right now, my main focus is on corporate books –I am working on the biographies of people like Aliko Dangote, I am revising the biography of Mike Adenuga, because we wrote earlier on it. But right now, the latest book we are writing is a book called Boardroom Leadership and Corpo-rate Governance.

When you say "we", what do you mean ex-actly?

Dimgba and I. The fact that he is in the grave doesn't matter; he is still going to be my co-author. As long as I live, Dimgba Igwe is going to be my co-author. His death doesn't stop anything. It doesn't stop us from being co-authors. It will look very strange to see only Mike Awoyinfa's name on the book as the author. It's not his plan to die when he did. We had this dream to-gether. As long as I am alive, there is no book I will write that you won't see Dimgba Igwe's name on it, except it's my own autobiogra-phy. Even if it is, I will still dedicate a page to him. I won't dedicate any other book alone except Dimgba Igwe.

Who are you ex-pecting for the book launch?

The launch will be taking place on September 15. We have invited President Muhammadu Buhari. Why did we invite him? Even before he became the president, he came here on hearing about Igwe's death. I haven't forgotten about that one. That's one of the reasons I am so passionate about him; for a man like that to come down and say "Sorry". When I made a speech that day, Buhari was touched; he was almost crying. I told him, "Look, when you come into power, I hope you bring a change" to a situation whereby somebody would drive a car, kill somebody and vanish into tin air. We hear these days that CCTV will be installed everywhere. Nigeria should move forward to that of a civilized, sane country where people in emergency still have a chance of surviving and getting their lives back. It's not when you are in trouble, you are left on your own. It's insane for a man to have an accident and be moving all over the place looking for help and there is none. That's not the Nigeria of our dreams.

Back to the book launch, we have invited Ahmed Bola Tinubu, Governor Shettima of Borno State and all other governors in Nige-ria. Everybody who is a friend of Dimgba Igwe is expected to come. Mike Adenuga is a big friend of his, and I am inviting him openly to attend (you know, he has a policy of not accepting invitation letters sent to his office); we are inviting Aliko Dangote, another close friend of Igwe; we are inviting Dele Fa-jemirokun –these three are people we have written about.

A year after the de-mise of Dimgba Igwe, how has it been for you as somebody closest to him and your project?

Dimgba's death is one big cancer wound inside me that can never heal. Every minute, I think of him. Every second, I think of him. At times, I sit down and get myself lost. The incident keeps on replay-ing in my mind as if I was there. Sometimes, I find myself driving and shaking my head in agony. It's just an unforgettable kind of thing. I try to forget it, but it's not easy. He is my "twin brother" in every sense of the word, but I can't keep weep-ing and agonizing forever. Life has to go on. I am trying to pick up the pieces and move on with my life. But every time, I feel he is around, and he is watching me.

His death has made me to be more spiritual. I keep praying most of the time for the God of Dimgba Igwe not to disappoint or embarrass me (I believe he is in heaven right now), because it will be a double tragedy if I fail and I

How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

am unable to carry on with is dreams. It will be double tragedy if anything happens to me now –people would say these two people have a path together. I don't want that. Everything is on my head now; the entire world is watching how Mike will cope. Basically, he was the one doing everything. When it came to book launch, he was the one to write the letter; he was the one to give instructions. In fact, he was the headmaster and I was the teacher under him. He was my manager, my coach and I was just a player. I miss him everyday. I worry a lot about whether I will be able to make it. Right now, I have two families...

Two families?

My family and Igwe's family. The business is the same. The wife is now a director in the business and she represents the husband. As I said openly, whatever I do is 50-50. I won't say because Mike Awoyinfa is the one handling the book project now, I will take ev-erything. No. For me, Igwe is still alive. I have said it in the church, before everybody, that the business is still 50-50, and I am not going to cheat this woman, that, as far as this business is concerned, I have sworn before God that, if this had happened to me, Igwe would have done the same thing. He was a man of integrity, honesty and a man of God. He saw me in the same light as a man of integrity. I may have my own "iniquities", as he called it, but he knew when it came to trust and integrity, I would never cheat him. He said it before he died when I turned 60. When a man has so much trust in me, how would I go and betray him? If I betray him, God will also betray me.

Do you feel disappointed that a year after, the mystery sur-rounding his death is yet to be unraveled?

It doesn't really bother me. As I said, Igwe has forgiven whoever killed him. If police arrests the man who killed him now, of what benefit will that be? Will it bring back my friend? This is not like the **Dele Giwa** situation where people will ask, who killed **Dele Giwa**? I don't give a damn about who killed him. I have forgiven him and I know my friend has forgiven him, too.

You have embarked on several journeys with the late Igwe. Which was the most unforget-table experience you both had?

There were several unforgettable experiences. The one that easily comes to mind was when we went to Paris, France, about 7 years ago, and I took many photographs of the city. When we go to a street in Paris called Champs Elysee, the widest street in Paris with ten lanes, I just had an accident and stumbled. Instead of allowing my camera to crash and save my life, I was saving the camera. That was how I landed on my right shoulder. I was close to death. Instead of people coming to help me, they stood watching.

Because of the risk you took?

I don't know. They were there watching drama. Everybody was minding his own business and just watching. It was Igwe who said, "Mike, why are you protecting this camera? You should have allowed this camera to fall. What's inside this camera that you want to risk your life?" I was just thinking like a **journalist**. I told him, "I must protect my scoop at the risk of my life". So, he took me to a pharmacy and they gave me what I would use. He was the one massaging my hand. He wanted us to go to the hospital, but I told him no, that I had the will power to survive it. At times, your will can make you survive. That was how I survived. It really pained me that I wasn't there to pay him back when he had that accident. He was the one really apprehensive of something happening to me, chiding me for being restless and urging me to be calm to avoid dying. But, look at the irony of life. Life is full of ironies. We should all get prayerful. This world is a very strange place. One of the lessons I have learnt from Dimgba is that ev-ery new day is a bonus, a blessing.

Do you still jog?

Yes, I do, but inside my yard (laughter). I would have loved to go to the street, but I hate to be pitied; people will be pointing their fingers at you. Even if they don't, they will be staring at you, wondering whether you learnt any lesson from what killed your friend. I don't want to be a nuisance on the street.

How Dimgba Igwe and I broke barriers to write 50 World Editors –Mike Awoyinfa

For a country where people often complain we don't read and you continue to publish, are people reading your books?

What is the proof that people don't read? We just sit down and make generalisation that people don't read. If you give people the right book, they will read. Up till now, people are still asking us for 50 Nigerian Corporate Strategies. We have printed it three times and everything is out of stock and they are even thinking of reprinting it. People doing their masters and PhD keep asking for this book. I believe that, if you write a book that adds value, inspires people and open people's eyes to how to make money, that touches their lives, well written and not boring, people will go for it. It's not every book that you will write. Thank God, journalism has taught me how to know what people want to read. The best thing the late MKO Abiola told me was, "Mike, you always know what people want to read." That, to me, was the biggest tribute. He said this when I was the editor of the Weekend Concord. So, I don't just write anything for writing sake; I write what I think will bring money for me.

When are you going to write your literary mas-terpiece as somebody interested in literature and poetry to be pre-cise?

Well, I am interested in literature, but I don't think those things sell (laughter). I don't think I will waste my time writing what will not sell.

But Chimamanda Adi-chie is selling?

That is Chimamanda. It's too late for me to be writing a book that will win me a Nobel Prize in Lit-erature. I am not after Nobel Prize in Literature. I leave that to the Os-undares of this world. But, for me, it is better to face this niche I have seen; let me write about Nigerian Boardroom Gurus. I can tell you, it is not easy getting these boardroom people. These CEOs don't have time. It needs the grace of God to be able to even get them for an interview. But I can see the hand of God, particularly on the Nigerian boardroom gurus. They have been granting me interviews: people like Christopher Kolade, Profes-sor Joe Iruekwu, Chris Obechie, Dele Fajemerokun, Ndidi Wuneli, Shobanjo, Michael Omolayole (I already have 10 in my kitty).

Does it mean you are working on 3 or 4 different book projects right now?

What else do I do? I am rewrit-ing Mike Adenuga's biography and I am writing this 50 Boardroom heroes in Corporate Governance –I have invited a young man who is assisting me, Musa Jubril. He is a raw journalist and very talented. Each time we go for an interview, he will tell me, "Ah, this is a new school; this is my MBA."

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## Soyinka's Demonisation of Jonathan

Vanguard (Lagos)

December 11, 2014

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**Length:** 1144 words

**Byline:** Dan Amor

### **Body**

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In a feat of acerbic verbal tantrums, Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka Tuesday December 2, attacked President Goodluck Jonathan and likened the Nigerian leader to Nebuchadnezzar the biblical autocrat and king of Babylon who initially denounced the Living Supreme God. Soyinka who addressed a press conference on the state of the nation at the popular Freedom Garden in Lagos, said that Jonathan is tyrannical because the Inspector General of Police Suleiman Abba stopped the attempt by the defected speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal to enter the Green Chamber of the National Assembly with thugs.

The respected professor of dramatic literature who is clearly biased in his recent pronouncements given his current alignment with top leaders of the opposition political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) said so many unprintable things against the administration of President Jonathan.

Indeed, the distinguished playwright is entitled to his opinion especially in a wide democratic space in which freedom of association and of speech is the norm. But it is unfortunate that the renowned literary icon could allow his judgment to be beclouded by ahistorical considerations. By this recent act of likening Jonathan to Nebuchadnezzar, Soyinka has come down from his Olympian height as a global citizen and statesman to the sheer pedestrian rabble of petty villainy and rancour. It is a pointer to the fact that every great intellectual has his weak points. Our own Kongi is no exception.

Even with the unsavory political development in Anambra State in 2004 which led to the unfortunate withdrawal of the security personnel of former Governor Chris Ngige after his attempted abduction by the police, no Nigerian, not even Professor Chinua Achebe who rejected former President Olusegun Obasanjo's national award due to that crisis, went as far as comparing the former President with Nebuchadnezzar.

For the benefit of the reader who might not know the ancient/biblical story, Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who reigned c. 605BC-562BC. He was said to have constructed the Hanging Gardens of Babylon (now Iraq) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar II was the fourth king of the Second Dynasty of Isin and Fourth Dynasty of Babylon who ruled for 23 years. One very notorious fact about him is that Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize the existence of the God of heaven and was basically tyrannical.

But he later bowed to and worshipped God when he saw the efficacy of God's mysterious powers as demonstrated by Daniel the young Jewish believer. Given Jonathan's antecedent and pedigree as a faithful adherent of the tenets of the word of God whose administration strictly adheres to the fundamental principles of the rule of law, Soyinka's

### Soyinka's Demonisation of Jonathan

attempt to demonize him is wicked and unacceptable. In the light of the above statement that Nebuchadnezzar did not know God and the reality that Soyinka does not believe in the God of heaven, Soyinka and Jonathan, who is like Nebuchadnezzar?

Every discerning Nigerian who can read between the lines knows where Soyinka is coming from. His recent outburst is yet another pure political statement by an APC sympathizer meant to rattle the President and sway the sympathy of Nigerians from his administration. Suddenly everyone who thinks he has something to say has now turned to a primary school headmaster wielding a big stick to whip the leader of the world's largest Black Country. "Jonathan Bashing" is the name of the game. Soyinka who relishes controversy, who enjoys being primed in the fantasy of the media has cooked another meal to attract acclamation.

But the applause he received in Lagos in the name of Jonathan-bashing to humour Nigerians was a soured one. It is a grand, though disingenuous alibi not only for parrying the barbs of those who see him as hobnobbing with the opposition, but also a ploy to curry favor from Nigerians for those who vowed to make the country ungovernable and still planning to form a parallel government if Jonathan wins in 2015.

Of course, Soyinka has always been tactless in his political (mis)adventure and intellectual over bearingness. Yet, it is unthinkable that Soyinka is now on the side of the feudal forces still determined to keep Nigeria in perpetual medieval servitude. Without necessarily alluding to his rapport with the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida whom he described as an autocrat soon after IBB refused to grant their (he, Achebe and J. P. Clark) petition to spare the life of the poet/soldier Mamman Vatsa, and he burnt his fingers, Soyinka has not always been ideologically so refined as to escape the crudity of the orthodox left.

In spite of everything, those of us his younger admirers still manage to ask ourselves: why did Soyinka abandon his search for the killers of Dele Giwa, the colorful Nigerian journalist who was bombed in his study on October 19, 1986?

As a renowned statesman and global citizen, Soyinka's words should act as a soothing balm which would heal this troubled land of ours instead of taking sides in petty partisan showmanship thereby heating up the polity. It is amply absolutely absurd and anti-intellectual for Soyinka to circulate that a man like Jonathan, who cannot hurt a fly, who is so mild and apolitical that even the opposition branded him "clueless" is worse than Nebuchadnezzar.

If the truth be told, just as Jonathan has dwarfed the achievements of past administrations in terms of infrastructure, so is also his achievements in the area of fundamental human rights. Jonathan is the most abused and attacked President in the annals of this country, and if not for his humane temperament Nigeria would have been worse than Sudan by now.

Yet, how many Nigerians or even his political opponents are unjustly harassed or languishing in gaol? How many are reported killed as a result of political vendetta or envenomization? How on earth would a man like Jonathan be branded an autocrat, not even by those who have an open agenda to pull him down but by a respected international figure such as Soyinka who claims to be the conscience of humanity and yet hobnobbing with corrupt politicians? Why has Soyinka not condemned this eerie act of *déjà vu* called political defection, which is being used to tear the country apart by politicians of all shades?

How right can Soyinka be if he encourages the opposition to take up arms against the Jonathan administration as they are gradually doing? Why would the police allow Tambuwal to invade the National Assembly with political thugs? When has thuggery become constitutional because it favors a particular political party that has the support of the Nobel laureate? Nigerians of goodwill should condemn Soyinka's attempt to demonize President Jonathan.

Dan Amor, a public affairs analyst, wrote from Abuja.

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## **Insecurity - I Live in Constant Fear of the Next Attack - Nma, Father of Two** **[analysis]**

Leadership (Abuja)

March 17, 2012 Saturday

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**Byline:** Binta Abdulazeez Idris

### **Body**

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Nigeria in recent times is witnessing an upsurge in terror-related attacks. This is not entirely new but the dimension it has taken and the nature of weapons being used by these terror groups have created fear in the minds of people.

writes on what people are going through because of these attacks.

Mallam Salihu Nma a father of two says he has drastically cut down on outings for the family for fear of the unknown. He said "before now, every other weekend I would take my boys to the amusement park or find something fun to do with them but now I stay home simply because who knows when the next bomb will strike?"

We are so used to hearing about bombs these days that it's no longer news anymore The other day my son asked me how come they haven't caught the people behind the bombings, I told him the government is in charge and will do that soon and this is where our government must step in, to help its citizens especially victims, not to live in fear."

The history of recent bomb blasts in Nigeria could be traced to 1986, during the military regime of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, when ace **journalist, Dele Giwa**, was killed by letter bomb in his home in Lagos. There was also an isolated case of accidental bomb explosion at the Ikeja Cantonment in 2002, which claimed hundreds of lives.

There was also a bomb blast on October 1, 2010, during Nigeria's 50th Independence anniversary celebrations in Abuja. On January 1, 2011 there was a blast at Mammy market in Abuja. Also on April 8, 2011, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) office in Suleja, Niger State was also bombed.

Another blast occurred on April 26, 2011, in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital. An Army barracks in Bauchi was hit by bomb blast on May 29, 2011, while the Police Headquarters in Abuja was bombed by a suicide bomber on June 16, 2011 the list goes on and on.

Nigeria is one of the countries highly affected by all forms of violence. The scale and intensity of violence have increased in the past few years bomb blasts, abductions, assassinations, etc. has become common occurrence in the country.

## Insecurity - I Live in Constant Fear of the Next Attack - Nma, Father of Two [analysis]

Violence now pervades the social and cultural life and has made the country become one of the most dangerous zones in the world, and can massively affect the mental health of the people.

Terrorism has no generally acceptable definition; just as who is a terrorist is debatable, a terrorist is someone who uses violence, especially bombing, kidnapping, and assassination to intimidate others often for political purposes any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.

LEADERSHIP WEEKEND spoke to Dr Ahmed Balogun a consultant psychiatrist at Pristine hospital Abuja "the impact is mainly shock and acute stress reaction. As you know, Nigerians would not see a psychiatrist for evaluation after experiencing some form of traumatic event in their lives and these things have a way of affecting one sometimes long after the actual event.

Some are faced with , eating and sleeping problems, headaches, cognitive confusion, poor concentration, memory difficulties, distressing dreams or nightmares, intrusive thoughts or images" he said.

He added " Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an intense, prolonged and sometimes delayed reaction to an intensely stressful event. The core symptoms are hyper-arousal, insomnia, poor concentration, irritability and persistent anxiety"

Mrs. Joyce Nwokedi a teacher also said "in my opinion, this mess we are experiencing in this country is a fall out of youth restiveness; unemployment rate is increasing everybody wants a government job because we all want a piece of the national cake as our leaders display ill-gotten wealth which they flaunt shamelessly. So tell me, why won't we have anarchy all around us?

Explaining further, Joyce said the purpose of terrorism is simply to garner attention.

Mr. Aaron Deinde, also a teacher sees terrorism as a strategy to get the much needed attention, saying that emotional aggression, associated with anger, are what translates to these attacks on lives and property. "there are direct and indirect victims involved when we have such attacks- the survivors of the violent events or the injured; those who were present or nearby, those who were exposed to the trauma as a result of their attempts to help victims also face some kind of psychological reactions.

I remember when the bomb at a church in Madalla went off for some days I couldn't sleep without having a nightmare. Some nights i would jump up from my sleep out of fear ,even when I didn't witness the occurrence first-hand. What about those that did?he said

leadership weekend also spoke to a police officer who said "more still needs to be done there should be critical stress management programmes in place such as education on stress management, outreach to those affected, crisis counselling, distribution of materials on stress reactions, not only to civilians, but to men in uniforms as well.

You won't believe it but some of my colleagues in Kano state don't wear their uniforms because they have also become cherries for picking for these groups and it is sad." He also suggested that, "there should be moral reawakening that is reduction in the socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor; provision of jobs to the army of idle youths as well as reorientation programmes for everyone if possible."

There are also management challenges, which he listed to include, "lack of adequate awareness and, inadequate resources? He added that mental health experts were grossly inadequate to cope with the impending catastrophe.

Terrorism is a leading global problem; it has political, socio-economic and health implications. Unfortunately Nigeria has joined the league of nations affected by this ugly trend and something must be done to stop it.

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## Ode to teachers

The Nation (Nigeria)

December 4, 2017 Monday

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Length: 1824 words

### **Body**

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My neck dripped with sweat when I arrived home that afternoon. Feet fatigued, tongue lolling for water, I had not slumped into the sofa at home when my father, Moses, materialised from his room with a letter.

'A dispatch man delivered this this morning,' he said as he thrust it toward me, half curious, half ecstatic. 'It's from Newswatch.' I had been about town all day, feet in and out of offices, feet on the streets, the sun presiding, my shoes shedding leather.

Weariness left me. With alacrity I tore open the letter. I swallowed the contents in what looked like seconds. I knew it was the beginning. My career had been launched. Ray Ekpu, firebrand columnist and editor-in chief of the journalistic lay of the land, The Newswatch magazine, wanted me to see him in his office. He was responding to a personal letter I wrote him about my love of writing and my fruitless wandering in search of a job.

'I was impressed by the quality of your writing,' he said gravely clutching my letter. I was in his office at Oregun. He showed me the letter with evidence that Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed had appended their encouragement that I should be hired immediately. Agbese was deputy editor-in-chief and Mohammed executive editor. I walked out of Ekpu's office still awed by a man who benumbed and captured a generation of Nigerians with his pen and judgment.

Today, it is 30 years. All I want to do is give kudos to those who have made this possible. If Ekpu lit the tinder of my career, it began when I was in primary school. I can see now my teacher, Mrs. Sonoiki at Methodist School Ibadan from whom I learned the tenses. 'I go. She goes. We go, etc.' I also recall the pugilistic elegance of Mr. Daramola, who would not let my syntax stumble even while I played soccer for the school.

At Government College, Ughelli, there were quite a few. First, the environment of the school that forbade pupils to err either in the written or spoken word. 'Howzat sir' or 'how was' were epithets of derision for anyone who decapitated the English language. Prefects watched out for their own mistakes. But we learned writing not only from the English teachers, but from others in the arts, especially the history teachers, Edeyan and Eshareture. Eshareture was a dapper gentleman who spoke and expected polished phrases from us. Edeyan paced the class as though reliving the past, gesticulating and dramatising. But we had English teachers like Ogboduma and the Ghanaian Tieku, who taught us not only the technicality of language but how to marry tenses with elegance. My principal Demas Akpore brought poetry alive when he gathered us in the library and read in his haunting way the poems of Senghor, Diop, etc. Up to this day, I have never heard a person in all my travels animate poetry like Akpore's tongue.

### Ode to teachers

But the history teachers especially made us understand that history was not just about the past, and not just about storytelling, but points. Very early, Eshareture and Edeyan dissected Mansa Musa's exploits as limpidly as the Yoruba Wars.

I was so haunted by them that while I waited for my admission to the university, I started to write essays every day. My father knew I loved Time and Newsweek magazines, and he decided he was going to buy me copies every week in spite of his lean resources. So, I wrote essays that no one read except myself. No day passed, including Sundays, without dashing off about 800 words. I started to read novels, including African Writers Series and such mainstays as Dickens, Thackeray, Dumas and others as I could pick from my father's library. One afternoon, I discovered a programme on NTA with Professor Theo Vincent. He was a master of book reviews and he articulated it. He prepared me for my feisty moments in Ife's literature in English Department. He was deep, enthused and lyrical.

Eventually I joined the History Department at Ife, with great zeal for a potpourri of knowledge. Professor Akinjogbin was unforgettable for the boyish way he handled his subjects. We had read him in high school, but to have him as a teacher was priceless. But in part one, all the students were enamoured of Professor Femi Omosini. He never read from notes but reeled off line after perspicacious line in his class on the social and intellectual history of Europe. He was like a star lecturer. Then a year later, Professor Olatunji Oloruntimehin taught us West African history, bringing into the subject an audacity of analysis that broke with tradition. For instance, we learned that the phrase 'indirect rule' miscast the story of colonial umbrage. Professor Richard Olaniyan opened the Americas and the United States for me, with his deep insights, especially into the founding fathers and their duels with tyranny.

A friend and classmate of mine, Osagiatior Ojo, often called me 'the eminent literary figure who found himself in the wrong department.' He was referring to my immersion in literature classes. Some of my literature classmates thought I belonged to Literature until I confessed I was history major. But a few lecturers made literature beautiful for me. Dr. Folarin, a female British teacher made things clear early on. But later I was to enjoy the classes of Ropo Sekoni, Chima Anyadike, Biodun Jeyifo and Adebayo Williams. Professor Sekoni had an avuncular presence as he clarified point after point in an unforgettable way. Professor (also now Chief) Anyadike was noted for the laconic splendour and precision of his teaching. In few words, he made everything clear. Professor Jeyifo brought a 'people's' flavour to literature that was invaluable. Professor Williams brought to teaching a poetry of rendition, and an excitement of phrasing in class and tutorials. Even when we were not assigned to his tutorial class, we wanted to attend. He visibly enjoyed his work and effect on his students. I learned so much from being his student as we met many times to discuss literature and the state of the nation after class.

After leaving Ife, I knew I was not going to be a university professor. I wanted to be a journalist. Two persons had had a big effect on me while at Ife. The first was Dele Giwa, whose breathtaking columns inspired me and I introduced his column to my father. I recall when Giwa wrote the beautiful lines about Dele Udoh, who died from the police bullets, 'Dele Udoh had many plans before his death. Dying was not one of them.' Though his prose soured and declined towards the end of his life, I still adore him as a model. He was embroiled in administration.

The second person was Roger Rosenblatt, a Time essayist and senior writer. The first piece of him I read was a prologue to the cover story on the death of Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. I knew immediately that he was different. I had not read anyone like him, in the flair and flow of his prose, his insights into history and literature and philosophy, in the intersection of intellectual and quotidian experience. I have had constant relationship with him since 1990 when I visited his office at Time Square, New York. He has written plays and novels as well.

In the course of my career, my experience in Newswatch lay a good foundation. From Ekpu I learned how to generate perspectives on stories. From Agbese, I knew the precision of editing. We called him Dan the Butcher, because of his uncanny ability to cut fluff out of a tale. From Mohammed, everyone learned the etiquette of editing. He did it without aura of a bully.

My time in Newswatch was brief as I was called by Lewis Obi through Babafemi Ojudu to join the African Concord. Obi and his deputy Bayo Onanuga gave me the opportunity to bloom as a writer and it was there I started to write essays for publication. I look back at those years as the time I began to find my voice. I worked with Ojudu and Dele

### Ode to teachers

Momodu on many cover stories. The presence of Ohi Alegbe, who joined us from The Guardian was unmistakable as copy editor.

Not long after, Tunji Bello was to impress on editor-in-chief Dr. Doyin Abiola to move me to the group political desk as deputy political editor. The years have been exciting. Turbulence came, of course. During the June 12 crisis, I was the managing editor of Abuja bureau and a colleague (name withheld) drew my attention to SSS stalking me with a 504 Peugeot and Jetta cars morning and night. I left town before they woke up one morning.

I also had a gruelling time with the army who beat me for beating their security cordon to see the plane crash site at Ejigbo. I wrote quite a few columns, and I could not tell the story of my life as columnist without kudos to Mike Awoyinfa, who gave me the first opportunity to own a column with the Weekend Concord.

I cannot forget the angst with my pieces on Awo, Ojukwu, Jonathan, Achebe, Buhari, etc. all these bonfires smoked out of my column In Touch, which still smoulders. I cannot apologise for who I am, because as the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson writes in his Ulysses, 'I am a part of all that I have met.' I also hope that those who have been needled by my words understand the wellspring of conviction from which they emanate and accept my right to annoy righteously. As Abraham Lincoln orated when he became US president, I write 'with malice towards none.'

My gratitude goes to all I have worked with in The Nation from the managing director Victor Ifijeh to the gatemen, especially those on the editorial where we engage in friendly affray and sometimes cantankerous bonhomie each Wednesday in order to produce editorials that are the best in the land.

My sojourn in the United States was also worth the while, especially as a reporter with the Rocky Mountain news and Journalism teacher at Denver. As I taught, so I practised, also privileged to win a few awards. I cannot forget John Enssling and Rebecca Cantwell for all they did to make life and journalism worth the while in the United States.

I cannot end this piece without thanks to my years in the God's Kingdom Society, a church where I learned the rigour of the Bible and life. The Bible, of course, the best gift I ever had, as a book not beaten by any for its great divine message and great sayings and stories. It haunts when I write and it is on a plane above Rosenblatt and my favorite novelist Joseph Conrad.

I also will say that Felix M. Osifo was a mentor just by being within my sights as a model member of the GKS. He rose from humble beginnings to the top of the UACN. His story was a great inspiration for me to do something with my life.

I shall of course not forget Moses Oghanero Omatseye, my late father, who toiled for me as though his life was a sort of Abrahamic sacrifice for his son. I would be nowhere without him, and of course my mother, Salome, who was always a quiet tower of strength.

In all, I give glory to Almighty God whose grace and mercy on my life I cannot weigh. So, I say to my teachers and my God, thank you and accept this ode for the odyssey you gave humble me. The story continues.

**Load-Date:** December 5, 2017



## **Eneche Akogwu - A Case for Improved Welfare [analysis]**

Leadership (Abuja)

January 29, 2012 Sunday

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**Length:** 1262 words

**Byline:** Paul Dada

### **Body**

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Journalists in Nigeria as in other climes work round the clock to inform and educate the society. But contrary to how journalists in other environments are treated, Nigerian journalists could hardly be well catered for. PAUL DADA examines the need for employers of newsmen to become more committed to their employees' welfare.

If there was anything that Eneche Akogwu, the slain Kano State Correspondent of Channels Television knew how to do, it was getting good stories. Like any other good reporter, Akogwu had a sharp nose for news.

It was this unique sense of smell for news and commitment to duty that compelled Akogwu to risk his life to cover the January 20 multiple attacks on selected places in Kano by the dreaded Boko Haram sect.

It was also a day that death decided to lay its cold hands on the 31-year old journalist. While Akogwu busied himself with the coverage of the attacks, unidentified gunmen, suspected to be Boko Haram members shot him dead.

Today, Eneche is being mourned by family, friends, colleagues and his fiancé. But beyond the mourning it is expected that there should be a welfare package in place for every dutiful journalist like Akogwu.

LEADERSHIP SUNDAY confirmed from a top management source of Channels Television that the news medium has good and encouraging welfare packages for its staff. According to the source, every worker in the television station has a life insurance coverage facilitated by the management.

While it may be true that Channels Television and some media houses are interested in the welfare of their journalists, the same cannot be said of many others. Yet there could be fewer professionals that need to be taken care of by their employers more than the gentlemen of the pen profession.

Journalism can be likened to a case of hell let loose. And journalists have to cope in that hell. The job of a journalist is not the typical and conventional resumption and closing time of 8:00am to 4:00pm type. They are not just people who sit on cozy seats in an air-conditioned office with a coffee-filled mug on the table while treating files.

The working hours are irregular. Every reporter has to be on top of the news, on the beat they cover. And the news is there on the field, not inside the office.

## Eneche Akogwu - A Case for Improved Welfare [analysis]

In practice, there is really no resumption or closing time for a newshound who is worth his salt. Even during the oddest hours of the day, a reporter may need to be on duty trying to keep up with news as they break.

So, journalists cover war, riots, crime, fraud, and all. And woe onto that ***journalist*** who misses an important news story on the beat he covers. Hence, stress perhaps is most familiar word to a newsman.

Many journalists have suffered grueling interrogations and ill-treatments in the hands of law enforcement agents. Many have faced life-threatening situations. And no less than 50 are said to have lost their lives in questionable circumstances in the history of Nigerian press.

Notable among those who have lost their lives gruesomely were ***Dele Giwa***, founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, Bagauda Kaltho of TheNews magazine, Tayo Awotunsin of Daily Champion and Krees Imodibe of The Guardian Newspapers, two budding Nigerian journalists, who died while covering the Liberian war, Godwin Agbroko, Chairman, Editorial Board, ThisDay newspaper, who was murdered in December 2006 and Bayo Ohu of The Nation. The latest is Eneche Akogwu. Unfortunately, for all these murders, no culprit has been brought to book.

However, journalists are human too. They want to have a good life. They want to have decent accommodation, get married, have children and of course, have access to the basic things in life.

However, many organisations care less concerned about the welfare of journalists. This has forced journalists to resort to depending on gratification known as "brown envelop". Some have sought greener pasture in ministry jobs.

There are even stories of employers of journalists who encourage their staff to engage in corporate begging of sort. They tell their reporters that their identity cards are "meal tickets" through which they can get money.

While Nigerian Journalists continue to groan under the condition of poor remuneration and lack of welfare, their counterparts employed by foreign media enjoy better treatment.

Niyi Babade, a Nigerian-born ***journalist*** with Reuters said in an interview: "Let me confess to you that good insurance scheme and quality welfare package should have long been put in place for Nigerian journalists to reduce the hazards of their profession because that is what is practicable in the Western media. The Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE), Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) are all aware of the importance of the insurance scheme and good welfare package since it enhances quality reportage and investigative journalism.

When your life is insured, you can go all out to unearth exclusive stories without fear. When you are well paid in terms of salary and allowance, you cannot be 'bribed,' under any guise. If you are working for any international media organisations, mostly as one of their best hands -like I am known for exclusive media coverage of wars, you would have been sent on several training and your life insured as well. I was sent on 'Hostile Environment' training course by Reuters. It greatly helped my career. Let there be riots anywhere in the world, the Western press may not send you there because you have not yet acquired this special training. But the NGE, NUJ don't know this at all, due to the average selfishness of Nigerians. It is painful they overlook the issue of insurance. The international media are aware that it is against labour laws for any practicing ***journalist*** to be sent for war coverage without being insured."

This situation with the Nigerian journalists has generated concerns among stakeholders in the media industry and others.

Last year, in the African Press Organisation (APO),The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and its African regional group, the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) foundation organised a two-day conference on the Welfare of African journalists in the Nigerian capital.

The Conference which was captioned: "The Fruit of our Labour: A New Agenda for Improving Conditions of Journalists in Africa", was attended by the IFJ President Jim Boumelha, IFJ Secretary General Elisabeth Costa and about 30 media leaders across Africa. The Conference addressed poor working conditions of African journalists which were described as "appalling and precarious.

### Eneche Akogwu - A Case for Improved Welfare [analysis]

In his address, FAJ President Omar Faruk Osman said this about journalists: "They have no way to improve their wages and workplace conditions. Year after year, working journalists who are union members are fired, arrested and attacked for exercising their legal right to free association and their right to organise".

"The solutions to these problems lie in our hands and we must find ways to improve the working conditions of journalists in Africa", he said.

The Resident Representative of FES in Nigeria, Thomas Mattig, also decried the working conditions of journalists and media workers across the continent. "Many journalists work under precarious working conditions, they have no or almost no social security, no access to collective bargaining mechanisms and often they do not have a work contract or a regular salary".

It is then not out of place to call on media owners and managers of news organisations to become more responsive to the welfare of journalists working with them.

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2012

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## **NIGERIA: STIFFER SANCTIONS WILL NOT SOLVE CRISIS, SAY OBSERVERS**

IPS-Inter Press Service

September 8, 1995, Friday

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**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** By Julian Samboma

**Dateline:** LONDON, Sept. 8

### **Body**

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Two London-based Nigerian commentators have come out against increasing calls by pro-democracy campaigners urging the international community to use comprehensive sanctions to try to bring down Nigeria's military-backed regime.

Kayode Soyinka, publisher of Africa Today a bi-monthly political journal launched this year in London, and Cameron Duodu, an author and veteran *journalist*, argue that such measures may backfire since the regime is likely to harden its stance, rather than bow to pressure from the international community.

Their view is that the best way to achieve political change in the country is through internal pressure and quiet diplomacy by foreign governments.

Ever since General Sani Abacha seized the reins of political power in a coup two years ago, his regime has been under sustained international and local criticism for its appalling human rights record and its steadfast stalling of moves to institute democratic reform.

But Soyinka and Duodu are wary of stepping up foreign involvement.

"I will tell you one thing and that is that sanctions are not the answer to the current political crisis in the country," says Soyinka. "This is a Nigerian problem which should be solved in the family and I believe that internal pressure on the government will do the trick."

Duodu too argues that behind-the-scenes diplomacy by Western governments could be more effective than sanctions threats or trade embargoes. "You have to understand that all this pressure could be self-defeating. General Abacha cannot afford to look as if he is bowing to outside interference if he is to keep his own military constituency."

Soyinka was a one time London correspondent of the outspoken Nigerian magazine Newswatch, whose founding editor, *Dele Giwa*, was killed in the mid-1980s by a parcel bomb allegedly sent by military intelligence agents. For his part, Duodu has been an uncompromising defender of democratic rights in Africa throughout his long literary career.

## NIGERIA : STIFFER SANCTIONS WILL NOT SOLVE CRISIS, SAY OBSERVERS

Neither are supportive of the Abacha regime, however, Soyinka's "realistic" reading of the political situation in Nigeria leads him to the conclusion that a major part of the problem is that the civilian political class continues to collaborate with successive military regimes.

"Abacha by himself is not the problem," Soyinka says. "He is also a victim of these civilian politicians who make a lot of democratic noises then turn around and become collaborators, propping up whatever military despot can serve their ends."

"I am realistic enough to see that the civilians should share the blame. In fact, they pose a bigger problem than the military. If civilians refused every time to serve in military governments, how long do you think they would last? Not very long, believe me."

The publisher argues that the democratic movement will only triumph over the oppressive military regime when they give up their "fetish" about international sanctions, and concentrate instead on getting Abacha's civilian collaborators to ditch him.

Soyinka would also like to see more grassroots organizing against military despotism.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, this argument cuts no ice with the country's mainstream National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which counters that internal pressure on its own can never get the military to release its hold on the country's political machine.

Anthony Ojolola, an opposition activist currently visiting London, says: "We have tried without much success to solve this very serious political crisis by ourselves. We can no longer rely on that path, so we are now calling on the British, American and German governments to support our democratic struggle by imposing economic sanctions on the country."

It is a measure of the exasperation of the opposition that they are now actively lobbying for comprehensive sanctions, of the sort deployed against illegal white minority rule in South Africa in the 1980s, to be imposed on their country to force the military to relinquish power.

Nigerian activists here contend that the question now is not whether leading British Commonwealth and Western countries will impose more serious sanctions on the country, in addition to the limited sanctions already in place, but rather when they will do so.

Some specialists, however, believe that such optimism is misplaced.

"Firstly, it is unrealistic for the West to set a precedent which will obviously be difficult to follow," says Gregory Kronsten, a Nigeria specialist at the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). "Trade sanctions against Iraq are one thing. It is quite another against a country like Nigeria which is threatening no other country."

"In fact, trade sanctions cannot succeed in a country like Nigeria, where supplies can always be brought in or taken out over land. It is not an island you can blockade. So why impose sanctions if they won't be effective?"

These considerations hardly figure in the calculations of activists whose dream is to see Abacha banished to his military barracks.

"We are facing reality, and the reality is that the limited sanctions which are in place against Nigeria have made Abacha lift the political ban and promise to announce the timetable for democracy," says Ojolola, who vows to continue selling the idea of stiffer economic sanctions as a way to rein in the repressive military regime.

**Load-Date:** September 12, 1995



## The Case of Buhari's Alleged Plagiarism [column]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

September 21, 2016

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**Length:** 1576 words

**Byline:** Mohammed Haruna

### **Body**

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Easily the biggest news last week was the allegation that President Muhammadu Buhari committed plagiarism in his speech "Change Begins With Me," with which he launched his national re-orientation programme on September 14. The speech itself had come under a lot of flak for seemingly transferring the onus of bringing about the much-needed change in attitude in the country from its leadership onto its ordinary folk.

"I am therefore," he had said in the course of the speech, "appealing to all Nigerians to be part of this campaign. Our citizens must realize that the change they want to see begins with them, and that personal and social reforms are not theoretic exercise. If you have not seen the change in you, you cannot see it in others or even the larger society. In other words, before you ask 'where is the change they promised us', you must first ask how far have I changed my ways 'what have I done to be part of the change for the greater good of society'."

The uproar caused by this seemingly bait-and-switch speech had barely subsided when the allegation of the president's plagiarism surfaced. It seems to have triggered widespread moral outrage and an even louder uproar.

The outrage and even the uproar, if not its pitch, are justified; plagiarism, as Wikipedia points out in its treatment of the subject, may not be an offence defined or punished by law because it is not the same as copyright, but it is unethical. It therefore stands to reason that the higher the status of a plagiarist, the more unethical the plagiarism.

Even then there is absolutely no justification whatsoever for the terrible pettiness of the politics that Buhari's political enemies have been trying to play with the allegation.

Leading this implacable crowd is - of course, no prize for guessing right - Mr. Femi Fani-Kayode, whose hatred for anything and almost anyone Islamic and Northern has since become legendary. Buhari, he said on his social media account, "has no memory, knows no history, plagiarises other President's speeches and reads only the cartoon section in the newspapers". Buhari's plagiarising Obama's speech, he said, "is outrageous and it has brought shame to our nation".

No doubt the timing and context of the plagiarism saga could hardly have been worse for the president, coming as they did on the eve of his departure to New York for this year's United Nations' Summit and as a speech which was supposed to inspire positive change in Nigerians' attitudes. Even then it is no excuse for Fani-Kayode's demagoguery. Most certainly it is no excuse for his blatant lie that the president is a habitual literary thief.

### The Case of Buhari's Alleged Plagiarism [column]

Since his inaugural speech on May 29 last year the president has delivered more than a dozen speeches at home and abroad. This is the first time he has been accused of plagiarism. Since then there has, of course, been insinuations that the theme of even his inaugural speech was plagiarised from a speech in French decades ago by France's president, the late General Charles DeGaulle. That allegation is probably untenable since important nuances and details are often lost in translations.

But even if the insinuations are justified, there is the big difference that presidents invariably don't personally write their own speeches. Therefore at worst they can only be vicariously responsible for the exact wordings of their speeches.

In the particular case of Buhari's "Change Begins With Me" speech, it is important that the Presidency owned up to its mistake without equivocations, apologized and promised to take measures against a repeat.

People like Fani-Kayode who, no matter what, are prepared to crucify the president even about something he was not personally responsible for, would do well to remember that the very man whose speech he was accused of plagiarising - America's President Barack Obama - has himself been severally accused of stealing other peoples' words, probably not completely without justification.

This is not to excuse one wrong by merely pointing fingers at someone else's. No. It is simply to put Buhari's wrong in context. In that sense Buhari's vicarious literary theft pales in significance compared to that of several accomplished journalists and columnists in America and here at home whose alleged literary thefts were direct. The charge against the president certainly pales in significance to the literal theft of our commonwealth by the PDP regime - a regime in which Fani-Kayode was a presidential spokesman and minister - for sixteen long years.

A little over four years ago Dr. Fareed Zakaria, a well-regarded columnist and editor at Time magazine and CNN was found to have plagiarised a paragraph from an article in New Yorker magazine in a piece in his column entitled "The Case for Gun Control". He pleaded guilty and was immediately suspended by magazine and the TV station, both of which are in the same stable.

His suspension lasted only one week and though his reputation has been dented, his journalism career has not ended. On the contrary, he has remained a credible and respected voice in global journalism.

Here at home, readers old enough may remember the famous case, 30 years ago, of Ray Ekpu when he was accused of plagiarising from the English philosopher, Thomas Paine's book, "The Age of Reason," by a two-some of Dele Momodu, Ovation's publisher, and Kunle Ajibade, editor-in-chief of The News. At the time the two were post-graduate students of University of Ife, today Obafemi Awolowo University.

The genesis of the case was a book on Dele Giwa, co-founder of Newswatch along with Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, who had been assassinated in a first-of-its-kind parcel bombing of a Nigerian journalist. The authors of the book were Adinoyi Onukuba-Ojo who later became managing director of the now comatose, if not dead, Daily Times, and Dele Olojede, who was to win a Pulitzer for international reporting years after he moved to America to ply his trade.

Their book, "Born to Run", was somewhat unflattering of Giwa's colleagues at Newswatch. An apparently angry Ekpu wrote a review of the book in which he paid its authors back in kind. As students, Momodu and Ajibade thought they detected copious reproduction of Paine in Ekpu's angry review.

Accordingly they jointly wrote an article accusing Ekpu of plagiarism. For weeks none of the country's newspapers they approached would touch it. Finally Guardian Express, then an evening newspaper in The Guardian stable, ran it. Then all hell broke lose. The military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida considered the allegation serious enough that it withdrew the congratulation it had written to Ekpu for winning the International Editor of the Year Prize awarded by a New York based media review outfit.

### The Case of Buhari's Alleged Plagiarism [column]

Ekpu threatened to sue The Guardian. The newspaper's worried management tried to talk Momodu and Ajibade into retracting their allegations but the two young men stood their ground. They did so even after Ekpu's colleague, Agbese, wrote an article with the self-explanatory title "Green in their eyes," in defence of Ekpu.

Ekpu never sued the authors. However, through the interventions of some elders of the profession at the time, most notably Arewo Segun Osoba, former governor of Ogun State and at the time managing director of Daily Times, the matter was allowed to gradually die down. Today Ekpu remains one of Nigeria's brightest lights in journalism.

What the cases of Zakaria and Ekpu clearly show is that, though unethical, passing off someone else's words as your own is not necessarily a fatal offence even for those in the business of professional communication.

Not only is Buhari NOT a professional communicator. He has been honourable enough to own up to the allegation against him and has promised to punish the author of his embarrassment, and through him, the nation's embarrassment.

Some people have called for the sack of whoever was responsible for the gaff. I think that would be extreme because the offence was most probably committed not out of malice but out of a desire to make one's principal look good. And, at least in America whose model of democracy we aspire to, absence of malice can be justification even for proven libel.

Not surprisingly the plagiarism allegation has triggered claims by two media consultants, Akin Fadeyi and Omor Bazuaye, that the very concept of "Change Begins with Me" was theirs, but was stolen by the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, after they'd presented it to him early this year.

The minister has, of course, rejected their claim. He said he started work on the concept long before he met any of the two. His story of the sequence of events leading to its launching last week sounds more believable to me than those of Fadeyi and Bazuaye.

In any case the good thing is that the claims and counter-claims here are copyright issues and therefore a matter of law rather than ethics. Mohammed has challenged the two to go to court. Either they pick up his gauntlet or they should shut up.

Today we are in an age of social media where the internet, as Time magazine said in its cover story of August 26, is apparently being lost to a "culture of hate" and a "tyranny of the mob."

Reasonable and knowledgeable people in society owe themselves and their country a commitment to fight back against that culture and tyranny. The allegation of plagiarism against Buhari is a test of that commitment. Hopefully it will not be flunked.

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2016



## **Ninth Daily Trust Dialogue - Politics and the Media in Africa [column]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

February 6, 2012 Monday

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**Length:** 3099 words

**Byline:** Abubakar Siddique Mohammed

### **Body**

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Politics is an inevitable feature of any human society. In a general sense, it is the activity through which people make, preserve and modify the general rules under which they live. Therefore, the important questions as to who should get what, how resources are distributed, through which means are collective decisions arrived at, etc., fall within the realm of politics. It is obvious that these weighty issues will inevitably stimulate disagreements within any society- and they have led to wars or civil conflagration in many instances. Since there will always be rival opinions, different wants, competing desires, opposing needs and interests and disagreements about rules which govern our activities or under which people live, politics is inseparable from conflict. They are intricately linked. This reality imposes on society the imperative for co-operation, more so when people realise that the rules and regulations under which they live can be influenced, respected and sustained by working together. Thus, in a dialectical sense, society is able to achieve another fundamental goal of politics: the taming or domestication of violence.

Politics is therefore an arena where various forces within society contend. In this, often intense, competition various means are employed. One such resource is the media. The same way that conflict and co-operation are intricately linked so also politics and the media, especially in our times. In a democracy, where the will of the people is assumed to be supreme, politicians strive to use the media or means of mass communication to mobilise public support, first to win elections and then to get their programmes sold to the public while in office. But the print and electronic media are both organs which could be used not only to assist in legitimising and mobilising support for governments, but also in running down governments. So important is the media in legitimising modern democracies and the democratization process that it has been variously referred to as the Fourth Estate of the Realm; the People's Parliament, etc. This is largely as a result of the media's utilitarian value as an institutional channel through which opinions are expressed and public perceptions moulded. In addition to the media's functions of informing, entertaining and instructing its target audience, it has also become an instrument of propaganda and the channel through which public perception of its audience could be shaped, moderated, altered or influenced. Although the media could be made to serve the general good, it could however, be used as a cover for the promotion of personal or group interests. In this regard, it should be stressed that, apart from the traditional roles expected of media organs, they are equally established to serve the specific interests of those who own and control them. In this respect it could be suggested that, where the vested interests of those who own and control the media collide with other interests, the media may be used in the services of its owners.

The defunct Concord could be a good illustration of this point. The paper was established to promote the interests of its founder, Chief Moshood Abiola and those of the political party he belonged to, the National Party of Nigeria.

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The paper was thus virulent in its attacks of the Unity Party of Nigeria led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, which posed a political challenge to the former. But when Chief Moshood Abiola left the NPN in 1982 over his failure to take over the chair of the N.P.N from Chief Adisa Akinloye, as a prelude to a planned bid for the party's presidential ticket for the 1983 presidential election, the paper dramatically changed its tune. The Concord and other outlets owned by Chief Abiola launched a series of orchestrated, equally virulent attacks on the government of President Shehu Shagari and even openly encouraged the military to take over. As you may remember, the military did overthrow that government on 31st December 1983.

With the overthrow of the civilian regime by the military, Chief Abiola mobilised his media empire to justify the coup. His journalists encouraged the new military rulers to be ruthless in the conduct of public affairs, especially with regards to the fate of the deposed politicians, who were accused, tried, judged and sentenced on the pages of the Abiola newspapers. The Sunday Concord, edited by Dele Giwa, played an important role in this campaign against civilian politicians and anyone believed to be associated with them. Supporting the coup, this celebrated Nigerian journalist wrote in his column, 'Parallax Snaps', of January 8th 1984, that

The soldiers couldn't have come a minute too early or a minute too late. Everybody in Shehu Shagari's bad books was already getting hysterical.

In the first month of the regime, the Concord mounted a systematic campaign against civilians and the ousted elected civilian regime. This campaign started in the paper's first editorial after the coup. It was captioned: The Bottom Line is Performance. In this editorial, the newspaper advised the military junta to refuse civilians political appointments. It argued:

Misgivings have already been expressed over the proposed inclusion of civilians in the new cabinet. The contention centres on the fact that such civilians who might have had a romance with the [deposed] civilian administration under which a fetish was made of corruption, might directly or indirectly have had their hand soiled in shady deals and might only cast a slur on the white-linen appearance of the new administration.

Besides, as some of them might have had strong political loyalties and affiliations, they might still be nursing their political hang-overs, and are therefore unlikely to serve the new government with unreserved commitment. Moreover, as civilians are by nature often overtly bureaucratic in their approach to issues, their snail-pace mannerism may not augur well for a military administration which had pledged itself to a speedy, no-nonsense approach to solving the nation's festering multitude of problems.

In his column in the same edition of the Sunday Concord, Dele Giwa even urged the military government to take extra-judicial measures to arrest and torture two leading members of the deposed ruling NPN party. These were Chief Adisa Akinloye (who defeated Chief Abiola in the contest for the chairmanship of the NPN in 1982) and Alhaji Umaru Dikko (who had openly campaigned for the victory of Chief Akinloye against Chief Abiola in the 1982 chairmanship contest). He wrote:

The military must get Akinloye especially. If diplomatic and other so-called legal means failed to produce Adisco, the military must adopt the Gadhafi approach, and get professional kidnappers and assassins to his trail. They will get him.

After getting him, they must then compel him, by bloody and slow torture, to disclose where he is keeping all the money he stole from Nigeria. When he has told them where the money is being kept, he must be made to effect instruments of transfer of the money to Nigeria.

If he is slow at complying, the kidnappers and assassins should ask him to indicate the hand he uses for writing. They should then begin to break the fingers of his other hand one by one until he used his writing hand to sign the instruments of transfer of the money to Nigeria.

As for Sunday Adewusi [the Inspector General of Police under the deposed civilian government], I have a personal score to settle with the fellow. So, I would like to ask Major-General Buhari to oblige me by handing the fellow over to me, and he can be sure that I would do justice to the usurper.

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Even the "no-nonsense military regime" of Generals Buhari and Idiagbon apparently found this advice rather too chilling. It is, however, not quite clear as to what role the recommendations offered by Dele Giwa and other leading Concord journalists played in inciting the military to adopt repressive and reprehensible measures against the deposed elected civilian government, including the botched abduction of Alhaji Umaru Dikko, a prominent political opponent of Chief M. K. O. Abiola.

Chief Abiola's media vendetta against the deposed politicians went to such an extent that his newspapers started a campaign for the banning of some politicians. In an editorial, in Sunday Concord, 22nd January 1984, shortly after the military coup, captioned, "Future of Politics in Nigeria" the Sunday Concord said:

The vexed question as to whether politicians who have had a previous bad record in public life are to be forbidden from participation in political activities, must now, in view of our recent unsavoury experience with this breed, be resolved in the affirmative. The Shagaris, Dikkos, Akinloyes, and Ekwuemes should be banished from further participation in politics. This nation has had enough run of ill-luck on account of them.

Ray Ekpu, another leading columnist of the Sunday Concord, would not be outdone. In an article titled, "Na Democracy we go chop?", published in Sunday Concord of January 15 1984, Ekpu castigated both the West for condemning the coup and the late Dr Tai Solarin for calling on the military to handover to civilians within six months. According to him:

"It is easy to understand why the death of democracy in Nigeria has pained the western powers and their media so much. Their funeral orations at Nigeria's democracy's graveside and their newspaper obituaries which pass for commentaries must be dismissed as the hogwash that they are. What they think about democracy in Nigeria ought to mean little or nothing to us. What matters is what we Nigerians think.

Democracy as we knew it these last four years was not democracy as they know it in their own countries. It was not even a bastardised form of it, it was madness in its pure form, madness that had no method to it... the mere fact that it is the western powers that are the chief mourners of the death of Shagari's administration ought to be instructive. For it tells us that government was a more devoted servant of the western interest than Nigerian interests.

That is why it is difficult to appreciate Tai Solarin's view that nobody in this country wants to see an army regime that would last more than six months.

Mr Solarin must be so much in love with democracy that he would have it at any price. That love has apparently blinded him to the terrible experience of the last four years and the fact that the mounting heap of mess left behind cannot be cleared within six months.

The other reason one can guess for Mr Solarin's wish for Nigeria is his avowed love for Awo and his (Tai's) desire to see papa achieve his life-long ambition of ruling Nigeria. Mr Solarin realises that the longer the Military administration hangs around the more Awo's chances ebb"

Just as African newspapers can be used openly by their owners as instruments of self-aggrandisement, so could organs of the media be employed for more diabolical ends, as we have experienced in recent times in many countries, such as Rwanda, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan, to mention but a few. We can illustrate this with the example of the roles played by the Kangura newspaper and the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) (One Thousand Hills Free Radio and Television) which broadcast from July 8, 1993 to July 31, 1994 in the Rwandan Genocide. According to the Human Rights Watch

In the thirteen weeks after April 6, 1994, at least half a million people perished in the Rwandan genocide, perhaps as many as three quarters of the Tutsi population. At the same time, thousands of Hutu were slain because they opposed the killing campaign and the forces directing it. The killers struck with a speed and devastation that suggested an aberrant force of nature, "a people gone mad," said some observers. ..But this genocide was not an uncontrollable outburst of rage by a people consumed by "ancient tribal hatreds." Nor was it the preordained result of the impersonal forces of poverty and over-population.

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This genocide resulted from the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power. This small, privileged group first set the majority against the 12.5.

The radio was not left out. Indeed it became even more effective in delivering the message of hate directly and simultaneously to a wide audience given that listening to the radio was a popular distraction among Rwandans both the ordinary people and the elite. In 1991, some 29 percent of all households had a radio. To further galvanise the people to effectively carry out its genocidal enterprise the government distributed radios free to some local authorities before the genocide and perhaps after the killing had gone full gear Radio Mille Collins which was established by forces, politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats etc associated with the regime was used extensively to galvanise Hutus to kill Tutsi.

As the HRW report clearly indicates, the gargantuan tragedy, otherwise known as the Rwandan Genocide, was deliberately planned by small, privileged elite, which prepared the grounds for its evil acts by mobilising the media to manufacture and spread hatred against the group targeted for mass slaughter. In this sense, there is an eerie resemblance between the pre- genocide discourse in the Rwandan, Akazu- controlled media and the on-going campaign of hatred being championed by a powerful section of the Nigerian press against the peoples of Northern Nigeria in general, and the Hausa and Fulani nationalities, in particular.

We can illustrate this campaign with the example of Dr Reuben Abati, formally a regular columnist in the Guardian and now one of the advisers to President Goodluck Jonathan. In an article he wrote on page 53 of The Guardian, Friday, February 25, 2000 titled, "The Second Jihad", Abati deliberately lied and otherwise distorted history by claiming that:

Prior to 1804, the Fulanis had already emigrated to Northern Nigeria from Sudan and elsewhere, but they constituted an outsider group, an alien constituency, and were so treated by their Hausa host -communities who were not Muslims, but African animists. Transiting alien groups are often subjected to manifest psychological torture and the Fulani's were not immune to this fact of social co-existence. A proud, aristocratic group, they resented their hosts and sought power and more space.

The philosophy behind the jihad comprises the following elements: the destruction of anything possible that seems to give advantages to the opposition, the stealing of those advantages and their eventual appropriation, a determination to cause mayhem through any means, fear of primordial isolation, and desperation for power.

These are the same elements behind the Second Jihad. The same fear of isolation and helplessness that set the Fulani aliens against the Hausas are reproduced in the enthronement of democratic rule and the cry of marginalisation that is currently issuing forth from the North. The marginalisation that is spoken of is not in terms of physical representation in political offices that is the problem of the Igbo) but the manner in which democratic rule has removed the dirty hands of Northern opportunists from the treasury and other sources of easy wealth which has served that class very well.

We are not opposed to Islam but we think anybody who lives in a decent society must obey the rules of that society. It is not religion that they seek to promote but their own craving for power.

The Jihadists are leaving us with no option but war. Their stubbornness raises further questions about citizenship. Are these persons citizens of Nigeria? What does it mean to be a citizen of this country? My other suspicion is that the Northern Jihadists do not consider themselves to be citizens of this country. They belong to a religious kingdom, and they have more loyalty to the Arab world than to Nigeria.

For too long, the progressive camp in this country has had to compromise too many things for the simple sake of ensuring peace. But what we have also seen is that there are people in this country who do not want peace. It is the tendency to accept easy compromises for example that helped to create the myth that Northerners are in the majority in this country, whereas a trip to the North reveals more empty spaces and herds of cattle than human beings.

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Dr Abati is not alone in this virulent hate campaign. Earlier on, the late Chief Bola Ige and the Sunday Tribune seemed to have taken a strategic decision to propagate hatred against the Fulani in particular and northerners in general. Chief Bola Ige used every opportunity to liken the Fulani to the Tutsis of Rwanda and sometimes Burundi. As the Tutsis of Nigeria he provocatively proclaimed that the Fulani of Nigeria are likely to end up sharing the same bloody fate with the Tutsis of Rwanda. Like in Rwanda where the Tutsi were identified as the target group and blamed for all the ills of society, Chief Bola Ige insistently identified the Fulani as evil oppressors and parasites and therefore the target for genocide in Nigeria. On page 2 of Sunday Tribune of February 16, 1977 he wrote:

"Since 1960, has our bane not been the "Tutsis" of Nigeria (who are minority of minorities - in population, in education, in management skills, in the economy) have held Nigeria at the jugular scheming political manoeuvres that make them hold on to power at all costs and in all circumstance? The result, of course, is that all "non Tutsis" of Nigeria are not ready to trust their future to such a minority who have never exhibited true Nigerian nationalism...The young people do not trust the authorities, and the way they see Nigeria is vastly different from how the "Tutsis" of Nigeria want Nigeria to be."

Clearly, as highlighted at the beginning of this contribution, politics is occasioned by conflict and the media is not immune to this process. It is similarly true that the struggle for economic and political space amongst our numerous competing elites will create frictions which will determine the nature and direction of our political discourse. However, the genocide in Rwanda was real. Nearly one million Africans were massacred within thirteen weeks. We should also not forget that editors, reporters, columnists and other media actors were the main catalysts in the hate campaign which led to the tragedy. Leading practitioners of the media in Nigeria should therefore ask themselves, must Rwanda be our role model?

Dr. Abubakar Siddique Mohammed is the Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training, Jama'a, Zaria.

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2012

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## The Human Person And the Evil Within (2) [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

August 1, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 930 words

**Byline:** Achike Chude

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Continued from Friday

It is this awareness of man, as the masterpiece and epicentre of creation that continues to instigate in him the ongoing discourse in politics, religion, economy and other fields of human endeavour. We must not for one moment think that the great questions of identity asked from the dawn of eternity by the ancients, till the modern times are no longer relevant; who is man? what is man? What is the purpose of man? We see attempts to answer some of these questions in the gathering of world leaders in the wake of a Rwandan genocide that wiped out almost one million lives in a space of 90 days.

We see this in the setting up of the Nuremberg tribunal to try those found culpable in the mindlessness of a Second World War inspired by morbid psychopathic tendencies in which six million Jews, as well as over twenty million other lives were lost. We see this on the streets of Bosnia and Sarajevo in the nineties when man, in full flight of sanity, turned on his fellow man in complete demonic fury. \*\*Q\*\*Mind you, the heinousness and revulsion of a crime does not lie solely in the number of human casualties suffered but on the nature of the deed and in the absolute loss of the humanity of the perpetrators.\*\*Q\*\* After all, Dele Giwa, that intrepid Nigerian journalist blown up by a parcel bomb in a most gruesome manner in 1986 had argued that "any human life lost in an act of violence is as gruesome as a million lives lost in a pogrom".

We may seek to mitigate the culpability of mankind for some of the worst atrocities and tragedies inflicted upon man by man by trying to locate the reasons, for such occurrences within the historical milieu in which they occurred. But there is nothing to indicate that there has been a radical shift of man to reflect the high and fine points of modern civilization. This was surely understood by that enigmatic and maverick musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti who argued in his famous song BEAST OF NO NATION that despite the modern accoutrements and habits of man, he still remains an animal. It is to the curtailment, suppression and elimination of this base animalistic instincts of man that both religion and civil law are addressed.

In the ordering of a just and equitable society, both religion and the law are meant to play ancillary and supportive roles. Religion, because it is transcendental and mystical is seen under certain cultures as superior to civil law. This is essentially because the object of worship who is referred to as God in most cultures (Supreme Being) is seen as all knowing, all seeing, all good and all perfect. Thus man is called upon to seek perfection in harmony with the

## The Human Person And the Evil Within (2) [analysis]

supreme being within the structure of society. In this sense, religion enjoys the status of being the first line of defence against societal decadence. This, on its face value should be enough to ensure the safety and stability of society since the destination of every spiritual demand on man is the sanctity of the human person and an imposed obligation to work for the good of society.

This understanding about the existence and active participation of the divine in the natural order of human existence has also impacted positively on the development of human society. Unfortunately, the application of religion, by man has also led to its share of abuses and atrocities. It is this abuse and failure of religion that makes civil law imperative and essential for the good of all. The seemingly pervasive dominance and overriding influence of the law over religion stems from its applicability over people of different historical realities, cultural and religious persuasions. But because the law has to cater for a very wide range of disparate and diverse group of people, it becomes imperative that in order to achieve a more organized and stable society, the rules and regulations that must guide these peoples must flow from the people through their representatives. Under the dynamics of the modern era religion seems to have lost its influence over man.

But still, the call on man by religious' imperatives is far greater, far more sacrificial, far more superior to the demands on man by the law. "Love your enemy as your self "we are told. "Greater love can no man show than to lay down his life for his fellow man" goes another. And finally, "Do unto others as you would want others to do unto you" These demands on man derive from Christian ethics and eschatology. But similar ethical demands are made on humanity by the various religions of the world. Civil law does not, and cannot provide a platform for the moral and ethical transformation of man and society but it can compel obedience towards the same end, even from the social deviant .But in order to do that, the law must be ever pervasive and ever present to compel compliance. By contrast, obedience to civil authority by self acclaimed religious people is a consequence of obedience to a higher moral and spiritual authority.

Surely, neither the law nor religion can stand on its own as the excesses of religion is curtailed and contained by the law, while the limits and failures of the law is covered by the charity of religion. Though the participants of le jeu de la mort might have acted with the belief or knowledge that they were acting within the ambit of the law, in sentencing their partners to death by electrocution and carrying out same, those who declined were motivated by a higher and nobler order that insisted that man must be treated with dignity at all times.

Concluded

Achike Chude, a political analyst writes from Oregun, Lagos.

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2010

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## **Ade Abolurin - Good Citizen of the Federal Republic (GCFR) [opinion]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

October 25, 2012

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**Length:** 1022 words

**Byline:** Idang Alibi

### **Body**

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The mission of the Information Minister Labaran Maku-led National Good Governance Tour is not only to see and report to Nigerians the concrete projects on ground that have either been completed or are on-going, the initiative is also to highlight or draw attention to even innovative idea or approach to governance that exemplifies good governance.

I am happy to announce that in the course of the on-going nation-wide projects inspection tour, which began in the FCT on September 20, we have come across so early in the day one very good example of a Nigerian public officer who can be announced as the poster person of this administration. That man is Dr John Ade Abolurin, Commandant-General of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Abolurin epitomises frugality, focus, patriotism, sense of mission and above all, honesty and prudence in the management of public funds. This man deserves to be promoted as an exemplary public officer because his conduct and approach to governance are sufficiently impressive enough and therefore worthy of recommendation to others.

On the very first day of the tour, the team visited the Civil Defence Academy in Sauka near the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport. The Academy, as the name suggests, is meant for the training of recruits into the Corps. When Abolurin disclosed that all the structures on ground in the Academy were built with a 'paltry' sum of N1.5 billion, there was a spontaneous outbreak of praise for him among the journalists, civil society representatives and other stakeholders who constitute membership of the team. These segments of society who are usually very critical, cynical and stingy with praise could not help themselves but poured a lot of generous words on Abolurin, describing him as one of the very few honest and prudent public officers that can be found in the country and that if other public officers were like him this nation would have moved forward.

It is only the television medium that can effectively capture for those who have not gone to Sauka to see for themselves what Abolurin has done with the sum of N1.5 billion. What is on ground in Sauka needs to be seen to be believed and appreciated. In a country where in spite of the existence of the Bureau for Public Procurement, many public projects are still executed at about 1,000 times the cost in neighbouring countries, what is in Sauka is truly a pleasant surprise. It is known all over the world that Nigeria is the most lucrative market for construction jobs. We got this dubious reputation because of the inglorious practice of padding the cost of execution of projects so high in order to feed corruption.

But in Sauka, Abolurin has been able to build male and female hostels, an auditorium, fish pond, dog training facilities, tar roads, equip the structures with facilities and do so many other things, all with the sum of N1.5 billion.

Journalists and those other hard-to-please members of society on the team remarked that in other agencies, ministries and department of government that sum of money which Abolurin used to do that number of impressive things will not even be enough to build the auditorium which was just one of the many things Abolurin did.

Several years ago the late eminent **journalist Dele Giwa** said that Nigerians were no longer shockable. So many atrocities are committed in our country but we do not seem moved by them. If it were not so what Abolurin has done in Sauka with N1.5 billion should have provoked a chain of reaction in the highest reaches of government in the country. Many public do-gooders would have come out boldly demanding that a public inquiry be instituted without delay to find out how one chief executive of a public institution could use such an amount to do so much and why it is otherwise in many other MDAs in the country. Abolurin's good example is a pleasantly rude shock to a people who have become inured against scandalous corruption and the misuse of public funds. His use of 1.5 billion to do all that is visible on ground in Sauka should be a ringing indictment against most public officers in Nigeria who should bury their heads in shame.

Abolurin has confirmed my own personal thesis about Nigeria that if over the past 30 years when corruption grew dangerous horns in our country, we have been consistently applying even 20 per cent of the revenue we have been earning judiciously in development projects; we would have by now become a fairly developed country. But we do not. Our leaders trivialise or tend to devalue our national currency. They talk about a billion naira as if it was some few miserable hundreds of Naira. You see a few kilometres of tarred road and they tell you several billions have been used to construct it. You see a public building that is worth only a few millions of Naira and the officers who superintended its construction will tell you without any blushing that several billions have been used to construct it. And no one questions such scandalous claims. But Abolurin has exposed the level of thievery in our country by showing that a billion is no small money and that it can do much in the hands of anyone who is honest and is concerned for the public good. What Abolurin has done in Sauka will surely prick the consciences of thousands of lying and thieving officials in Nigeria.

When I shared with a friend, Godwin Agim, who is a top shot in the NSCDC, our positive impression of Abolurin, he was more effusive in his praise of his boss. He said for them who are insiders and who know and feel the full extent of the good Abolurin represents, he deserves even greater national applause than he is getting because his hard work, dedication to duty, commitment to his goals, his concern for the wellbeing and welfare of his workers and his prudence in the management of public resources entrusted to his care are exemplary. He said it is these attributes that have made it possible for Abolurin to have taken the NSCDC from ground zero to the height hero that it has become in Nigeria today and have made the NSCDC the preferred destination of many job seekers in our country.

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2012

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## Sustaining Political Re-Branding, Media Profiling [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

October 18, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1101 words

**Byline:** Joe Nwankwo

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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Political rebranding is relatively new in Nigeria. But in advanced democracies like the United States and Britain, it is a must and a multi-billion Dollar industry.

"Political re-branding" is a phrase that requires using some of the methods developed in commercial marketing, to reposition a political party and politicians within a political space.

As the 2011 election looms in the horizon, the stage is set for image burnishing and fine-tuning as the case may be. And owing to the slippery political terrain in the country with many a Nigerian politician often faced with mudslinging, the imperativeness of a skilled and political brand manager brand becomes even more. The dearth of political brand managers has yielded disastrous results with not a few politicians relying on unskilled relation advisors.

According to Earl Osaro Onaiwu of Red Carpet Protocol, the nation's foremost political and image branding outfit, advances in technology has made Nigeria part of the global community with the result that whatever dust or mud is thrown at a politician, true or false, would have dire and far reaching implications, hence the need for people like him with vast experience in political branding.

Onaiwu remarked that political parties and politicians should be brand identities looked upon by their constituents and electorate as people they can trust. And to achieve this, he says, goes beyond the occasional media online stories and or interviews. For him it involves a sustained and strategic media profiling.

The brand expert laments that most politicians lack the awareness that they should be "brand personalities" and have a history of iconic public projection.

Osaro's thinking is in sync with a recent study in the United Kingdom which states that "why re-branding" is so interesting and significant is because it replaces the relatively stable, or at least slow-moving, character of traditional political identity which a much more aggressively and strategically mobile version, alert to the conditions of the "political market" and the changing profile of media relations. This version appears to give added emphasis to "managerialist" concerns, the ability not simply to inspire but "to deliver."

Speaking recently at a public forum, Onaiwu said: "The 2011 election is sure to rake up a lot of dust and mud and it will be a surprise if it does not. This will not be surprising owing to the lucrative nature of political office in the

## Sustaining Political Re-Branding, Media Profiling [analysis]

country. Politicians and political actors as well as political parties will need to do more in terms of branding and marketing themselves."

He expressed regrets that most politicians are yet to grasp the import of presenting themselves as political brands as exemplified by David Cameron of Britain, Barack Obama of the United States and Angela Merkel of Germany. He is of the opinion that once the Nigerian politician begins to see politics as a long-term commitment with the people, they will cease relying on non-professionals that tend to create bigger problems for them.

He further argued that most of those canvassing for one office or the other especially for the highest office of the land have issues they need to properly situate before the public with the help of people like him.

The Red Carpet Protocol CEO is not far from the truth. For instance, President Goodluck Jonathan has suddenly found himself in a bomb blast quagmire with his media managers spinning tales that get them enmeshed further in the mud.

Former military president, Ibrahim Babaginda, has a long hurdle convincing Nigerians of his annulment of the June 12 presidential poll, the suspicion of his administration in the killing of renowned *journalist, Dele Giwa*, and the misappropriation of the \$12billion Gulf oil windfall.

Similar baggage hangs on former vice president, Atiku Abubakar, who is facing mounting opposition from all sides including his home state, Adamawa.

For Onaiwu, being courted by all the frontline politicians, these are matters that can be handled and presented to the Nigerian public without ruckus especially if Nigerians are made to understand the historical imperativeness of the era and circumstances of the issues when these things happened.

He explains that focus should be on re-branding of both party and individuals in a way that is unprecedented in scale and styling, stressing that the Nigerian public should be made to understand that governance is bit of populism and large dosage of eye for the future.

The brand icon, who at present drawing the cream de la cream of the political class and has been variously described as a man of many parts is raising the bar in this election eve with his long standing experience doing business with governors.

He has already raised the bar with his Governor's Mandate Television (GMT), on primetime with major TV networks in the country and ready to go on satellite platform. There is but little doubt that GMT has revolutionised reportage on development projects in states and what governors are doing for their people.

Similarly, he has launched First Ladies Television (FLT), which is dedicated to the humanitarian and pet projects of wives of state governors and is in talks with some foreign First Ladies in the continent to showcase their gesture of humanness.

Before his foray into the TV, he was the first person to launch two fully fledged newspapers, The Democratic Mandate and The Congress, to showcase the activities of state governors: their projects and views. The Congress was dedicated to reporting the legislature, their initiatives and constituency projects.

He is yet on another milestone as he is set to roll out a TV programme, Inside the Niger Delta. The programme is designed to showcase the Niger Delta in its entirety: governments' interventions, NDDC's initiatives, oil companies' activities, individual and communities' efforts in the hub that is home to Nigeria's vast oil resources.

Onaiwu disclosed that the programme is dear to him because he wants to tell the Niger Delta story as has never been told, from the perspective of the people, government and those exploiting for oil and providing other ancillary services.

Sustaining Political Re-Branding, Media Profiling [analysis]

Owing to these programmes of his, an informed commentator described him as the "Governors' Man." This appellation is not misplaced when one takes into cognizance Onaiwu's long standing relationship with many a governor.

A master of Open Hall Meetings and Meet-the-People Fora, Onaiwu, argues that most of the country's politicians are yet to meet those they seek to serve, pointing out that 2011 election is one that requires synergy between the politician and people.

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2010

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## Newswatch - Sad End to a Great News Magazine [column]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

September 19, 2012

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**Length:** 1359 words

**Byline:** Mohammed Haruna

### **Body**

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It did not start newsmagazine journalism in Nigeria. The credit for that must go to the since rested Newbreed, the gutsy biweekly the late, even more gutsy, Chief Chris Okolie published from 1976. But even before Newbreed there was, of course, local magazine journalism. However it was essentially entertainment and soft-sell oriented, led by publications like Drum, imported from South Africa, Spear and Woman's World published by Daily Times of Nigeria under the incomparable late Alhaji Babatunde Jose.

There was, in a sense, news magazine journalism of sorts even before Newbreed. Before Okolie, we had Africa, Afriscope, West Africa, etc. But, except for Afriscope owned by Comrade, now Senator, Uche Chukwumerije, they were all published abroad, mostly from London. They were also monthly and, as their titles suggested, their scope of coverage was continental or sub-continental.

Newswatch may not have started newsmagazine journalism in Nigeria. However, the eternal credit for rediscovering that brand of journalism in the country even before Newbreed was to resume publication in 1987, seven years after the fatal ban military head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, imposed on it in 1978, must go to Newswatch.

Not only did Newswatch rediscover newsmagazine journalism in Nigeria, it was the first to do so as a weekly. It was also the first print medium to be largely owned and controlled by journalists themselves.

The story of how the late **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Mohammed and Dan Agbese, dissatisfied with the integrity and credibility of journalism at their various publications, left to found a weekly news magazine of their own in late 1984 and subsequently publish it from February 28, 1985, has since become the stuff of legends.

By the time the four-some started their magazine they were all household names as journalists, editors and columnists. But as many an accomplished **journalist**, editor and columnist would attest to, their names were not enough to guarantee success. They also needed to work hard, publish and be damned and show clarity and simplicity in how they told and commented on their news stories. For years, week in, week out, they demonstrated all these qualities - and some - in the news and views they published.

Not surprisingly, within months their magazine caught the imagination of the Nigerian reading public and it became the reference point of Nigerian journalism, print and otherwise.

## Newswatch - Sad End to a Great News Magazine [column]

Like all good things, it soon spawned competitors. This week, the Nigerian Economist, Citizen, Tell, The News, Viva, Sentinel, Analyst, Source, TSM, name it, they all joined the fray one after the other. Not to be left behind, the leading newspaper stables of the time, notably Daily Times, Concord and Guardian, all started weekly news magazines of their own.

Over twenty eight years after the founding of Newswatch in 1984, less than a handful of these competitors, notably Tell and The News, have matched the magazine in surviving the rough waters of print journalism in Nigeria.

Naturally those 28 years had not been all smooth sailing for the magazine. Perhaps the most devastated blow against it came pretty early in its life when Dele, its leading founder, was killed in his residence in 1985 by a parcel bomb. This did not deter its remaining founders from staying the course of their investigative style of reporting.

Predictably, however, their style earned them harassments and bans by the various governments of the day. Invariably this affected the magazine's profitability. But even before the bans, one of which lasted all of six months, many of its readers, and even some of its ace reporters, had begun to regard it as less robust in its coverage of news than it was before Dele was killed.

Several of these dissatisfied reporters left to found Tell which gave Newswatch a good run for its money.

Last month, as probably most of us know by now, the inspiring story of Newswatch's brand of journalism and its longevity - at least by our local standard - came to a sad and abrupt end; on August 6, Chief Jimoh Ibrahim, the highly controversial entrepreneur who had bought over 51% of the magazine a little over a year ago, announced the indefinite suspension of the magazine "to reposition it and make it relevant to modern times."

That announcement may have come as a shock to most of the magazine's readers. Certainly it did to its erstwhile owners; at least that was what they said at a press conference they called early this month in reaction to Chief Ibrahim's announcement. "The decision," said Ray on behalf of Yakubu, Dan and Soji Akinrinade who had joined the board after Dele's murder, "came to us as a big shock." Through good times and bad, said Ray, the magazine kept faith with its readers every Monday, except for the period of its ban, throughout those 27 odd years.

If anyone, including Ray and his colleagues, is surprised at Chief Ibrahim's announcement, he shouldn't; unless, of course he is not familiar with, or had chosen to ignore, the widespread controversy that has surrounded the chief's acquisitions from that of Afribank, through his airline whose original owner was Captain Idris Wada, the governor of Kogi State, to NICON Insurance, the erstwhile government insurance company. In each and every one of these cases the original owners must've rued the day they thought the chief was the turn-around entrepreneur to rescue their distressed companies for the benefit of both sides. Instead the chief, apparently a master at playing hard ball, ended laughing all the way to his banks at the expense of the original owners.

At the time the chief seemingly went to the rescue of Newswatch, it was really in dire straits; it owed eight months salaries and allowances to its workers and owed even bigger sums to its printers and suppliers. Perhaps this was what led Ray and his colleagues to grab what looked like a lifeline from the chief. They may also have felt encouraged by the way he seemed to have quickly turned the National Mirror he had bought from another newspaper publisher, Emeka Obasi, into a well printed and high quality national daily.

Whatever may have motivated them to make the chief Newswatch's core investor, with 51% of the magazine's shares, it has since become painfully clear to them that the chief is hardly likely to keep the promise he apparently made to them that he will turn their magazine around. Instead, the "corporate surgery" he has said he will subject the magazine to is almost certain to kill it.

And as if to add salt to their injury, the man has been claiming even more than the 51% shares he'd bought in the original deal. "I own 89 per cent shares of the company," he told Thisday (August 12) the other day. How that was possible when there are other outside shareholders of the magazine that were yet to sell their shares and when he himself could not make up his mind how many shares Ray and his colleagues had owned, he would not say; in one interview with Thisday he said Ray owned only 2%, Dan 1½%, Yakubu 1½% and Akinrinade 1½%, making a total of 4%. Less than a month later, he told the same newspaper the four owned 6.5%. Earlier, a half wrap around

Newswatch - Sad End to a Great News Magazine [column]

advert clearly aimed at embarrassing the four into silence, which his newspaper published on August 15 said the four owned 6.3 % whereas the actual total was 6.38%.

The same advert talked about unissued shares of 89.18%. The chief is yet to disclose when those shares were issued and he bought them in accordance with the company laws of the land.

In retrospect it now seems the chief was never really interested in the survival of Newswatch. Rather it seems he was more interested in the magazine's prime land at Oregun, Lagos. He will, he has said, pull down the property on it and "rebuild it into a world class complex with a printing press."

His less than stellar performance at Air Nigeria and at NICON hardly suggests it will be all for the good of Newswatch and its old shareholders. Trouble is it all seems too late for anyone to save the news magazine which, not so long ago, was the reference point of good professional journalism in Nigeria, perhaps even on the continent and beyond.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2012

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## How to Go to Aba [column]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 18, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 966 words

**Byline:** Michael John

### **Body**

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There is this fancy saying in democracies, which is absolutely true and has been true since the invention of the gun, that "the pen is mightier than the sword." Of course, no one uses the sword anymore for warfare or for security, and it has been banished to the museum and ceremonial occasions. The pen is still very much in use and I bet you I have already used one today or will use it in the course of the day. So the pen is absolutely mightier than the extinct equipment known as the sword, just as the fowl is mightier than the dinosaurs (because they - dinosaurs - do not exist anymore).

Stretch that saying a little more and claim that the "pen is mightier than the gun" and I challenge you to take a trip to Aba, Abia State, Nigeria, armed with a carton of pens and newspapers and see what will happen to you and your miserly pens and newspapers. That is where you will discover that the gun is mightier than the pen - particularly when it is loaded and pointed at you by someone whose finger is on the trigger and the safety catch has been released. Someone who is high on drugs and with slurred speech.

Perhaps, Wahab Oba, chairman of the Lagos State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ); Adolphus Okonkwo, a zonal secretary; Sylvester Okere, secretary of the Lagos State council; and Sola Oyeyipo, a Lagos-based *journalist*, had such fancy ideas that the pen is mightier than the sword, now they are sadder but wiser. They attended the National Executive Council meeting of the NUJ in Uyo and after he addressed the meeting, the Akwa Ibom State Governor, Chief Godswill Obot Akpabio, offered all of them air tickets back home. Mr Aniekan Umanah, Information Commissioner, claimed he gave them a travel ban, and warned them to fly and not to pass through areas which they could run into kidnappers. In case you miss the point, Aba is now like a cross between Afghanistan and Iraq. The kidnap rate of persons in expensive cars is like one every half an hour - which ranks it with Iraq shortly after the American invasion.

But like you know, journalists are trained to be curious and to tread where angels fear. Many have died in wars (of course you remember the dear colleagues who died in Liberia and the ones killed in Nigeria by gunmen and rioters), and passing through Aba was to them part of the professional hazard. Armed with their pens they set out on the journey to Lagos intending to pass through Aba. At Aba the kidnappers who had since seized the local government from Governor Theodore Orji of Abia State struck and abducted them.

I do not blame the journalists because if they had been witness to a little innocuous debate the week before their trip in our newsroom, they would have known better. Someone from Abia State, by the name of Emeka, was involved in an argument with Hassan, an indigene of Kaduna. Emeka complained about the fuel situation and was

## How to Go to Aba [column]

angry that an oil refinery was sited in Kaduna even though Kaduna does not have an iota of crude oil. Hassan laughed and said "What about your state? You even have a police commissioner in Abia State even though you have no iota of security, particularly in Aba!!!" Emeka had no answer to that. I believe that if it were in the days of Gani Fawehinmi (bless his soul), he would have sued the Federal Government for not issuing a travel ban to Nigerians not to go to Aba or pass through the town.

Indigenes of the crime-plagued town are claiming that if it were in the days of the Bakassi Boys the situation would have been controlled. But some opinions have it that it is the Bakassi Boys who are fighting back and creating the madness. Whatever the case, journalists are not money bags and kidnapping journalists and asking for N30 million ransom is a huge joke in news rooms. The combined assets of all the journalists (including their pensions and gratuities) may not reach that amount.

But the kidnappers have proved once again that a loaded gun is mightier than the pen. The military dictatorships proved it with the killing of **Dele Giwa**, Bagauda Kaltho and a host of others. Now some bandits have decided to also prove that a gun whether in the hands of the Directorate of Military Intelligence, the Strike Force or a kidnapper is still mightier than the pen.

Jumping like a cat on hot bricks, the Federal Government has scampered from one statement to another to dissociate itself from and condemn the incident of kidnapping. I sympathise with them and urge them to simply legalise kidnapping and tax it out of business. Kidnappers should pay tax on their loot and declare their assets. After all, when policemen stand at check points and extort money from you, is that not some kind of gratuitous "kidnapping?" And come to think of it, these policemen are very smart! They would pick a spot and stand there from January till December so that if you are a kidnapper, you would know the road to take and evade them. This is policing by positional advertisement - you advertise your positions for safety reasons.

In countries abroad, policemen rove around in squad cars, and if they mount check points they move it around at short notices so that you cannot predict on which route they may be. Not the brave Nigeria Police (who would rather advertise on radio or television, the routes they intend to be on, if they had the money and budget for it) than set itself on a course of collision with the men of the underworld.

I deeply sympathise with these journalists and I hereby issue a travel ban to all my readers not to pass through Aba. But if you are from there, you can still go - but please park your car at the boundary of Aba, hire an old rusty motorcycle or Volkswagen Beetle car (70's model) and ride home. Kidnappers do not abduct men on rusty old motorcycles or Beetle cars, according to research.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2010

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## **Nigerian Press Under Fire From Military Leaders**

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

May 22, 1996, Wednesday

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**Section:** OPINION/ESSAYS; Pg. 19

**Length:** 907 words

**Byline:** Josh Arinze; Josh Arinze, a former assistant editor with Nigeria's Tell magazine, is a Hubert H. Humphrey fellow at the College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park.

**Highlight:** Routinely, newspapers are closed and journalists imprisoned

### **Body**

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For much of the world, last November's execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nigerian writer and minority-rights activist, was a jarring wake-up call. With the exception of Nigerians and a handful of people abroad who had bothered to follow events in Africa's most populous country, few saw it coming.

The hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight others, which followed an unfair murder trial, drew universal condemnation. It also managed to attract international attention to the excesses of Nigeria's current bunch of military rulers -- the very attention Saro-Wiwa and many other human rights campaigners had been striving to attract for almost 10 years.

But for now, much less is being said about the military regime's determined attempt to destroy Nigeria's feisty independent press. It would be a tragedy if the outside world were to wait to hear of hangings of editors and reporters before taking a resolute stand in support of journalists in Nigeria.

The Nigerian press once had a well-deserved reputation as Africa's freest and boldest. Some of the boldness is still there, but the freedom is all but gone. Too bad, because in a proud history that has spanned 137 years, the press in Nigeria has been at the center of the nation's life, through war and peace, joy and sorrow.

The Nigerian press has survived harrowing economic downturns, closures, arrests, and state-sponsored murder. It has also survived harsh military decrees in a nation that has been ruled by soldiers for 26 of its 36 years since independence. But now it is fighting for its life. For the independent press in Nigeria, the period since Gen. Sani Abacha seized power in November 1993 has been the worst since the nation's first newspaper was published in 1859. (Nigeria's military strongmen have no problems with the many government-owned media; these say only what the government wants to hear.)

Unfettered press? Not true

Looking at the newsstands, a visitor to Nigeria might assume the press is unfettered. That's because newspapers and magazines that refuse to trumpet the official line are available. But what's not seen are the daily risks Nigerian journalists take to produce such stories and the sacrifices they make.

## Nigerian Press Under Fire From Military Leaders

Nigeria's military rulers point to the very existence of some independent publications as "evidence" that the Nigerian press is free. What they never tell the world is that many of the journalists working for these publications are under constant surveillance by government security agents. They never talk about the editors they have jailed, nor the reporters and photographers that police have beaten up on the job.

They never mention their list of "troublesome journalists," who are not allowed to travel abroad because when they do, these journalists tend to give their foreign colleagues firsthand accounts of their plight. It would make no sense, of course, for Nigeria's military leaders to tell the truth about why they fight the independent press. At a time when most sectors of civil society have been bought by - or surrendered to - the military, the press is often the only institution maintaining an articulate stand for the rule of law and freedom of expression.

### Support for struggling journalists

The press stands as a barrier to the military's total control over what should be an exemplary nation. Dictators hate such barriers. That was why General Abacha hanged Saro-Wiwa, in spite of strong international opposition. And it is why the Nigerian press needs all the support it can get in its struggle to survive the meanest dictatorship the country has ever known.

Closing down newspapers and magazines and detaining journalists are commonplace in Nigeria. But a new threshold was crossed in October 1986, when Dele Giwa, editor in chief of Newswatch, an independent newsmagazine, was killed by a letter bomb apparently delivered by members of the Nigerian intelligence services. Though such a blatant example of murder hasn't occurred in a journalist's home since, government harassment of Nigerian journalists has grown steadily worse.

Many news organizations have been closed repeatedly, sometimes for more than a year. Such closures have caused some publications to go under. Between June and August 1994, three different media companies were banned by decree. This put more than 15 publications out of circulation for more than a year. Some have still not reopened.

Currently, four Nigerian journalists are serving 15-year sentences, allegedly for complicity in a March 1995 coup plot against the Abacha regime. The journalists are George Mbah of Tell magazine, Christine Anyanwu of The Sunday Magazine, Ben-Charles Obi of Weekend Classique, and Kunle Ajibade of The News. None of the four has ever been involved with the Nigerian armed forces. But the Abacha regime, claiming that they played a role in the coup, railroaded them through a special military tribunal last July and put them in some of Nigeria's harshest prisons.

Since then, the antipress campaign has escalated. In December, more than 100,000 copies of Tell were seized, and Nosa Igiebor, the magazine's editor in chief, was arrested. (He remains in jail.) There were arson attacks on the offices of two independent news organizations, and in February, gunmen nearly killed a newspaper publisher. These attacks are believed to be the work of government security agents.

If the Abacha regime wins its war against the press, the march of jackboot despotism in Nigeria might never end.

**Load-Date:** May 22, 1996



## Soyinka's demonization of Jonathan

The Sun (Nigeria)

December 21, 2014 Sunday

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**Length:** 1186 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

### **Body**

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BY DAN AMOR Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, Tuesday December 2, attacked President Goodluck Jonathan and likened him to Nebuchadnezzar, the Biblical autocrat and king of Babylon who initially denounced the Living Supreme God. Soyin-ka, who addressed a press conference on the state of the nation at the popular Freedom Garden in Lagos, said that [...]

BY DAN AMOR

Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, Tuesday December 2, attacked President Goodluck Jonathan and likened him to Nebuchadnezzar, the Biblical autocrat and king of Babylon who initially denounced the Living Supreme God. Soyin-ka, who addressed a press conference on the state of the nation at the popular Freedom Garden in Lagos, said that Jonathan is tyrannical because the Inspector General of Police, Suleiman Abba, stopped the attempt by the defected speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal, to enter the Green Chamber of the National Assembly with thugs.

The respected professor of dramatic literature who appears to be in current alignment with top leaders of the opposition political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), said so many unprintable things against the administration of President Jonathan.

Indeed, the distinguished play-wright is entitled to his opinion especially in a wide democratic space in which freedom of association and of speech is the norm. But, it is unfortunate that the re-known literary icon could allow his judgment to be clouded by ahistorical considerations. By this recent act of likening Jonathan to Nebuchadnezzar, Soyinka has come down from his Olympian height as a global citizen.. It is a pointer to the fact that every great intellectual has his weak points. Our own Kongi is no exception.. Even with the unsavory political

### Soyinka's demonization of Jonathan

development in Anambra State in 2004 which led to the unfortunate withdrawal of the security personnel of former Governor Chris Ngige after his attempted abduction by the police, no Nigerian, not even Professor Chinua Achebe who rejected former President Olusegun Obasanjo's national award due to that crisis, went as far as comparing the former President with Nebuchadnezzar.

For the benefit of the reader who might not know the ancient/biblical story, Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who reigned c. 605BC-562BC. He was said to have constructed the Hanging Gardens of Babylon (now Iraq) and the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar II was the fourth king of the Second Dynasty of Isin and Fourth Dynasty of Babylon who ruled for 23 years.

One very notorious fact about him is that Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize the existence of the God of heaven and was basically tyrannical. But, he later bowed to and worshipped God when he saw the efficacy of God's mysterious powers as demonstrated by Daniel the young Jewish believer. Given Jonathan's antecedent and pedigree as a faithful adherent of the tenets of the word of God whose administration strictly adheres to the fundamental principles of the rule of law, Soyinka's attempt to demonize him is wicked and unacceptable. In the light of the above statement that Nebuchadnezzar did not know God and the reality that Soyinka does not believe in the God of heaven, Soyinka and Jonathan, who is like Nebuchadnezzar?

Every discerning Nigerian who can read between the lines knows where Soyinka is coming from. His recent outburst is yet another pure political statement meant to rattle the President and sway the sympathy of Nigerians from his administration. Suddenly every-one who thinks he has something to say has now turned to a primary school headmaster wielding a big stick to whip the leader of the world's largest Black Country.

"Jonathan Bashing" is the name of the game. Soyinka who relishes controversy, who enjoys being primed in the fantasy of the media has cooked another meal to attract acclamation. But, the applause he received in Lagos in the name of Jonathan-bashing to humour Nigerians was a soured one. It is a grand, though disingenuous alibi not only for parrying the barbs of those who see him as hobnobbing with the opposition, but also a ploy to curry favour from Nigerians for those who vowed to make the country ungovernable and still planning to form a parallel government if Jonathan wins in 2015.

Of course, Soyinka has always engaged in political (mis)adventures and intellectual overbearingness. Yet, it is unthinkable that Soyinka is now on the side of the feudal forces still determined to keep Nigeria in perpetual medieval servitude. Without necessarily allying to his rapport with the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida whom he described as an autocrat soon after IBB refused to grant their (he, Achebe and J. P. Clark) petition to spare the life of the poet/soldier Mamman Vatsa, and he burnt his fingers, Soyinka has not always been ideologically so refined as to escape the crudity of the orthodox left. In spite of everything, those of us, his younger admirers, still manage to ask ourselves: why did Soyinka abandon his search for the killers of Dele Giwa, the colourful Nigerian journalist who was bombed in his study on October 19, 1986?

As a renowned statesman and global citizen, Soyinka's words should act as a soothing balm which would heal this troubled land of ours instead of taking sides in petty partisan showmanship thereby heating up the polity. It is amply absolutely absurd and anti-intellectual for Soyinka to circulate that a man like Jonathan, who cannot hurt a fly, who is so mild and apolitical that even the opposition branded him "clueless" is worse than Nebuchadnezzar. If the truth be told, just as Jonathan has dwarfed the achievements of past administrations in terms of infra-structure, so also are his achievements in the area of fundamental human rights. Jonathan is the most abused and attacked President in the annals of this country, and if not for his humane temperament, Nigeria would have been worse than Sudan by now.

Yet, how many Nigerians or even his political opponents are unjustly harassed or languishing in gaol? How many are reported killed as a result of political vendetta or envenomization? How on earth would a man like Jonathan be branded an autocrat, not even by those who have an open agenda to pull him down but by a respected international figure such as Soyinka who claims to be the conscience of humanity and yet hobnobbing with corrupt politicians?

### Soyinka's demonization of Jonathan

Why has Soyinka not condemned this eerie act of déjà vu called political defection, which is being used to tear the country apart by politicians of all shades? How right can Soyinka be if he does not frown at the opposition taking up arms against the Jonathan administration as they are gradually doing? Why would the police allow Tambuwal to invade the National Assembly with political thugs? When has thuggery become constitutional because it favors a particular political party that has the support of the Nobel laureate? Nigerians of goodwill should condemn Soyinka's attempt to demonize President Jonathan.

.Amor is an Abuja-based journalist and public affairs analyst.

**Load-Date:** December 21, 2014

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## Access to Information and Transparency

This Day (Lagos)

October 07, 2013

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**Length:** 1564 words

**Byline:** Femi Falana

### **Body**

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It would be recalled that the colonial regime did not recognise the fundamental rights of Nigerians to freedom of expression. In particular, divulging of information about the government was a serious criminal offence under the Official Secrets Ordinance. It attracted 14 years imprisonment without an option of fine. The making of seditious statement or publication was also a crime under the Criminal Code. Indeed, truth was not a defence or justification to the charge of sedition.

The situation did not change when the country gained political independence from the British colonial autocracy in 1960. Even though a bill of rights was contained in the Constitution, the right of Nigerians to access information was not recognised. As if that was not enough, the military adventurers who seized power in 1966 put fundamental rights in abeyance and enacted other decrees to deny Nigerians access to information. Newspaper houses were shut down at will while journalists and public commentators were detained under preventive detention decrees.

In Arthur Nwankwo v. The State (1985) 6 NCLR 228 at 252, the governorship candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in the 1983 general election was charged with sedition for publishing unauthorised public documents. He was convicted and sentenced to one year imprisonment. The conviction and sentence were however set aside by the Court of Appeal. In his contribution to the judgment of the court, Olatawura JCA (as he then was) held:

"I have taken pains in reading the whole of this book which contains letters which emanated from the Government House. These may be the 'innocuous' ones referred to by the learned Attorney-General. After a cool reflection and sober reading of the entire book the subject matter of this appeal I have come to the conclusion that the publication is not seditious."

In 1984, two journalists - Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor - of the Guardian Newspaper were jailed under the Public Officer (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No 4 of 1984 for unauthorised publication of the list of ambassadors. A prominent journalist, Dele Giwa, was suspected to have obtained information on a drug courier fronting for the wife of a top military chief. He was parcel bombed in gruesome circumstances on October 19, 1986. The gallant efforts of Chief Gani Fawehinmi to unravel the mystery surrounding Giwa's ruthless assassination almost cost him his own life.

The June 12, 1993 presidential election which was adjudged the freest election in Nigeria was annulled by the Ibrahim Babangida junta. The nationwide demand for official information and confirmation of the winner of the election was rejected. Following the protests which greeted the annulment, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Dr. Beko

## Access to Information and Transparency

Ransome-Kuti and I were arrested in Lagos and taken to Abuja where we were charged with incitement and unlawful assembly. Many other pro-democracy activists were detained without trial while over 200 protesters were killed.

In 1995 and 1997, some leading journalists, Mrs. Chris Anyanwu, Kunle Ajibade, George Mbah and Ben Charles-Obi, were tried for treasonable offences and sentenced to life imprisonment for exposing the phantom coup de tat stage managed by the regime. They were prosecuted for being accessories after the fact of treason. The offence for which they were convicted arose from publications which were not authorised by the military oligarchy.

Before then, The News and TELL had resorted to guerilla journalism when they were proscribed for publishing accurate information on wanton corruption that had been institutionalised under the kleptomaniac junta. Bagauda Kaltho, the northern correspondent of The News/Tempo Magazines' was bombed out of existence. Apart from a copy of "The Man Died" written by Professor Wole Soyinka allegedly found on him, the **journalist** was bombed beyond recognition. Many other journalists were held without trial for publishing information obtained from government sources without official approval.

Under the 1999 Constitution, the mass media is required to uphold the fundamental objectives of the state and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. Accordingly, the Freedom of Information Bill (FOI) was submitted to the National Assembly in July 1999. It was passed by both chambers of the National Assembly in 2007 but vetoed by President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was again passed in 2011 and signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan on May 28, 2011.

The essence of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is to open up the government to the society, promote transparency and accountability in public life. Thus, the law has recognised the right of every citizen to be given access to any record under the control of the government or public institution. The law is also applicable to private institutions which utilise public funds, perform public functions or provide basic services. Private organisations like telecommunications companies and other public-quoted companies fall into this category. Religious bodies may also be asked to disclose information with respect to funds collected from men and women of questionable character in the society.

The law requires public officers to keep the records of the government. They shall be made available upon demand by interested members of the public including the media. Gone are the days when civil servants could refuse to disclose information to the public. The reason for demand for information is immaterial.

Under section 2(2) thereof an applicant is not required to give any reason or demonstrate any specific interest in the information. An applicant is required to apply for access to information in writing and to provide sufficient detail in the application. An oral application is not allowed under the law.

Upon the receipt of a written request, the information shall be provided within seven days. The request shall be attended to by the head of the organisation. If a letter is wrongly addressed to any department, it shall be forwarded to the appropriate office as the case may be. Where information is withheld, it shall be communicated to the applicant within seven days and he shall be informed that he has a right to challenge the refusal in court. An application for mandamus to compel disclosure shall be heard summarily to prevent delay. An applicant who has been denied access to requested information is at liberty to apply to the court for a review of the matter within 30 days after the denial.

There are adequate provisions for the information needs of illiterate and physically-challenged people to access information. It is also important to note that there is protection for whistle blowers. An applicant may be requested to pay reasonable standard charge for search, duplication and transcription. But where the information is in the public interest payment is not required.

The government is required to publish in the Gazette a description of its responsibilities, the records under its control, administrative manuals etc. Information can be sought from any government department. Public institutions are compelled to keep records and information and organise them in a way that they can be accessed. The Act

## Access to Information and Transparency

requires government and public institutions to provide training for officials on the public's right to access information of public records.

The law has created reporting obligations on compliance with the law for all institutions affected by it. These reports are to be submitted annually to the office of Attorney-General of the Federation who in turn is required to oversee the effective implementation of the Act and report on the execution of implementation of the Act to the National Assembly.

If it is proved that information has been altered or destroyed by a public officer or any person, he shall be liable to be tried and if convicted, he shall be sentenced to a year imprisonment. However, sections 29 and 30 have provided immunity for public officers from civil or criminal prosecution for disclosing information without authorisation.

The exception to the FOIA includes information that could compromise national security, the conduct of international affairs, records that could expose trade secrets, test questions, architectural engineering designs, research materials under preparation, legal practitioner - client relationship, health worker - patient relationship and journalists' confidential source of information.

The disclosure of personal information is also exempted except where the person involved agrees to its disclosure or where the information is already publicly available, or where the disclosure is in the public interest. For instance, members of the public are empowered by the Electoral Act 2010 to seek information with respect to nomination forms submitted by candidates who are contesting elections in Nigeria.

Under the Money Laundering Act 2004, it is a criminal offence for lawyers not to disclose information obtained from their clients in respect of certain suspicious. The law has destroyed the age long lawyer/client confidentiality. The Official Secrets Act and other laws cannot be invoked to prevent the disclose of official information. This is the purport of section 2(b) of the FOIA which has guaranteed access to official information notwithstanding anything contained in other law or regulation.

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2013

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Review: Fiction: Out of the shadows: A passionate first novel that emerges victorious against all the odds:  
Waiting for an Angel by Helon Habila 226pp, Hamish H....



**Review: Fiction: Out of the shadows: A passionate first novel that emerges  
victorious against all the odds: Waiting for an Angel by Helon Habila 226pp,  
Hamish Hamilton, pounds 12.99**

The Guardian (London)

October 26, 2002

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**Section:** Guardian Saturday Pages, Pg. 26

**Length:** 1109 words

**Byline:** Maya Jaggi

## **Body**

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In Helon Habila's powerful first novel, the *journalist* and poet Lomba is warned by a colleague that, even if he finishes the novel he is writing in longhand by candlelight in a Lagos slum, no one will publish it. "Here in this country our dreams are never realised," says Lomba. "Someone always contrives to turn them into a nightmare." Waiting for an Angel , written in similar circumstances and focused partly on the predicament of writers in a country such as Nigeria, faced that oblivion. But the author self-published a section of it, which then won Britain's Caine prize for African writing last year. He was taken on by a major literary agency in London, and his book sold to Penguin's Simon Prosser, editor of Zadie Smith and WG Sebald.

Few of Habila's Nigerian contemporaries can hope for such a break, inside or outside the country. At independence in 1960, its literature was thriving, led by the father of the African novel in English, Chinua Achebe (his 1958 Things Fall Apart is one of the most widely read novels of the 20th century), Wole Soyinka (the 1986 Nobel laureate) and Cyprian Ekwensi. British publishers thirsted for innovative writing from the former colonies. Imprints such as Heinemann's African Writers Series (whose first 100 titles Achebe oversaw) had both a presence in Africa and distribution in the west.

In the 1980s, economic downturn and rapacious military rule conspired to halt the boom in Nigeria. Successive multinational publishers pulled out of the country as the naira plummeted, putting books out of the reach of an already tiny readership. Nigerian publishing houses dwindled, their interests largely confined to textbooks, vanity memoirs (as of army top-brass) and romantic pulp, exemplified by a Mills-and-Boon type outfit known to Lagos wags as "Thrills and Boom". Writers such as Habila have resorted to paying what are essentially printers, where both quality control and distribution are non-existent. Meanwhile, though foreign publishers have embraced Nigerian writers living abroad, notably the Booker Prize-winner Ben Okri, their active curiosity about those in Nigeria has clearly waned.

Judging by Habila's sombre, gripping and at times humorous novel, this is a pity. Cleverly constructed in seven parts, it deftly moves back in time from a period after military rule has ended. The linchpin, Lomba, "slim, of average

Review: Fiction: Out of the shadows: A passionate first novel that emerges victorious against all the odds:  
*Waiting for an Angel* by Helon Habila 226pp, Hamish H....

height and inquisitive of gaze", is first encountered through prison diaries that echo Soyinka's classic memoir of the 1960s, *The Man Died*

Though the circumstances of Lomba's political detention become clear only towards the end, he gradually emerges as a college drop-out whose best friend went mad as the army clamped down on student protests. His great love married a rich man to pay for her mother's cancer treatment. Forced to put aside his novel, he wrote on arts and culture for a magazine, but was informed by its editor that "everything is political". As their offices were destroyed in an arson attack for accusing the military dictator of squandering millions, the editor faced arrest or exile.

Among other characters in Lomba's Lagos neighbourhood of "Poverty Street" are Kela, a 15-year-old boy packed off to an aunt in Lagos for smoking dope in his father's car; Kela's teacher, Joshua, in love with a former pupil turned prostitute, and inspirational leader of residents' protests; Nancy, a young single mother who finds release in covering the walls with graffiti; and Kela's Auntie Rachel, owner of Godwill food centre, whose husband died fighting the Biafrans in the civil war, and whose second suitor was burnt to death as a suspected "northerner" during riots sparked by the annulling of presidential elections in 1993.

Auntie Rachel, a drinker, "dreamt backwards, groping back to a time dissolved, to figures blurred in the astigmatic lens of history". The novel's own hallucinatory reeling back in time slowly reveals how these characters are linked, culminating in a fatal demonstration that Lomba has been assigned to cover, but which is brutally quashed.

Fiction and historical fact are intertwined (a character named Helon Habila appears briefly at a literary gathering raided by "sojas"). Incidents during the corrupt military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida and the even greater terror of Sani Abacha are taken out of sequence: Babangida's annulling of the elections and imprisonment of the apparent victor, Moshood Abiola; the coup that brought Abacha to power; the hanging of the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa; the killing by letter bomb of the *journalist Dele Giwa*; and the assassination of Abiola's widow, Kudirat. "The bodies keep piling up." The author describes the feeling of "living with guns to our heads" in an afterword - often a questionable device in fiction, yet perhaps justified for a non-Nigerian readership.

In realist vein, the novel's artistry is manifest in the mordant strength and clarity of its language, and its compelling structure. Though the strands are satisfactorily gathered up, each section resembles a short story. In the first, Lomba is inveigled by a prison superintendent, with the promise of books and writing materials, into penning love poems to a schoolteacher the crude officer wishes to woo. But allusions and clues he drops into the poems (in one case plagiarising Sappho), reveal his identity to her. Other episodes are set in a Lagos of curfews and interminable petrol queues, where thieves are set alight, and women make firewood by hacking up wooden billboards advertising condoms - a hint that warnings about Aids are still going unheeded.

The power of literature, and writing under repression, are implicit themes. Lomba, taken to visit the old slave port of Badagry on the Atlantic coast, recoils at the "gewgaws of slavery", which include the mouth lock. "Every oppressor knows that wherever one word is joined to another, there'll be revolt."

The title refers to a man in a Lagos bar defying the curfew after martial music on the radio has signalled a coup, in effect awaiting his own death. It could equally suggest the writer, and his society, waiting for salvation. There are several layers of irony in a woman's cynical advice to Lomba: "You must try and get arrested - that's the quickest way to make it as a poet. You'll have no problem with visas after that, you might even get an international award." While it would be heartening to see this novel as a harbinger of a literary renaissance, as things stand we are left wondering what other sparkling manuscripts might be left behind in the dust.

To order *Waiting for an Angel* for pounds 10.99 plus p&p call the Guardian book service on 0870 066 7979.

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2002



## Abuja Bomb Blasts And 2011 Elections [analysis]

Leadership (Abuja)

October 9, 2010 Saturday

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**Length:** 2352 words

**Byline:** Chika Otuchikere

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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The country may have effectively gained entry into the world's ignoble chart of countries where bomb blasting terrorists have successfully penetrated to prosecute their evil inclinations and turn people's lives into one big living hell.

Before now, the country was loath to be identified as a terrorist nation. Even when a Nigerian national, 17-year-old Mutallab was arrested in faraway United States of America, on allegations that he attempted to detonate a bomb inside an aircraft conveying nearly three hundred persons, Nigeria disassociated herself from the dastardly action, preferring not to be described as a terrorist nation.

The country rather exonerated herself by saying that the young man had been groomed abroad and so could have imbibed the strange culture of suicide bombing from outside Nigeria. In their view, bombing, or the more evil suicide bombing, is not a part of the African culture. Following Mutallab's action and other incidents of militant attacks and the cases of terror unleashed by ethno-religious militia groups like the Boko Haram, the USA promptly included the country's name on the reprehensible list of countries to watch with regards to terrorism.

This action by the US government jolted the Nigerian government, which then was having a tough time grappling with her intractable security lapses, especially with the rampant incidences of kidnapping. The Nigerian government, however, fought tooth and nail to get the country's name off the terror watch list. But now, not too long after the country was given a clean bill of health in terms of terrorism and her name wiped out from the terror watch list, the country may as well have gained re-enlistment as one of the countries not to ignore where terrorism is concerned.

Last week's bombing of strategic locations in the country's Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, which resulted in the death of over 12 persons and injuring of over 30 others, may have signalled the dawn of a new but dreadful dimension to the country's security upheavals. Although many close watchers of the country's predatory political turf were quick to point out that Nigerians had a foretaste of the gravity of death by bombing during the Ibrahim Babangida military era with the parcel bomb blasting to death of one of Nigeria's foremost and finest writers and journalists, **Dele Giwa**, according to them, the mere fact that **Dele Giwa** case went unresolved was an ominous indication that it was only a matter of time before death by bomb blast would become a part of the country's catalogue of violent crimes. Nobody though, would have envisioned the dimension.

## Abuja Bomb Blasts And 2011 Elections [analysis]

With the 2011 general elections just around the corner and frenetic politicking already sweeping across the length and breadth of the land, the general feeling, as expressed by members of the political class, the civil society and even stalwarts of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who spoke with LEADERSHIP WEEKEND, is that the infamous October 1 bomb blasts near the Eagles Square venue of the Independence celebration, an event which had 15 heads of state of friendly nations in attendance, is only a warning signal and a graphic picture of what Nigerians may expect from now through to the conduct of the elections.

In their own view, the 2011 elections may be doomed, especially against the backdrop of the recent accusations and counter-accusation between the incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan and the camp of former military president, Ibrahim Babangida both of whom have heaped the blame for the bomb attack at each other's doorsteps. According to many, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, what both parties are doing is taking glory and indulging in some cheap publicity through the national tragedy.

Another insinuation the war of words between the president's camp and the IBB camp revealed they said, was some sort of subtle boasting that both parties have the capacity to make the country ungovernable if things do not go their way, and would not hesitate to go to any length to show how powerful and brutal they can be if pushed to the wall.

Coordinator of the Emancipate Nigeria Group (ENG), a social political organisation, Miss Cordelia Samuel, in her reaction to the October 1 bomb attacks and the subsequent trading of blame by two of the ruling party's key aspirants who have already coughed out N15 million for the party's presidential nomination forms, noted that 2011 has taken on a violent dimension which may never be arrested, because of the calibre of the persons involved. According to her, the situation is made more frightening, because the players involved in what she called a "game of death" over the 2011 presidency, were persons of immense influence who could be said to be above the law and so, unstoppable. She pointed out that the stage for the disintegration of the country had been set.

"If you ask me what I think of the Oct 1 bomb attack, I will say that it is the latest introduction to the weapons of denying the Nigerian masses the freedom they have long sought. There are so many ways one can look at it, but it is enough to say that the bomb blasts cannot in any way be distanced from the forthcoming 2011 elections. Why are these people so wicked to this country? They are just crazy about power, not because they want to use the power for the purpose it is used in this present, civilised world.

To eradicate corruption and ensure that corrupt politicians do not get anywhere near the federal or state government houses, those who, over the years have been fingered in corruption related activities no matter how powerful they are, should be subdued and locked up in jail where they should ordinarily spend the rest of their lives and be denied the loot they stole.

"The president accused his opponents of masterminding the blast which reports claim killed 25 persons and injured scores of others. The opponent this time, former military president Ibrahim Babangida, who had earlier accused the federal government of attempting to assassinate his campaign director general, Africa Independent Television owner, Chief Raymond Dokpesi retorted by accusing the president of ineptitude and inexperience. He said that the bomb blast was a clear indication that he was not in control of the country's security. Reading between the lines, there is no doubt that both or either of them could have done it to implicate the other.

"With the introduction of this ugly incident, 2011 has already been marred because nobody in his right mind would go near any polling centre when he is not sure of the next target of bombers. The government has to do something urgently".

A senior police officer who spoke on the condition of anonymity pointed out that the police could not have stopped the bomb blasts. According to him, apart from the constraint of poor equipment especially for surveillance, with the situation where important positions are not given to officers purely based on merit but rather considerations such as ethnicity, zoning and favouritism which, he said can never promote professionalism, there is no way the country would be secured.

### Abuja Bomb Blasts And 2011 Elections [analysis]

"Politics has been brought into sensitive agencies of government such as the police, the military and many other organs of government. There is therefore no way efficiency and professionalism would not be thrown overboard. Nigerians are dying everyday from lack of security in the system and yet the people who are supposed to know the right thing to do are folding their arms and allowing the rot to continue. You brought Ogonnaya Onovo less than one year ago and suddenly, you removed him, simply because you don't want the army chief you were planning to appoint and the police chief to be from the same geo-political region.

" The question they did not ask is, did he show signs that he has what it takes to be police IG of a country of our size before he was summarily sacrificed on the altar of expediency? I am not saying that Onovo was good or bad. I am saying that you don't handle the nation's security that way. We can never achieve anything that way. Yes, during his short stint the nation experienced embarrassing situations with the Boko Haram thing and the spate of kidnappings, but the environment which created those things preceded his coming. Okay, look at another scenario. Barely a few weeks after Rimgim was appointed IG, the biggest embarrassment the nation has ever experienced occurred. Why did the president not sack him for that? But of course the president knows that it was beyond Rimgim.

"The point I'm making is that in the police force, we must enthronize professionalism. A police force where all officers, no matter their state or region of origin, would be non-partisan at all times; a police force that is motivated to do the work. Do you realize that when you deny officers promotion simply because they come from certain regions, you are making bitterness to swell inside them? And when they have the opportunity to vent their anger it could have disastrous consequences.

"Today, it is no longer a secret that officers also belong to political parties and of course most of them are with the ruling party. Of course you know also that in the PDP, which is the ruling party, there are many 'heavyweights'. These officers also take sides with the one they think is the 'highest bidder'. This is because professionalism has been destroyed in the police, which I blame the military for.

" The 2011 general election is almost here and you are aware of the role the police should play to ensure a free and fair election, but I can tell you that the police is not free and so cannot be fair. I can assure you that desperate politicians would make use of the politicians among the police to attempt to have their way, but let us see how far that would go.

"I cannot say whether the police actually got a warning message that the bombs were going to explode on October 1. I cannot say also whether the IG got any such message and did not act on it like you have insinuated. But whatever is the true picture, an investigation should be able to unfold. The fact remains that we are highly constrained as an organization and the politicians have made complete rubbish of us. Just like the military made the police ineffective during the military era, causing the force to abandon its age-old professionalism and integrity.

"Today, people are in the police for what they can get. There are some professions where you cannot be there just for what you can get; you have a responsibility to serve. The police, journalists, the military and teachers are supposed to be of that ilk, but it is not so in Nigeria. Today, we have experienced a bomb attack; we are sure it will not end with only that one", he said.

In a reaction statement to the October 1 bombing entitled 'Sad News: Bombing in Nigeria, A Worrying Sign, What Next for Nigeria?', Erstwhile US ambassador to Nigeria, Robin Sanders, still assuming that the attack was the handiwork of the Movement For the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, (MEND) stated, "On what should have been a day of reflection and recognition of its 50th anniversary on October 1, the capital of Nigeria, Abuja, was rocked by two car bombs, killing at least 12 people. First sympathies go out to the nation, and to the families of all those who lost their lives and were injured in this terrible bomb blast.

" Current reports are that elements of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, better known as MEND (a loose umbrella organization of militants and militant groups) perpetrated this act to underscore the issues in the oil-rich Niger Delta Region. Peaceful political and civil society groups have highlighted over many, many years the need to end corruption of oil wealth and to increase development in all sectors (education, health,

## Abuja Bomb Blasts And 2011 Elections [analysis]

agriculture) in the Niger Delta as well as the right of the Niger Deltans to have more say and influence in how resources and profits from the oil wealth are used to help improve the lives of those living in the Region.

"MEND is not known to have been a totally cohesive group in the past, with a singular leader, but more of a loose affiliation of different militant interests. It is unclear now with this attack, which certainly would have required detailed planning and strategies, whether the affiliation has or is morphing into something different from the loose associations of the past of various militant interests.

"In addition since the amnesty for militants in 2009 and despite all the many problems with truly implementing the amnesty rehabilitation program with more consistent progress on training opportunities for militants, militant-related violence had diminished somewhat in the Region. This car bomb attack in the capital presents a new and worrying trend for Nigeria that we all need to pay attention to and work to bring those who perpetrated the act to justice.

"No one doubts the legitimate issues in the region, but we all must assist the nation in addressing and correcting these issues in the Niger Delta Region by supporting both political and civil society groups who want to make changes in the Region and improve its development and use of resources but through peaceful means," she said.

But for the rather hasty interjection of the presidency concerning the perpetrators of the heinous crime, Nigerians would have also concluded that the incident had no political undertone. However, in the minds of Nigerians, there is no way the bomb blast would be divorced from the coming election. Already, politicians are deploying all the 'weapons' in their arsenal to prosecute the election which has taken a warlike posture.

As Dele Abiodun, a journalist put it, "Jonathan started it off by pointing an accusing finger at his political opponents for a bomb blast that MEND had already taken responsibility for. He politicised the bomb blast from the word go; he then proceeded to get his SSS boys to arrest his political opponent's campaign director, because they said Henry Okah's phone call log implicated the AIT chairman." We are watching to see how this story will end.

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2010

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## Onukaba: 'I am the hope of my people'

Business Day

May 3, 2017 Wednesday

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Length: 1601 words

### **Body**

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I met him for the first time in April 2001. It was at the office of Mr. Chris Mammah, the ebullient special assistant (Media) to the then Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. However, the reputation of Dr. Adinoyi Ojo Onukaba preceded the meeting. I had known of him for about two decades. As an undergraduate at the University of Ibadan in the late 1980s when holding a copy of The Guardian was a sort of status symbol, Onukaba's reports in the newspaper were a joy to read. He brought drama into reporting.

His ability to do a compelling story, for instance, out of the refusal of General Olusegun Obasanjo to grant him an interview was truly ingenious. Then came the breaking news of the controversial suitcases cleared from the Murtala Muhammed Airport during the change of national currency by the military government. Onukaba created a niche for himself as a man at the forefront of the theatre of history as that episode remains a reference point in the undercurrents of national politics as dramatis personae in that controversy stake claims to national political leadership many decades after. Perhaps, the most dramatic in such influences of Onukaba on my young mind was the publication of the biography of Dele Giwa, the iconic Nigerian journalist killed in a bomb blast in October 1986; which he authored with his friend, Dele Olojede. The old guards of Nigerian journalism, especially in the Newswatch, considered the book a 'sexed' biography but the budding young Turks of Nigerian journalism like Dele Momodu and Kunle Ajibade rose in an engaging defence of the young authors, creating an excitement which aspiring young journalists on the nation's campuses feasted on.

Onukaba had travelled to the United States after his exploits in journalism in Nigeria to secure a doctorate degree and had worked at the United Nations. He returned in 1999 to work briefly as Special Assistant (media) to the Vice President before being moved to the Daily Times conglomerate as Managing Director. By Nigerian standards, Onukaba fell in the category of 'Big men'. But there was nothing about him that fateful morning in 2001 that betrayed that. And never did he carry himself as a big man. He had the gift of putting you at ease in his presence by acknowledging little achievements other people had recorded.

Onukaba occupied a unique position while he worked in the Presidency. He had years of close relationship with President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar. His friendship with the duo dated back to his years as Airport correspondent of the Guardian Newspapers. Abubakar headed the Customs Department at the Airport and itinerant Obasanjo was a regular traveller through the airport. Onukaba authored the book, In the Eye of the storm, a biography of Obasanjo as part of the campaign to free the General from the gulag of General Sani Abacha. He also authored Atiku, the biography of Atiku Abubakar, dwelling on his early years until his election as Vice President in 1999. But Onukaba never flaunted these close relationships and it is a testimony to his integrity that while the duo had their celebrated conflict in the Villa, neither of them accused Onukaba of snitching on him.

### Onukaba: 'I am the hope of my people'

Onukaba was too decent for that. He was indeed considered frank to a fault by many of his colleagues. As former Vice President Abubakar acknowledged in his tribute, Onukaba took delight in 'telling truth to power'. He never shied away from saying so when he felt the government was not doing well, most times to the discomfort of many of his colleagues. Outside such meetings, Onukaba would go into further arguments, insisting on calling a spade a spade. He exhibited such frankness in his books on Obasanjo and Atiku. He was fond of recalling how he once sauntered into the hotel room of General Olusegun Obasanjo in New York, in the United States, happy that his book, *In the Eye of the Storm*, had played some role in the release of the General from prison. He said it was an enraged General who hauled a copy of the book at him, querying some contents of the book. Yet, Onukaba felt he did his job as a writer by including the content the General was not comfortable with. Onukaba would argue years after that if he had not written what he believed was the truth in the book, he would have lost the respect of the General who remained his friend, until death. He had the same experience with the content of his biography on Atiku Abubakar. Abubakar did not complain but some of Onukaba's colleagues felt he should have not have included such unflattering content in the book. 'Which one is your own?' Onukaba retorted. 'Why are you taking Panadol for another person's headache?' explaining that rather than complain, Abubakar had actually commended him for the boldness to include such material in the book.

It was for this frankness that many of Onukaba's colleagues and friends felt he would not make a successful politician when he ventured to be governor of Kogi State. But Onukaba was driven by a passion to serve his people. In the Atiku Media office, Onukaba sustained a regular traffic to the banks, transferring money to his townsfolks for sundry purposes- school fees, payment to learn or to complete a trade, payment to start some small business, payment of hospital bills....The list was endless even as many of his Kogi folks daily thronged the office seeking introduction to individuals and organisations for one assistance or another. He was never tired of offering such help. Onukaba made friends easily and was on first name basis with many of Nigeria's top government officials, entrepreneurs and businessmen. But he despised exploiting such friendships for personal gain. He used the goodwill to help others. He was never tired of explaining that his people were disadvantaged because they were late starters in the acquisition of western education and that the lot fell on trail blazers like him to help others up the ladder of social mobility. 'I am the hope of my people', was his refrain.

As he always lamented when getting frustrated with the deluge of request for financial assistance - being a person of modest means himself - Onukaba believed only a responsible government that focuses on education, skill acquisition, job placement and provision of social services will reduce the pressure on conscientious trail blazers like him. It is indeed tragic that he died in circumstances involving some young armed robbers. As a member of the Atiku Abubakar Policy Team, Onukaba always advocated a holistic appreciation of insecurity challenges in the country, arguing that unless the youths are provided good education, skill acquisition and assisted to earn decent living, all approaches to insecurity in the country would be scratching at the surface of the problem.

One of Onukaba's greatest attributes was his ability to laugh at himself. He was fond of making light of serious issues such that his friends who would have thought of sympathising with him will forget their mission to him. When he was sacked alongside other aides of the Vice President in 2005, Onukaba regaled some of his visiting friends of his immediate reaction to the news: 'When I heard the announcement, all the money I had in my accounts, home and abroad, was less than a month's salary'. His friends who had come to sympathise could not control the laughter that trailed the disclosure, led by Onukaba himself.

When he contested for the governorship of Kogi State in 2016 on the crest of a robust programme that would change the Confluence State for good, Onukaba received only one vote. On return to Abuja, his friends paid him a sympathy visit. As we entered his living room with remorse, he shouted, 'they beat me silly!' The account of his defeat was more hilarious but a tragic commentary on the politics of Nigeria. It is better told in Onukaba's words: 'I was getting set for the congress venue when my coordinator rushed inside the hotel room with excitement. 'Excellency (the title Nigerian politicians call everyone who aspires to the office of governor!), I have found out how much the aspirants are giving the delegates. They are giving each delegate between N100, 000 and N250, 000. It will be nice if we can give more than N250, 000 per delegate to be sure of their votes', Onukaba stopped midway as he guffawed loudly, apparently because of what he was to say next. Then he continued, amidst spasms of laughter. 'At the time he was saying that, all the money I had on me for the election was less than N250,000'. The company

### Onukaba: 'I am the hope of my people'

joined in the laughter and the sympathy visit turned into a session of commentaries on the realities of politics in Nigeria.

As Onukaba's friends gather today to honour him with an endowment programme for his family and literary works, there is no better testimony that he deserves the effort than one of his last earthly ventures. Back in 2015, a publisher from Kogi State had approached the APC campaign team about producing a magazine to promote the party for the election. The magazine never surfaced before the elections and there was no word from the publisher. Few weeks before his own death, Onukaba ran into someone who narrated how the struggling publisher had produced the magazine but died in a tragic road accident while bringing the magazine for delivery in Abuja. Moved by the story, Onukaba requested for a copy of the magazine. He then embarked on visits to chieftains of the APC to solicit their support for the family left behind by the young publisher. That is vintage Onukaba. He deserves the honour and support of today. May his soul rest in peace.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2017

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NIGERIA'S PANEL ENCOUNTERED UNREPENTANT MILITARY CHIEFS. MANY FAILED TO EVEN APPEAR. INQUIRY INTO RIGHTS ABUSES STYMIED



## **NIGERIA'S PANEL ENCOUNTERED UNREPENTANT MILITARY CHIEFS. MANY FAILED TO EVEN APPEAR. INQUIRY INTO RIGHTS ABUSES STYMIED**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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**Byline:** Andrew Maykuth, INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

**Dateline:** ABUJA, Nigeria

### **Body**

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A commission investigating abuses by Nigeria's past dictatorships began holding public hearings last week, but the much-heralded panel immediately ran up against unrepentant military authorities.

Many witnesses failed to appear before the Nigerian Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission, set up last year by President Olusegun Obasanjo to examine thousands of claims against the dictatorial regimes that ruled Nigeria for the last 15 years.

The handful of military authorities who showed up denied knowing anything about torture, murder or illegal detentions. Their denials went largely unchallenged by the commission's lawyers.

Despite the inauspicious beginning, commission chairman Chukwudifu Oputa said he hoped the panel's work would lead to reconciliation in Africa's most populous nation.

"We really want to achieve something to heal the wounds, to face our past honestly and compassionately," said Oputa, a retired Supreme Court justice. "We want to see if people who committed the deeds will own up. Forgiveness is one of the things we ask for."

Most of the claims heard during the panel's first week were from former military officers persecuted by Gen. Sani Abacha, the larcenous dictator whose unexpected death in 1998 set the stage for last year's transition to civilian rule.

## NIGERIA'S PANEL ENCOUNTERED UNREPENTANT MILITARY CHIEFS. MANY FAILED TO EVEN APPEAR. INQUIRY INTO RIGHTS ABUSES STYMIED

Appearing before the panel in a windowless basement auditorium of the National Women's Center, the former officers described being beaten, jailed, and humiliated by interrogators who accused them of plotting to overthrow Abacha.

"I have undergone torture, inhuman acts, and been detained in jail with my legs and my hands chained at night for one year," Usman Suleiman, an army captain, testified about his imprisonment for allegedly participating in a 1995 coup plot. That coup plot was widely regarded as a fiction manufactured by Abacha to sideline rivals.

Oputa said he hoped his panel would examine Nigeria's military past much as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission did for the apartheid era.

But crucial differences with South Africa's commission were quickly apparent.

The South African truth commission, headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, often held emotional sessions centered on Tutu's seeking to coax testimony out of witnesses using the sheer power of his moral authority.

The Nigerian proceedings are more like formal court sessions, with witnesses appearing in a box and lawyers addressing panel members as "my Lord." The questioning is done mostly by lawyers, while the seven commission members listen silently like judges.

The South African commission, with the power to grant amnesty, was able to compel an impressive amount of testimony from former apartheid operatives. Nevertheless, the commission was unable to penetrate deeply into South Africa's closed military structure.

The Nigerian commission, which can neither prosecute nor grant amnesty, appears to already be stymied by stubborn officers still safely ensconced in the armed services.

One army colonel blithely denied allegations that he had set up a junior officer who was accused of participating in a coup plot, saying the younger man suffered from delusions after his three years in jail. Questioned gently by the commission's lawyers, the colonel finished his testimony in five minutes.

"What was the point in calling this witness?" a puzzled Oputa asked the lawyers afterward.

Nor does Oputa appear to have the compassionate touch of Tutu, who sometimes broke down in sobs during emotional testimony.

When Lawrence Fabiyi, a former navy lieutenant commander, lost his composure as he described his time in prison, Oputa paused for half a minute.

"It's all right," the justice said. "We are at least alive."

The commission, which has spent 16 months preparing for the hearings, also did not appear well-organized. Witnesses like Fabiyi were subpoenaed only the day before they were scheduled to testify and did not come to the hearing fully prepared. Commission staff members said they had been unable to locate many witnesses to serve them with summonses.

Obasanjo initially established the inquiry to investigate abuses back to Nigeria's first military coup, in 1966. But the commission was overwhelmed by petitions and narrowed its focus to 150 cases dating from the 1983 coup against President Shehu Shagari.

"These are the cases that constitute gross abuse or violation of human rights, like torture, murder and detentions," Oputa said.

Oputa has not listed the cases to be heard, but the commission is expected to focus on the 1995 hanging of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority Ogoni activists, the 1986 letter-bomb murder of journalist Dele Giwa, and

## NIGERIA'S PANEL ENCOUNTERED UNREPENTANT MILITARY CHIEFS. MANY FAILED TO EVEN APPEAR. INQUIRY INTO RIGHTS ABUSES STYMIED

the prison death of Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of a 1993 presidential election annulled by the military government.

Oputa said his commission was hampered by a small budget and staff. Compared with the South African commission, which was created by a parliamentary act and is still hearing amnesty cases nearly five years later, the Nigerian panel was created by a presidential decree and has to request funding periodically from the president.

"The South Africa truth commission seemed so much more advanced," Oputa said. "Every commissioner had an office, a secretary and a car."

Some critics say the commission appears to be as much concerned about its own comforts as the task of shedding light on the past.

"They seem to be more interested in traveling to South Africa than in seeking out justice," said Olufemi Odekunle, a professor who was beaten and jailed for allegedly being involved in a 1997 coup plot. He has not heard whether his case will be heard.

Indeed, after the first full day of hearings, the people drawing the biggest crowds were photographers selling snapshots taken during the morning session.

Andrew Maykuth's e-mail address is [foreign@phillynews.com](mailto:foreign@phillynews.com)

### Graphic

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PHOTO;

PHOTO

Chukwudifu Oputa, a retired judge, is chairman of the human-rights panel. "We really want to achieve something to heal the wounds," he says. (ANDREW MAYKUTH, Inquirer Staff)

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2002

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## Learning African Politics Through Chinua Achebe (IV) [opinion]

Daily Trust (Abuja)

April 22, 2013

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**Length:** 1133 words

**Byline:** Jibrin Ibrahim

### **Body**

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What we learn from Achebe is the contours of authoritarianism and the decomposition of the Postcolonial State.

In "A Man of the People", Achebe predicts that a military coup d'état was inevitable. The publication of the novel in 1966 coincided with Nigeria's first military intervention in politics. The military is dragged into power in the context of disillusionment with the civilian political class but they turn out to be even worse. As soldiers stayed longer in power, they become experts in the wheeling and dealing of the political game, and their civilian advisers or ministers become their instruments for manipulation. When the Dictator declares in "Anthills of the Savannah" that: "You all seem to forget that I am still a soldier, not a politician", it is clear that the message was that all power flows from the barrel of the gun. The "gunless" people have been evacuated from the political scene and the arena of political competition has been narrowed down from the elite to the military elite. The people have no role, except as pliant masses ready to obey the whims and caprices of their dictator. No wonder the dictator is so incensed that a province has dared to vote against his ambition of becoming President-for-Life.

Achebe shows us however that dictators are not born, they are made. Sam did not scheme to be President, and he was open and sincere in the beginning of his rule, till the sycophants got him. One of the most serious lacunas in African political science is the dearth in scholarly studies of sycophancy and the art of bootlicking. In the 1960's and 1970's, Africanist political science devoted a lot of time to the study of "charismatic leadership", thereby falling victims to the propaganda of the sycophants. We learn from Achebe that dictators are partly made by their sycophants who continue to repeat into their dumb brains that: "The people have spoken, their desire is manifest. You are condemned to serve them for life." Of course the sycophants also end up being victims of the monster they have helped create as we read in Anthills: "Worshipping a dictator is such a pain in the ass. It wouldn't be so bad if it were merely a matter of dancing upside down on your head. With practice, anyone could learn to do that. The real problem is having no way of knowing from one day to another, from one minute to the next, just what is up and what is down." So while the dictator repeats over and over again that he did not want to rule for ever, his sycophants must be able to read his mind and appeal to him to do just that. It is the era of what Anthony Kirk-Greene has described in one of his famous essays as "His Eternity, His Eccentricity, or His Exemplarity: His Excellency, the African Head of State".

The greatest victims are of course the ordinary people who in their ignorance, opt for rationality rather than sycophancy, and pay the price. The people of Abazon are the example Achebe uses to make this point in Anthills: "The people who were running in and out and telling us to say that yes came one day and told us that the Big Chief

## Learning African Politics Through Chinua Achebe (IV) [opinion]

himself did not want to rule for ever but that he was being forced. Who is forcing him? I asked, and their eyes shifted from side to side." So the people of Abazon obeyed the "wishes" of the dictator and voted against his ruling forever." In return, the dictator showed his appreciation by closing their boreholes in the middle of a major drought. That is when authoritarianism loses its rationality and becomes self destructive. The king forgets the people have to survive for him to be able to rule them.

"Anthills of the Savannah" evoke painful parallels for those who follow the Nigerian situation. Under Babangida's rule, a *journalist*, ***Dele Giwa***, had been assassinated by what appears to be state security operatives as was the case of Ikem Osodi. A general and poet, Mamman Vatsa, close friend and class mate to the President had been executed for an alleged coup plot. Numerous intellectuals engaged in an intensive competition to "achieve" the status of the greatest sycophant. The business of government was carried out without any respect for economic and social needs of the people. Five years after the publication of the book, the Association for A Better Nigeria was formed to campaign for perpetual rule by President Babangida. etc etc. But the book is not just a Nigerian story. It is a universal story of the dangers of dictatorship and the necessity to struggle.

As Larry Diamond argues, Anthills is not just a castigation of the elite and the people: "Achebe does not yield to cynicism, nihilism and despair. For his broad indictment is accompanied by his articulation of an alternative of action, struggle and personal responsibility." The novel ends with a call to the barricades but also a warning that many will fall by the wayside. The heroes are dead but for the first time in Achebe's writing, women arise and take up the struggle of organizing resistance. In so doing, they discover that there are many allies in the struggle, in high and low places that are ready to play their part in the people's effort to gain control over their lives and their destinies.

Reading Achebe's novels is one of the shortest cuts to the understanding of African politics, the transformation of society by colonialism and the rise of new social classes and categories and the patrimonialisation of the state and its decomposition under the impulsion of greedy intra-elite struggles for power. In the process, the ruling elite compromise the survival of the goose that lays the golden eggs. We see the great gulf that has developed between the ruling elite and the people. And we see the glimmer of hope that the people could and will arise, to take over control of their lives. It is true that Achebe's narrative style revolves around tragedy. Nonetheless, this stylistic choice is imposed by historical imperatives. As he puts it: himself "Stories with happy endings are not terribly important as a rule... For me, what is important in a story, what makes it really memorable is usually some kind of failure, not petty failure but failure of substance, of somebody who has the potentiality for greatness and success but doesn't make it." But then, he does not despair for as he explained to John Agetua in an interview: "The bad news which I convey really comes ultimately from a belief that things could be better, which is an optimistic feeling. The corruptibility of man is self-evident but at the same time something can be done about it." The social sciences need to pay tributes to Chinua Achebe not only as a good story teller who narrated the happenings of our times but also as a creative writer who had a great eye for the political. Thanks you Mwalimu Chinua Achebe for all your lessons.

Concluded.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2013

As Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo Foundation is launched...



## As Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo Foundation is launched...

The Sun (Nigeria)

May 1, 2017 Monday

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**Length:** 1622 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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Notice: Undefined index: layout\_id in /var/www/vhosts/sunnews/wp-content/themes/fastnews/library/front.php on line 1663

I met him for the first time in April 2001. It was at the office of Mr. Chris Mammah, the ebullient Special Assistant (Media) to the then Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. However, the reputation of Dr. Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo preceded the meeting. I had known of him for about two decades. As an undergraduate at the...

I met him for the first time in April 2001. It was at the office of Mr. Chris Mammah, the ebullient Special Assistant (Media) to the then Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. However, the reputation of Dr. Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo preceded the meeting. I had known of him for about two decades. As an undergraduate at the University of Ibadan in the late 1980s when holding a copy of The Guardian was a sort of status symbol, Onukaba's reports in the newspaper were a joy to read. He brought drama into reporting. His ability to do a compelling story, for instance, out of the refusal of General Olusegun Obasanjo to grant him an interview was truly ingenious.

Then came the breaking news of the controversial suitcases cleared from the Murtala Muhammed Airport during the change of national currency by the military government. Onukaba created a niche for himself as a man at the forefront of the theatre of history, as that episode remains a reference point in the undercurrents of national politics as dramatis personae in that controversy stake claims to national political leadership many decades after. Perhaps, the most dramatic in such influences of Onukaba on my young mind was the publication of the biography of Dele Giwa, the iconic Nigerian journalist killed in a bomb blast in October 1986, which he authored with his friend, Dele Olojede. The old guards of Nigerian journalism, especially in the Newswatch, considered the book a "sexed" biography but the budding young Turks of Nigerian journalism, like Dele Momodu and Kunle Ajibade, rose in an engaging defence of the young authors, creating an excitement, which aspiring young journalists on the nation's campuses feasted on.

### As Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo Foundation is launched...

Onukaba had travelled to the United States after his exploits in journalism in Nigeria to secure a doctorate degree and had worked at the United Nations. He returned in 1999 to work briefly as Special Assistant (media) to then Vice President Abubakar before being moved to the Daily Times conglomerate, as Managing Director. By Nigerian standards, Onukaba fell in the category of "Big men." But there was nothing about him that fateful morning in 2001 that betrayed that. And never did he carry himself as a big man. He had the gift of putting you at ease in his presence by acknowledging little achievements other people had recorded.

Onukaba occupied a unique position while he worked in the Presidency. He had years of close relationship with President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar. His friendship with the duo dated back to his years as airport correspondent of The Guardian. Abubakar headed the Customs Department at the airport and itinerant Obasanjo was a regular traveller through the airport. Onukaba authored the book, *In the Eye of the storm*, a biography of Obasanjo, as part of the campaign to free the General from the gulag of General Sani Abacha. He also authored *Atiku*, the biography of Atiku Abubakar, dwelling on his early years until his election as Vice President in 1999. But Onukaba never flaunted these close relationships and it is a testimony to his integrity that while the duo had their celebrated conflict in the Villa, neither of them accused Onukaba of snitching on him.

Onukaba was too decent for that. He was, indeed, considered frank to a fault by many of his colleagues. As former Vice President Abubakar acknowledged in his tribute, Onukaba took delight in "telling truth to power." He never shied away from saying so when he felt the government was not doing well, most times to the discomfort of many of his colleagues. Outside such meetings, Onukaba would go into further arguments, insisting on calling a spade a spade. He exhibited such frankness in his books on Obasanjo and Atiku. He was fond of recalling how he once sauntered into the hotel room of General Olusegun Obasanjo in New York, in the United States, happy that his book, *In the Eye of the Storm*, had played some role in the release of the General from prison. He said it was an enraged General, who hauled a copy of the book at him, querying some contents of the book. Yet, Onukaba felt he did his job, as a writer by including the content the General was not comfortable with.

Onukaba would argue years after that if he had not written what he believed was the truth in the book, he would have lost the respect of the General, who remained his friend, until death. He had the same experience with the content of his biography on Atiku Abubakar. Abubakar did not complain but some of Onukaba's colleagues felt he should not have included such unflattering content in the book.

In the Atiku media office, Onukaba sustained a regular traffic to the banks, transferring money to his townsfolk for sundry purposes – school fees, payment to learn or to complete a trade, payment to start some small business, payment of hospital bills. The list was endless, even as many of his Kogi folk daily thronged the office - seeking introduction to individuals and organisations for one assistance or another. He was never tired of offering such help.

Onukaba made friends easily and was on first name basis with many of Nigeria's top government officials, entrepreneurs and businessmen. But he despised exploiting such friendships for personal gain. He used the goodwill to help others. He was never tired of explaining that his people were disadvantaged because they were late starters in the acquisition of western education and that the lot fell on trail blazers like him to help others up the ladder of social mobility.

As he always lamented when getting frustrated with the deluge of request for financial assistance - being a person of modest means himself - Onukaba believed only a responsible government that focuses on education, skill acquisition, job placement and provision of social services will reduce the pressure on conscientious trail blazers like him. It is, indeed, tragic that he died in circumstances, involving some young armed robbers. As a member of the Atiku Abubakar Policy Team, Onukaba always advocated a holistic appreciation of insecurity challenges in the country, arguing that unless the youths were provided good education, skill acquisition and assisted to earn decent living, all approaches to insecurity in the country would be scratching at the surface of the problem.

One of Onukaba's greatest attributes was his ability to laugh at himself. He was fond of making light of serious issues, such that his friends, who would have thought of sympathising with him will forget their mission to him. When he was sacked alongside other aides of the Vice President in 2005, Onukaba regaled some of his visiting friends of his immediate reaction to the news: "When I heard the announcement, all the money I had in my

### As Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo Foundation is launched...

accounts, home and abroad, was less than a month's salary." His friends who had come to sympathise could not control the laughter that trailed the disclosure, led by Onukaba himself.

When he contested for the governorship of Kogi State in 2016 on the crest of a robust programme that would change the Confluence State for good, Onukaba received only one vote. On return to Abuja, his friends paid him a sympathy visit. As we entered his living room with remorse, he shouted: "They beat me silly!" The account of his defeat was more hilarious but a tragic commentary on the politics of Nigeria. It is better told in Onukaba's words: "I was getting set for the congress venue when my coordinator rushed inside the hotel room with excitement. 'Excellency (the title Nigerian politicians call everyone, who aspires to the office of governor!), I have found out how much the aspirants are giving the delegates. They are giving each delegate between N100, 000 and N250, 000. It will be nice if we can give more than N250, 000 per delegate to be sure of their votes.' Onukaba stopped midway, as he guffawed loudly, apparently because of what he was to say next. Then he continued, amidst spasms of laughter: 'At the time he was saying that, all the money I had on me for the election was less than N250, 000.' The company joined in the laughter and the sympathy visit turned into a session of commentaries on the realities of politics in Nigeria.

As Onukaba's friends gather tomorrow to honour him with an endowment programme for his family and literary works, there is no better testimony that he deserves the effort than one of his last earthly ventures. Back in 2015, a publisher from Kogi State had approached the APC campaign team about producing a magazine to promote the party for the election. The magazine never surfaced before the elections and there was no word from the publisher. A few weeks before his own death, Onukaba ran into someone who narrated how the struggling publisher had produced the magazine but died in a tragic road accident while bringing the magazine for delivery in Abuja. Moved by the story, Onukaba requested for a copy of the magazine. He then embarked on a visit to chieftains of the APC to solicit their support for the family left behind by the young publisher. That is vintage Onukaba. He deserves the honour and support.

- Akande, is a visiting professor of Political Science and director, Centre for Presidential Studies at the Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State.

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## Re - Babangida's Age And Agenda [opinion]

Leadership (Abuja)

August 29, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 1389 words

**Byline:** Max Gbanite

### **Body**

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Aniebo Nwamu, a veteran *journalist* of great repute, is one of those whose writing I enjoy reading because of the intellect exhibited in his articles. However, like other columnists who must write on issues weekly, he is entitled to suffer a 'writer's block,' an affliction that happens when an intelligent writer mixes serious issues with the mundane just to fill the vacuum of his column. Having read Nwamu's column titled "Babangida's Age and Agenda", published in LEADERSHIP SUNDAY of August 22, 2010, I am convinced of my earlier assertion of 'writer's block.'

Since he confessed that he was in Minna to meet with Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in company of other journalists, his readers expected him to report on the current state of health and lucidity of the amiable and compassionate General during their interactive session, as well as whether IBB was coherent enough, had a presence of mind and was articulate during his presentation and in answering their hard-no-holds-barred-questions. For the record, Babangida was born on 17th August, 1941, and at age three became one of the legendary scholar, of Malam Najoji. By the time he entered elementary school in 1950, he was already ahead of his age mates with a remarkable retentive memory. He entered secondary school in 1956 and during that era, was already reading Dr. Tai Solarin's articles under the column "Thinking With You" (in the Daily Times).

That Aniebo did not read at age 8 does not mean that IBB could not; after all, the levels of development differ, at least that is what child psychologists in their various research efforts have said. It is therefore unfair for Nwamu to deny his readers what he really observed; i.e., the actual state of mind of IBB.

However, if his postulations on IBB showing signs of probable senility in future were based on medical observation of the man, then we need to know when and where such diagnosis took place, and if based on spiritual observation, that too requires some further empirical studies to properly ascertain.

Having said this, it is also very commendable of Aniebo to state without equivocation his position on the much dogged issues often rehashed by the South-west media and their paid assassin-pen-pushers, i.e. June 12, the Okigbo Panel report, *Dele Giwa*, etcetera. Nwamu posited, "In my heart of hearts, I believe IBB had no hand in the murder of my senior colleague *Giwa*...; the Okigbo report did not say that IBB stole \$12.4 billion. It said the Gulf oil windfall was not put in regenerative investments. As to June 12, I can testify that the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election was not Babangida's most grievous offence as a military leader." He is very correct. I have always stated that the sacking of President Shehu Shagari who won an election in 1983 - an election adjudged superior to that of 2003 and 2007 - is more sacrosanct than the June 12 annulment.

## Re - Babangida's Age And Agenda [opinion]

It is imperative to remind Aniebo Nwamu that IBB did not mismanage the economy. Instead, he leap-frogged the nation into the global community and put the nation ahead of Greece and other nations by accepting the imperative of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which the previous administrations of Shagari and Buhari called 'austerity measures,' and the derivatives of SAP led to 'deregulation and diversification' of the economy. The words of my friend Prince

Kassim Afegbua, IBB's fearless spokesman, in his essay published in Thisday on August 20, 2010 , aptly cures Aniebo's mismanagement-of-the-economy theory, when Afegbua challenged Nigerians to find the answers to the following: "What was IBB thinking when he commenced privatisation of universities in Nigeria; and when he licensed private television and radio stations; what warranted his establishment of federal universities of technology; what was on his mind when he opened up the economy that led to liberalising the banking sector; What about ECOMOG forces that stabilized the West African region; the Technical Aids Corps; the movement of the capital from Lagos to Abuja? What of the establishment of National Directorate of Employment, which is still training Nigerian youths today; what about the opening up of the rural areas for the poor to feel the impact of government through DFRII programme; what about MAMSER; and the Federal Road Safety Commission?"

Kindly allow me to add the following mismanaged policies of IBB: the creation of 11 out of the 36 states and 239 out of the existing 774 local governments; establishment of 5 additional zonal commands for the Nigeria Police Force; creation of State Security Services, Defence Intelligence Agency, the National Intelligence Agency; establishment of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, from which the EFCC was created; privatisation of the airlines industry and telecommunications, opening up the GSM phenomenon; construction of the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos and over 30,000 kilometres of federal highways; establishment of Peoples Bank, Agricultural Bank, Federal Urban Mass Transit, construction of 10 switch-gear stations to enhance NITEL-back bone, etc.

Funding of the programmes may have informed Nwamu's theory of mismanagement. Yet, subsequent administrations after IBB, especially, those of Obasanjo/Atiku and Yar'Adua/Jonathan, were definitely not better managers of the economy because they cannot tell Nigerians what they did to improve the economy. They signed budgets without implementation. Nwamu should kindly find out what these monies were spent on or how well these people managed the economy better than IBB. While making comparisons, it is worthy to note that what IBB's administration received as allocations in the eight years of its existence was equal to what Obasanjo/Atiku received in one year, and what Yar'Adua/Jonathan received in six months.

In conclusion, Nwamu's failure to articulate to his readers what candidate IBB presented to the journalists in Minna during the interactive session was wrong. That was why John Diefenbaker said, "Freedom is the right to be wrong, not the right to do wrong." Therefore, Aniebo Nwamu should decide if it was wrong to deny his readers the right to know what IBB said that he forgot in the presidency, and why he wants to come back. In that case, allow me to mention the agenda. IBB wants to encourage true fiscal federalism (i.e. resource control by states); evolution of power away from the centre by giving greater autonomy to the states and local governments; establishment of local government and state police commands to augment the strength of the Nigeria Police Force to secure the lives and properties of citizens; reduce the number of federal ministries like Agriculture, Water Resources, Education, and Environment by making them supervisory departments and remitting their budgets directly to the rural communities where farmers and the rural poor can directly benefit and improve their lot; strengthen the military command and our foreign policy so that the nation may be respected again; properly fund anti-corruption agencies to be more proactive in their fight against corruption; develop and establish a lasting infrastructure that guarantees free, fair, secure and acceptable elections in the country as a template for future generations under democracy; and create an enabling environment for healthcare delivery and lasting sports infrastructural development; privatize the energy-power sector, and all these will be done in four years.

IBB could not have built any personal industries to employ millions of Nigerians because the infrastructures he put in place have already created the jobs and wealth; and his new agenda will take the nation higher, open up the economy wider through diversification and create millions of jobs and wealth for Nigerians. Besides, former President Olusegun Obasanjo vindicated him as not being a corrupt leader and challenged anyone with information to prove otherwise to come forward, and none did. Therefore, IBB's age is insignificant; rather, his agenda is what sets him high and above all those who have indicated their interest to contest the presidency of Nigeria in 2011.

Re - Babangida's Age And Agenda [opinion]

That is precisely why Prof. Wole Soyinka said, "I like Babangida's personality, sense of honour and the sincerity of his ambition. He is a sincere leader with commendable listening capacity."

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2010

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## **Yemi Ogunbiyi - Consolidating Scholarship**

This Day (Lagos)

May 29, 2016

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**Length:** 1792 words

### **Body**

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It might seem cliché to say Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi has got the Midas touch in intellectual business but a peek into his publishing company in Lagos, Tanus Communication revealed how his personal contribution to knowledge economy in Nigeria is remarkably golden. Yinka Olatunbosun reports

The destination is Computer Village, Ikeja; a community that's known for the sales and distribution of electronic gadgets and accessories. The last thing you might be inspired to do when you arrive there is read. Blaring sounds from speakers, frantic sellers in hot pursuit of patronage, pushers of fully-loaded wheel barrows and throngs of customers leave a little less than a leg room to move around freely as you commute from one point to another. In contrast to that world outside, the walls inside the Tanus Communications building in the heart of Ogunbiyi community protect the editors, graphic designers, proof readers and the CEO, Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi from the noise and other environmental disturbances.

You can sense that sanity from the entrance to the building and in the way Ogunbiyi's table is organised. But you may not say the same of his itinerary that is justifiably volatile. After several weeks of rescheduling, no thanks to this reporter's forgetfulness on one of such occasions, Dr. Ogunbiyi spared about an hour to talk about his work, his vision for education and a few but well-intended digressions into prevailing socio-economic situations in the country.

He is a quiet but huge contributor to Nigeria's knowledge economy. And that did not start with the printing and publishing of school textbooks. After leaving his job as a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), his sojourn in the academics was not protracted. But he left an indelible mark in the field of drama and theatre one that this reporter spotted as a student with a mandate to read Ogunbiyi's *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book* every semester. Unfortunately, the book was not available at many bookshops. The few students who had copies walked with high shoulders. The university had just a copy which was perpetually lent out to students. To cut the story short, the first thing this reporter asked Ogunbiyi was the whereabouts of this elusive book - a compulsory read. His instantaneous action was to ask for the reprinted copy of the book to be brought; and after appending his autograph, he presented it to this reporter who wished there was a photographer on standby to capture that gratifying moment.

"We now have two more chapters; one on new Nigerian playwrights and a brilliant chapter by Biodun Jeyifo on Nollywood," he enthused. "I am really amazed that the book has such a staying power and such demand for it. Two of my students, Prof Coker and Prof Awam at NYU still use the book. Unfortunately, the book has not made me wealthy. But if I can sell more from the new edition, maybe I can make some money. When I went to see Ola Rotimi 20years ago in Port Harcourt he asked me to reissue the book. He told me then that the book was a very important

one. I didn't know how much it was. So, he called one of the students and said, 'Go and bring me Ogunbiyi' and I was surprised to know that that was how the book was called."

That was how the first visit to the office went. Of course, later that night, the reporter was torn between finishing the newly acquired book and Ogunbiyi's interview with Richard Ikiebe. The latter was easier. At least from it, it was gathered that after his academic years, he joined Daily Times, an intellectual hub that birthed the likes of the late **Dele Giwa**, Dr. **Dele** Cole and Chief Segun Osoba who handed over to him as the Managing Director.

"It was purely an accident of some sort when I left my job at Daily Times," he began, after informing this reporter that in his days as a **journalist**, he had executed high-profile interviews with Shimon Perez, Thomas Sankara, Kenneth Kaunda, Kamuzu Banda and Rajiv Ghandi. It couldn't be any easier to hold his gaze after dropping such names. And the smile on his face showed that he must have enjoyed the job. So, this reporter got more curious as to why he left. Being at the helm of affairs at Daily Times during military rule was not a walk in the park for him or anyone.

"I decided to start an advertising agency," he recalled. "But in between that, I was able to start a corporate publishing outfit meant for corporate books. But gradually, I found myself getting more interested. Some years ago, Donald Duke became the Governor of Cross River State and asked me to print some school textbooks for the state. I had never done school books before then. I was only printing corporate books. I said no. But he persuaded me. And there would surely be a payback time, he said jokingly.

"I took up the challenge. It was a huge contract and I couldn't find a press that could do that for me. I then found a press in India and they did the printing for me. When the books came back and I saw them, I thought they looked very nice so I suggested that Duke should sell the books to other state government since the books were all based in the federal government curriculum. He said he didn't think anyone would buy those books from him. I persuaded him by telling him that I would market the books for him for other states and that we would share the profit. He said, 'Well, good luck to you. I don't think you are going to make any headway'. That year, we sold about half a million text books to other states by merely selling those books that belonged to Cross River State."

On his return to his office, he reflected on how he could make good fortune from selling textbooks to other states. And that he did. The textbooks on his stable, no fewer than 450, are spread across core and entrepreneurial subjects in the school curriculum by federal government including history, computer studies, civic education, catering craft, woodwork, store-keeping, garment-making, plumbing and pipe-fitting, painting and decoration, French and Nigerian indigenous languages. The Tanus Special Classic Series parades amazing folktales such as Alice in Wonderland, The Wizard of Oz, Tom Sawyerr, Oliver Twist, Treasure Island and The Three Musketeers amongst others.

"State governments will ask for these books and if we don't have them that will be too bad so we make them. I think today we have between 45 and 50 entrepreneurial subjects in our stable. I have decided to keep producing textbooks only although there is a lot of pressure on us to do more than just that. For now we are stuck with school textbooks."

On his part, knowledge economy can be improved in Nigeria by ensuring continuous training for teachers and equipping the existing institutions. He argued that with the exception of Rivers State, under Gov. Rotimi Amaechi, no state government has invested as much as the sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo did.

"UNESCO says 30percent of our budget should be dedicated to the educational sector. I don't think any state comes close even to 20%. Also government should ensure that those who teach are well-paid. A primary school teacher in the US earns almost as much as the university lecturer in the US," he said.

To complement the effort of teachers in schools, Tanus Books Limited is producing school textbooks are some of the best in the system, in terms of production quality and content. But when schools hire incompetent teachers, the pupils are less inspired to read. As Ogunbiyi pointed out, corruption has seeped into the educational sector, and merit no longer counts in securing jobs.

The fear that electronic books may bury physical books with time was also allayed by Ogunbiyi, who had recently attended the London Book Fair where the future of physical books was contemplated.

"A few years ago, they all thought that e-books will take over. It was thought also that newspapers will go extinct and everyone would go online. But that has not happened. In fact, what has happened in the last one year will surprise you. The figures have shown that for some strange reasons, people are going back to textbooks and books. And the sale of e-books dropped sharply worldwide. I don't know what is responsible for that but I think people prefer to handle a book again. I have always preferred the physical books to e-books. But we make e-books. Only Lagos state has demanded for our e-books. No other state has shown much interest. Yes, Governor Amaechi invested in e-books. The problem of power is one of the issues facing the e-books patronage. I think e-books will stay but they will not in any way diminish the physical books."

The cost of production may be challenging for a publishing firm today but with favourable policies in place by the government, it is hoped that raw materials needed for production would be procured at reasonable cost. Another lingering challenge is piracy. That is why Tanus Books Limited has limited the outlets for the sale of their books and the copies commissioned by state governments bear induplicable seals.

"We use outlets to market our books but our own textbooks are marketed through our team in various offices such as in Port Harcourt, Abuja, Calabar and Enugu. We target university book stores with the Drama and Theatre book. We also have a marketing outlet in New York," he explained.

Today, some lecturers at various Nigerian universities recommend their own personal books, however poorly-produced, as compulsory reads. Sometimes, they insist that students come to class with the books. For Ogunbiyi, whose book became a compulsory read only after he left the academics, that sounded quite surprising.

"That is a pity. When I taught at the university, I didn't even do that. My book was not even on the list of compulsory reads. I think lecturers are exploiting the scarcity of books. The fact that there are no books around to buy has forced students to buy the available ones. That shouldn't be the case. Class discussions should provoke the interest in reading further. State governments should have libraries. We should fund education."

A tour of Tanus work pool and offices followed the discussion. His team members worked assiduously, and occasionally glanced up at this reporter. One of them, in charge of Islamic Religious Knowledge text book, explained how the transliterations of Arabic text are cross-checked to ensure that the final copies are error-free.

Generally, the books, highly colourful, are designed to attract young children. And as they advance in age, their books get less colourful.

Though the Tanus building belonged to Dr. Ogunbiyi's late mother, he has made the edifice a knowledge brewery, distilling works worth reading while constructing a legacy that will outlive its owner.

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2016



## **2012 in Retrospect - Any Respite From Bombings in 2013?**

Vanguard (Lagos)

January 05, 2013

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**Length:** 1275 words

**Byline:** Evelyn Usman

### **Body**

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THE year 2012 may have come and gone. But it left in its wake the death of several persons;both young and old, no thanks to series of terrorists attacks in some northern parts of the country. Sadly,several women turned widow and children orphaned, with several families still displaced , as their houses were blown into shreds by bombs.

Although the history of bomb blasts in the country could be traced to 1986, when the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, Mr **Dele Giwa**, was killed by a mail bomb in his home in Ikeja, Lagos, followed by pockets of explosions in some parts of the country.

But none, was targeted at the majority of Nigerians,with a terrorist group laying claim to the act until March 15, 2010, in Warri, Delta state, during an Amnesty Dialogue sponsored by Vanguard Media Limited, with a group of Niger Delta militants claiming responsibility. The group also claimed responsibility for the October 1, 2010 bomb explosion that rocked the Eagle square,during Nigeria's 50th Independence anniversary celebrations in Abuja.

However, a worrisome dimension was introduced to the incidence of bomb explosions in the country, following series of blasts by the Boko Haram sect which has led to the loss of over 1,000 lives since 2011 to date.

The first bomb explosion that signalled catastrophe ahead for the country, occurred on January 1, 2011, at an Abuja Army Barracks Mammy market,another on April 8, 2011 in Maiduguri, Borno State, on May 29, 2011,also at an Army barracks in Bauchi.

What can be regarded as the highpoint of the blast occurred on June 16, 2011, when the terrorists threw caution to the dogs and targeted the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters, Abuja, with the then Inspector-General of Police Hafeez Ringim escaping narrowly. Barely one month later, 50 persons were reported killed in a bomb attack in Maiduguri .

Not satisfied with the devastating national impact of its attacks, the sect went ahead to blow up the United Nations Building in Abuja on August 26, 2011, which claimed twenty-three lives.

To round off year 2011, it gave another devastating Christmas package to the country, by attacking churches in Abuja, Jos and Yobe states, where families who gathered to pray and celebrate a day which symbolizes harmony and good will towards others, were torn apart.

## 2012 in Retrospect - Any Respite From Bombings in 2013?

The list is endless in year 2012. Not even the home state of President Goodluck Jonathan whom the sect reportedly asked to resign, before it would cease fire was spared, as two explosions rocked Yenagoa, Bayelsa capital on January 21, 2012.. During the year under review, 58 persons reportedly lost their lives in Kaduna and Makurdi blasts on August 22.

One of the bomb blasts that would linger in the memory of Nigerians, was the one in Kano state, where an electronic media **journalist** with Channels Television, Eneche Akogwu was killed while covering the scene of a bomb explosion.

Military and Police formations as well as Prisons and Immigration facilities, were not spared by the rampaging terrorists. Same was the fate of Churches, Mosques, eateries and residential apartments, thereby sending innocent and helpless Nigerians to their unprepared graves, for just no cause, while several families were thrown into eternal mourning.

Crime Guard can authoritatively state that between March and December 2012, there were a total of 535 IED threats. But out of this figure, a total of 151 explosions succeeded while 384 cases were averted by the Police Anti Bomb Explosive Ordnance Department EOD, with some of the discoveries made in Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Ondo, Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi states.

Information made available to Crime Guard, revealed that most of the Improvised Explosive Devices (IED); both exploded and unexploded, were concealed in bottles; fire extinguishers; buckets with steel balls and detonators, vehicles with timing remote controlled devices with a Q-link receiver.

Some of them were also discovered to be concealed inside non-alcoholic drinks and vegetable oil. For instance the IED explosion at a Military check point in Bauchi on March 14, 2012 was concealed in a Lucozade bottle, Vegetable oil and Viju Milk containers. The one that exploded at the Prison Service, Konduga, Maiduguri, on March 2012, was contained in a 380 ml Peak Milk tin, while that on Shguwa Police Division in Adamawa State on February 2012, was packed in four cans of Star and Amstel Malta.

Spokesman for Police Anti Bomb Explosive Ordnance Department (EOD,) Mr. Gbolahan Folorunsho when contacted, attributed the command's achievement to intensified intelligence, security consciousness and public enlightenment lectures. According to Folorunsho, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, "during the period under review; the command sensitized members of the public, Corporate organizations, religious groups , sister security agencies, ministries and government establishments on the method of identification of basic IED components and bomb threat response techniques".

The command he further stated, embarked on series of explosives escorts across the country from manufacturers/marketers magazines to various end users storage facilities. This he explained, was to ensure that the materials were not diverted to wrong users, adding that the officers adhered strictly to standard explosive movement procedures as approved by the IGP.

ASP Folorunsho, said other measures put in place by EOD, included the inspection of explosives Magazines and supervision of existing and functional Quarries sites. " EOD operatives also monitor the handling, storage , usage of explosives and allied materials by end users nationwide", noting that so far, no incident of theft or mishap was reported at explosives magazines and quarry stores across the country.

But he was quick to add that the synergy between the Police and the Military also helped to achieve the feat. " In the immediate past, the personnel in our Units encountered arrest by the Military during the process of escorting explosives and its allied materials from Ports of entry to dealers magazines. But when the present Inspector-General of Police came on board, this problem was the first he tackled and he was able to fashion out a better modus operandi for EOD operations in escorting explosives from point to points as stipulated in the Explosives Acts and Regulations. This strengthens our operational ability and has produced dividend in the fight against terrorism.

## 2012 in Retrospect - Any Respite From Bombings in 2013?

Police Anti Bomb EOD command through our units across the country,, regularly embark on Joint search Operations with the Joint Task Force JTF to carry out raids and good successes of recovery of items suspected to be IEDs were made in several cases.".

In preparation for year 2013,the command held its first EOD workshop two weeks ago, with the theme' 'Establishment of Explosives and Allied materials Database in Nigeria Police and measures in Ensuring Control over illegal use and proliferation of Explosives materials'. The workshop according to the Commissioner of Police, Mr Folusho Adebanjo, was to brainstorm and adopt measures which would make its activities less cumbersome this year.

Other areas of preparedness he said, was in the area of training and research development for the personnel to be professionally ready to combat any act of insurgency in the country, disclosing that over 500 police officers and men approved by the IG,had been trained as Bomb technicians and investigators across the units.

It is therefore expected that with the preparation on ground , coupled with those from other security agencies, Nigerians, particularly those in the northern parts of the country will heave sighs of relief this year.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2013

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## **Harvest of awards for The Nation at NMMA**

The Nation (Nigeria)

December 15, 2017 Friday

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**Length:** 1544 words

### **Body**

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With 10 coveted prizes at the prestigious Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMA), The Nation leadership in quality reportage has been reaffirmed. This newspaper won the highest number of awards at the 27th NMMA on Wednesday night at the Muson Centre in Onikan, Lagos.

The prizes were from the 29 in the print media category. The Nation had 28 nominations, winning in 10 categories - the highest by any newspaper. The rest were shared among The Punch, New Telegraph, Nigerian Tribune, Business Day, The Sun, The Source and Vanguard.

Of the 29 awards in the print media category, New Telegraph won eight, The Punch won four, Nigerian Tribune (three), Business Day (one), The Sun (one) and Vanguard (one). The Source magazine also won a prize.

Editor Gbenga Omotoso won the **Dele Giwa** Prize for Editor of the Year.

Vintage Press Chairman Wale Edun, in a message to Managing Director Victor Ifijeh, who broke the news to him, said: 'Fantastic news. Congratulations all round. I salute the superb quality of our entire team'.

The Punch's Martin Ayankola and Vanguard's Eze Anaba were nominated for the prize.

Head of Investigation and multiple-award winner, Adekunle Yusuf won the Alex Ibru Prize for Investigative Reporter of the Year with his two-part entry: 'Hospitals of death, tears and sorrow'. The Punch's Toluwani Eniola and New Telegraph's Dayo Ayeyemi were first and second runners-up.

Taiwo Alimi, also a multiple-award winner and ace sport writer with The Nation on Sunday, won the Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Prize for Sports Reporter of the Year. His entry is 'Making of Olympic Champions'. Taiwo beat Anthony Akaeze of Tell and New Telegraph's Oyeleye Solomon Abiodun to the prize.

An Assistant Editor on the Business Desk, Emeka Ugwuanyi, won the Peter Odili Power Reporter of the Year, beating New Telegraph's Adeola Yusuf. Ugwuanyi's winning entry is 'Nigeria's power sector woes: Undergoing greed or sabotage'.

The Olusegun Mimiko Prize for Foreign News Reporter of the Year was won by Seun Akioye with his three-part report on: 'From Paradise to Hell'.

Travel and Tourism correspondent Uguru Okorie picked the prize for the Adamu Mu'azu Tourism Reporter of the Year. New Telegraph's Catherine Ifunanya is runner-up.

## Harvest of awards for The Nation at NMMA

It was double honour for Collins Nweze, a multiple-award winning Finance Correspondent, who clinched two coveted prizes from his six nominations.

Two entries - 'How bank fleece customers' and 'N1 billion Eurobond: Search for dollars continues' won Nweze the Union Bank Prize for Banking and Finance Reporter of the Year and the Access Bank Prize for Capital Market Reporter of the Year respectively.

A rights activist and freelancer with The Nation, Betty Abbah, won the Cecil King Memorial Prize for Print **Journalist** of the Year, with her entry: 'If I were your daughter, would you ask me to get married at 16?' She beat The Punch's Olakunle Falayi and New Telegraph's Isioma Madike to the prize.

All the nominees in the Abubakar Imam Prize for Newspaper Feature Writer of the Year category were of The Nation. One of them, Innocent Duru, with his entry: 'Cries of slum children' won the prize.

The NMMA panel of judges did not declare the winners in 10 categories in which The Nation writers had 11 nominations.

The categories are: Alade Odunewu Prize for Columnist of the Year; Gani Fawehinmi Prize for Human Rights Reporter of the Year; Chevron Nigeria Prize for Oil and Gas Reporter of the Year; Sonny Odogwu Prize for Business Reporter of the Year; Nnamdi Azikiwe Prize for Cartoonist of the Year; and Ernest Sissei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year.

They include: Aviation Industry Reporter of the Year, Coca-Cola Nigeria Prize for Brand and Marketing Reporter of the Year, Nigerian Ports Authority Prize for Maritime Reporter of the Year, and UBA Prize for Money Market Reporter of the Year.

Other reporters from The Nation on the nomination lists include: Group Political Editor Emmanuel Oladesu (Politics); Associate Editor Olatunji Ololade (Human Rights); Associate Editor Olukorede Yishau (Columnist of the Year); Louis Odion (Columnist of the Year); Assistant Editor Sina Fadare (Human Rights); Joseph Jibueze (Human Rights and Feature Writing); Gboyega Alaka (Feature Writing); Wale Ajetunmobi (Foreign News Reporting); and Hannah Ojo (Newspaper Reporter of the Year and Agriculture).

The prize for the Newspaper of the Year went to The Punch. The Nigerian Tribune won the prize for Editorial Writing of the Year. The Source won the WAMCO Prize for News Magazine of the Year. Business Day won the First Bank Prize for Business Publication of the Year.

The multiple recognitions earned by the array of reporters on the The Nation's platform showed improvement in quality and depth in news reporting and investigative journalism.

Last week, this newspaper's rich tradition of investigative journalism manifested at the yearly Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) Award held on December 9 in Lagos.

Head of Investigations Desk Yusuf won the grand prize with his three-part entry: 'How corruption, favouritism thrive in UNILORIN', published from March 14 to 16.

The entry also won the print journalism category of the 2017 WSCIJ Report of the Year.

The Nation also shone brightly at the 26th Diamond Awards for Media Excellence (DAME ) on December 6, when it won three coveted prizes of the 13 categories for the print media.

Ololade, a multiple award-winner, clinched two awards - the UNICEF Prize for Child-Friendly Reporting and Honorable Justice Moronkeji Onalaja Memorial Prize for Judicial Reporting.

Ololade's entry in the Child-Friendly Category entitled: 'This child has no blame', was published on July 23, 2016. His entry for Judicial Reporting entitled: 'Life on death row: Tragic lives of Nigerian prisoners', published on June 4, last year.

## Harvest of awards for The Nation at NMMA

Alimi won the S.O. Idowu Prize for Sport Reporting, beating The Punch's Arukaino Umukoro and TELL's Anthony Akaeze. Alimi's entry entitled: The making of Olympic champions, also won the 2017 NMMA Sport Reporting Prize.

Other reporters from The Nation, who shone at the DAME are Omotoso, Yusuf, Jibueze, Eric Ikhilae, Kunle Akinrinde, and Hannah Ojo.

The Nation also came as first runner-up in the DAME Newspaper of the Year category. It was also nominated in the Tunji Oseni Memorial Prize for Editorial Writing and UNICEF Prize for Child Friendly Medium categories.

### Similar feats in 2016

Year in, year out, The Nation has continued to walk shoulder high in its rating as Nigeria's leading newspaper. It ended last year with 13 NMMA prizes from 26 nominations in the print journalism categories.

In the same year, New Telegraph won in four categories, while The Punch won two prizes from its 14 nominations.

The Nation's star writer, Ololade, won three NMMA awards Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Prize for Sports Reporter of the Year, Gani Fawehinmi Prize for Human Rights Reporter of the Year and Sonny Odogwu Prize for Business Reporter of the Year.

Yusuf also won two awards Adamu Mu'azu Prize for Tourism Reporter of the Year and Chevron Nigeria Prize for Oil and Gas Reporter of the Year.

An Assistant Editor, Seun Akioye, won the Olagunsoye Oyinlola Prize for Culture and Tradition Reporter of the Year. He was a runner-up in the Olusegun Mimiko Prize for Foreign News Reporter category.

Alaka, a correspondent on the Features Desk of The Nation on Sunday, won the Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter of the Year (2016).

Senior Finance Correspondent Nweze won two prizes - the Union Bank Prize for Banking and Finance Reporter of the Year and the UBA Prize for Money Market Reporting.

An Assistant Editor on the Business Desk Lucas Ajanaku won the MTN Prize for Telecommunication Reporting; Senior Correspondent Adeyinka Aderibigbe won the Abubakar Imam Prize for Newspaper Feature Writer of the Year, while Abiodun Williams won the Photographer of the Year.

Reporter Hannah Ojo clinched the Etisalat Prize for Most Innovative Reporting.

Others who made good showing in 2016 NMMA included: Fadare, Chikodi Okereocha, Jibueze, Cartoonist Azeez Ozi-Sanni and Olatunde Odebiyi, who were runners-up in various categories.

At 2016 DAME, The Nation won five of the 20 prizes presented. Yusuf beat Mary Fadile of Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) to win the Nigerian Press Council Prize for Editorial Integrity.

Okereocha, an Assistant Editor, picked two awards at the event. He won the News Agency of Nigeria Prize for Agriculture Reporting with his entry titled: 'How smugglers hamper rice policy, frustrate investors'. Hannah Ojo was a finalist in this category.

Okereocha's second entry titled: 'Devaluation: Harsh climate for manufacturers, workers', won the Aliko Dangote Prize for Business Reporting. His colleague on the Business Desk, Okwy Iroegbu-Chikezie, was a finalist in the category with her entry: 'Private sector grumbles as CBN defends its policies'.

Jibueze also clinched two awards at the 2016 DAME. He won the Mobil Producing Prize for Energy Reporting and Justice Omotayo Onalaja Prize for Judicial Reporting.

He won the Judicial Reporting Prize for the third consecutive time, becoming the first reporter with such feat in DAME's history.

Harvest of awards for The Nation at NMMA

Ozi-Sanni, was a finalist in the Vanguard Media Prize for Editorial Cartooning category with his entry: 'Change, change.'

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2017

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## Sanwo-Olu: Fragile, handle with care!

Nigerian Tribune

December 9, 2018 Sunday

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Length: 1602 words

### **Body**

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IF you interview 10 people in Lagos, five or six will tell you they think the All Progressives Congress governorship candidate in next year's election, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, will most likely win. Ask them again what they knew about Sanwo-Olu as a person or his pedigree, many of them are likely to draw blank. Same if you seek to know the policies and programmes being enunciated by the APC candidate. The reasons for this are not far to fetch: Politics and elections here are not as much about the candidate as they are about the party Leader and the platform. If the party Leader and or platform is popular and acceptable, the deed is virtually done. Recently, however, there is the clamour that the electorate should discard this age-old practise and x-ray candidates rather than accept any Tom, Dick and Harry put forward by the party or hero-worship the Leader.

In the First Republic, at least in the then Western Region or South-west, our fathers knew only Awolowo and his party and whosoever was put forward by the Leader was the choice of the electorate. This has largely remained so up to this day. The party or platform holds sway; even the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the courts uphold this. Another reason why Sanwo-Olu is relatively unknown is because of the way he emerged. But for the fact that the Lagos APC godfathers stoutly rejected the second term bid of Gov. Akinwunmi Ambode, there would have been no Sanwo-Olu, at least for now. So, Sanwo-Olu is a child of circumstance, as it were. He could not have prepared for the 'agbami' or middle of the deep, blue sea that he suddenly found himself. He could, however, not have been luckier for two reasons. One: he has a formidable political structure behind him. His is a case of someone standing on the shoulders of giants. Initially, it looked as if Akinwunmi would put up a good fight but he soon crumbled like a pack of cards as he was easily out-foxed by the old, tested, and experienced wily foxes he was up against. The moment the Lagos and Abuja factions of Lagos APC found a meeting point and decided to share the spoils, with the Lagos faction getting the governorship (Sanwo-Olu) and the Abuja end getting the deputy governor (Hamzat Babafemi), Ambode's political fate was sealed, at least for now. Two is the shortage of heavy-weight political gladiators in the state. Except for the Peoples Democratic Party's governorship candidate, Jimi Agbaje, the field is left wide open for Sanwo-Olu. Of the two, Agbaje is better known, having been in the field, criss-crossing one party to another in search of the elusive crown but it is doubtful if, even now, he has enough backbone as Sanwo-Olu. Politics and elections are, interestingly, both predictable and unpredictable at same time, especially so in these climes. Unpredictable because voter behaviour can experience wide swings at short notice; elections, however, began to wear a cloak of certainty since APC as the ruling party at the Centre began to throw everything it controls and commands into the fray. So, from Edo to Ondo to Ekiti to Osun and other parts of the country, INEC and the security forces have helped the party out-muscle and outmanoeuvre its opponents. So, head or tail, Sanwo-Olu looks good to go - except there is an upset.

### Sanwo-Olu: Fragile, handle with care!

But I digress! My reason for actually writing this piece is that every day as I drive around Lagos and encounter Sanwo-Olu's campaign posters, I am amused by the kind of personality he projects. Photographs are like standing before the mirror. What you see is what you are! Photographs, they say, don't lie. You may not have given it serious thought but try and do so from now on. The photographs of Sanwo-Olu project a personality that is fragile and breakable. If you were to package him in a container, you will most likely label it 'Fragile: Handle with care' I am sure you know those kind of 'Breakable: Handle with care' materials. Compare him with Ambode, for instance: Stout, burly, sturdy. But Sanwo-Olu in his photographs (I have not met him in person or spoken with him) looks reserved, even reticent, self-effacing, gentle, and not ponderous. He appears in his photographs as that kind of personality grandma taught me are too quiet and too reserved that they are not able to say all they have to say. But, oh my, they can be made of steel inside! It reminds me also of an incident in my secondary school days at Owo High School, Owo. Terror-inspiring Mr. Omole (formerly Mr. Jacobs) had brought out the Head Girl and flogged her mercilessly. Omole had this saying: If you want to flog a person, you must flog him and let him know that someone flogged him. That was how he flogged the Head Girl. The next day, the Head Girl's father, a senior tutor at the nearby St. John/Mary's Teacher Training College (which was like a University in those days), came to the school to inquire what could have warranted such bestial treatment. Tears in his eyes, he said: 'Toyin, my daughter, is such a well-behaved girl that even if you put sugar in her mouth, it will not melt' Sanwo-Olu appears to me like Toyin but I am sure you know what we are going to put in his mouth if he wins the election is not sugar but power, influence, and money, all of which taste sweeter than sugar. What he will do with them, we may not be able to say a priori. We have to wait until he gets into office - if Jimi Agbaje or a dark horse does not upstage him. But should he get into office and his looks belie his actions, then, I will tell you the name my people call such a person!

### Buhari clears the air on Jubril

At long last, President Muhammadu Buhari has cleared the air on the widely- and wildly-circulated rumour about his alleged death and cloning. I once purchased a book in my University days, which someone loaned but never returned; it is titled 'In his image: The cloning of a man'. It depicted how a man decided to clone himself. So when the rumour of Buhari's cloning broke, I knew it was at least a scientific or fictional possibility. For decades, scientists have grappled with how to clone or make human beings and have attained a bewildering level of success along the line. Experience shows that the first step on the road to invention is the ability to imagine or think about it. If you can think it, then, you can do it. The secrecy surrounding Buhari's health has not helped matters. The nature of his sickness is yet to be officially disclosed. The cabal that surround him have not helped matters. As we speak, the little that is known about Buhari's health and treatment - plus the cost at public expense - is courtesy of the rumour mill. A nation that suffered similarly in respect of the late President Umaru Yar'Adua cannot be blamed if it believes any rumour, especially when facts are not forthcoming. Now that he has started to open up, Buhari must go the whole hog by disclosing his health status and the cost to taxpayers. He must also stop this colonial mentality of deferring to foreign journalists while spurning Nigerian journalists at home. Charity, they say, begins at home.

**LAST WORD:** The Army authorities must come out clean on the actual number of soldiers lost to Boko Haram at Metele, including those 'missing in action' - as well as their names and where they come from. The rumour doing the rounds about the ethnicity of the casualties is damaging; damn too damaging. Clear the fouled air, please!

### RE: Adebayo Shittu

I shuddered to read 'What is Adebayo Shittu still doing in government (18th November) and 'Adebayo Shittu: NYSC, threats or blackmail? (25th November) together with the write-up on the gruesome murder of Jamal Kashoggi, the Saudi journalist - but we have had similar occurrences here. Dele Giwa, celebrated Nigerian journalist, was killed through parcel bomb in a way that was as professionally done as Kashoggi's. Please beware of your movements because those threats may not be empty. We often pray for you. God in His infinite mercies and compassion will protect you from predators.

-Prince Bola Olaoye, Osogbo.

It is only in Nigeria that shameless public officials lacking decency and courage would adamantly refuse to quit whenever their hands are caught in the cookie jar or they openly disobey the law. Kindly remain resolute! No

**Sanwo-Olu: Fragile, handle with care!**

shaking, as they say in our local parlance. Call the bluff of Adebayo Shittu and let him go through with his threat. The two of you will have your day in court. And before then, you shall remain protected by the Lord you worship daily! No evil shall befall you! Shittu is being disingenuous buying time to remain in the cabinet of President Buhari using delay tactics. It was reported he had sued the NYSC for not sending him a call-up letter to enlist for national service. Knowing the way the wheel of justice grinds so slowly in Nigeria, the case may not come up for hearing until the life of the administration terminates in 2019. He would then claim that he was not booted out of office or forced to resign. The dummy being sold to the President by the minister on why he is sitting tight in office is that the matter is in court and it would be prejudicial to take any action, which I consider as hogwash. He should honourably resign and wait for the verdict on his suit before the court. The arrogance for failing to do so is arrant nonsense and a blemish on Buhari's administration, which prides itself as a proponent of the rule of law. If Kemi Adeosun was forced to resign, Adebayo Shittu must be given the same treatment. If not, it has no other name but 'double standard.' Keep up the good work of exposing public officials' malfeasance!

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2018

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## How to end the bully culture in America

Pambazuka News (Kenya)

August 23, 2018 Thursday

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Length: 1531 words

### **Body**

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I wrote a piece on bullying a while back. I have since seen many similar writings on the pervasive bully culture in America. Many young people fixated on what they were raised to believe by often busy, cosmetic and perhaps not so reflective guardians-keeping up appearances-may be bullies, crass and rude, but do not even realise it. (Not all: there are many decent well raised young millennials and 'Generation Nexters'). There is no understanding of a virtuous character and the inherent dignity of natural beings-the goal is: just superficially belong somewhere and be driven by crass materialism-buy the latest smart phone, the latest fashion.

Even the language of discourse and negotiation connote bullying and a dearth of sincerity or authenticity: we talk about using the 'bully pulpit' to negotiate, and 'faking it, till we make it.'

I am genuinely happy about a few people including Nigerians, who have graciously informed me that they read what I write. But how far can my writing go? Where can it reach? Even a few non-Nigerians have told me privately, that they read what I write, and I am flattered by it.

And I am also glad clever people read me. Once I tried to pick my 'distant readers' minds to see, if my frankness and willingness to point out thorny issues in American society is misconstrued. I did this with two people: a man and a woman-what balance! The lady said, 'No, you love America - and it is actually rather obvious.' She emphasised that I use an American privilege-First Amendment's freedom of speech-to express myself. Indeed, journalists have been killed in Nigeria (and elsewhere) by dictators for trying to express themselves honestly.

For example, the Nigerian rogue military dictator, General Ibrahim Babangida, who infamously bullied Nigerians and subverted the will of the people by annulling Nigeria's freest and fairest elections, is alleged to have instigated the odious use of a letter bomb to kill the prominent journalist, Dele Giwa. Just after a Premium Times reporter, Samuel Ogundipe published an article regarding the Inspector General of Police' report to the acting Nigerian president, professor Yemi Osinbajo, about the illegal siege (akin to a coup d'état) ordered by former head of the secret police, another human rights violation and abuse of the press by state power occurred. The reporter has remained in detention for his refusal to disclose the source of his information.

Consequently, I am appreciative of the transparency, rule of law and free speech-privileges that I enjoy in America, but which are non-existent in Nigeria, my country of origin, where journalists have been silenced in the past.

The second person, a former American government official, who discusses with me as I express my views, said, 'then change it. That is what America is about, if something is wrong and you do not like it, then you change it.'

## How to end the bully culture in America

Did you know you can change the whole constitution? Through amendments.

Anyway, that was some needed divagation for clarification. Back to the culture that needs to be changed. I said pigs would fly if 'somebody' became president, and when it comes down to it, the American Presidency is too noble an office and a cross-section of voting Americans recognise this. Surely, Americans are circumspect regarding, who occupies the noble office. Well...

And then I looked better at society's role in all of this. The open and unaddressed racism against blacks; I thought-American society is yet to eliminate it, because it is too uncomfortable a topic, you know? But the open misogyny, numerous other offenses and the stark-naked reality that someone was absolutely unfit for the job, would not pass muster-surely. But, well...

I looked carefully, apart from people getting jobs they are not qualified for-and no, it is not black people. (America is the great leveller, and that is perhaps a good thing, because an unfair aristocracy is precluded from being instituted-that is the logic, but is it true in practice?)

Arguably, only Richard Nixon has been a more qualified candidate for President of the United States than Hillary Clinton. Nixon, who became Vice President at the age of 40, after being a Congressman and Senator, often served in the capacity of acting President, because of President Eisenhower's poor health. Thus, because Nixon often did the job of President, while serving as Vice President he was the most well-prepared non-president running for the office of President of the United States. In fact, he raised the status of the position of Vice President, because of how he had to step in often for a recurrently ill President Eisenhower.

Hillary Clinton apart from being First Lady and a US Senator, also served as the real second most powerful person in the US government in the Obama administration, which is the Secretary of State. The Vice President is just really a person, waiting for the President to no longer be President so, he/she can step in-until Nixon raised the profile of the Vice President office, when he filled in for an ill, but popular President Eisenhower.

Does it matter that many not so 'qualified' candidates have gone on to be among the best US Presidents, like Lincoln and Barack Obama?

First, they were not egregiously unqualified and unfit for the noble role of president.

Second, apart from having great acumen (intellect), charisma, energy and empathy for Americans, they had another huge qualification, through their life experiences for the role. They had character, which they developed by overcoming hardship or discrimination. Lincoln's sobriquet is 'Honest Abe.' Many successful US Presidents have known pain, suffering and marginalisation: Lincoln, the self-made man born in a log cabin, overcame abject poverty, loss of his mother as a boy and other close family; being an autodidact, and his battle with depression, all prepared him for the noble office in which character should be a required virtue. The patrician turned populist, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, struggled with adult polio, which crippled him. Perhaps due to his illness, Roosevelt consequently developed great empathy for people, who struggled with hardship, pain and suffered like the common man and the average American (although he had been born into fabulous wealth).

Barack Obama dealt with the complexity of being raised by a white mother and white grandparents, but being discriminated against as a black man. He also had to struggle with being accepted by the black community in America. He famously lost his bid for Congressman to former Black Panther, Bobby Rush, who just had to say: 'He ain't one of us.' Meaning: he has an African name, he looks black, but he is not an African American descendant of Black slaves.

Hillary Clinton had the character for the office of President of the United States. Look at the terrain and the hidden rape culture and not so hidden misogyny, which she as a woman was not immune to. Imagine: a white woman once told me, she has to pretend she is not smart, because men do not find it attractive. Hillary Clinton has risen and comported herself with dignity playing the game of the 'boys' in arguably the most paternalistic and patriarchal society in the West. She was valedictorian of her class and graduated from Yale Law School, the number one ranked law school in America. Her acumen was on display to the world as she wiped the floor with candidate

## How to end the bully culture in America

Trump, in each debate they had. Apart from the acumen and job qualifications, she had the requisite character as well to be President, because she has risen to the top in an openly sexist culture with grace and her dignity untrashed. The endemic rape culture that female professionals struggle with today suggests this.

When there were revelations and allegations of outright sexual assault that would have normally terminated a candidacy, despite the cries, a cross-section of Americans was inured to it, perhaps, because it was an extant practice that was yet to be challenged. Abusive behaviour toward women had become normalised in America (similarly, many women, perhaps in reaction, have become abusive towards men and other women, and expect them to suck it up). Do not misunderstand me: there are many decent men in America and even politicians, but it is the American way-sometimes-not to complain, but to accept the injustice of some rogue players. Just like society has long winked at the transgressions of rogue police officers abusing African Americans.

When the inherent dignity of women was violated publicly and should have outraged all Americans, who at least have a relationship with a woman, if they were not females themselves? When a candidate repeatedly made blatant references to his female opponents' monthly cycle, like an impish child, I mean, America just overlooked it, because abuse and bullying happen. Suck it up-the American way?

It is time the bully culture is checked in America. We can start by stop giving unqualified bullies jobs decent people are qualified for, only so they can ride roughshod over everyone-women too. Because what happens is that they end up catapulting the entire environment right back to the stone-age, if they do not blow it to smithereens.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2018

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## **Jitters As MEND Threatens Another Blast**

Daily Champion (Lagos)

October 21, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 1159 words

**Byline:** Godwin Akor

**Dateline:** Makurdi

### **Body**

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Nigerian has again been thrown into fear because of the threat by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) that it would soon cause another bomb blast in the Federal Capital, Abuja.

The threat came from no less a personality than MEND's Asari Dokubo who said the questioning of Raymond Dokpesi and Henry Okah by security agencies over the October 1 bomb blasts in Abuja irked the organization, so, it would unleash more terror on the people.

Dokubo's statement came after President Goodluck Jonathan had said that some people may have used MEND for the dastardly act. He held a meeting with the militants thinking that they meant well for the nation.

If Jonathan thought that MEND would abandon its cause and allow peace to reign, then, Dokubo has told him in clear terms that the organization should be treated as an enemy.

This is why the federal government's complacent approach to MEND's claim that it caused the disgrace that took place in the presence of some world leaders should be viewed and handled with the seriousness it deserves.

There is no doubt that MEND is annoyed because of Dokpesi and Orka's arrest because they are both from the Niger Delta but this question must be asked : Is Jonathan not from the Niger Delta region?.

If Jonathan, according to MEND, has erred because the two persons were questioned, should MEND not blame itself for destabilizing an administration headed by one of their own?

I have never seen where a dog eats dog, but the militants from the Niger Delta are trying to make other Nigerians believe that the people of Niger Delta hate themselves. The attempt by some people to make the situation look as if Jonathan is not liked by his people should be however resisted.

MEND must know that the Yoruba did not vote for Obasanjo in 1999 but he became president. In fact activities of the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) became more pronounced when Obasanjo became a civilian president.

Heating up the polity and creating panic in Abuja where President Goodluck Jonathan sits would create a situation of insecurity not only in Abuja but in other parts of Nigeria. If the Niger Delta region was neglected during the

## Jitters As MEND Threatens Another Blast

previous administrations and MEND did not bomb Abuja, why must be now that Jonathan is presiding over the affairs of the nation?

If the Niger Delta region became impoverished when a son of the soil was not president, should the situation not improve when their son is occupying the exalted seat of president?.

When the position of MEND is critically assessed in relation to the October 1 bomb blasts in Abuja and the threat it has issued, one is inclined towards believing that the organization which claims to be emancipating the people may have been used by politicians to discredit Jonathan and disunite the people the more.

It may not be out of point for one to say that material inducement is being used to persuade MEND to create anarchy so that in a situation of confusion, the soldiers would stage a comeback.

Where is the chief of army staff?, where is the inspector general of police?, where is the chief of air staff?, where is the chief of naval staff?, where is the SSS overall boss?, where is the overall boss of the civil defence corps?, where is the president's security adviser and other security personnel who should give the nation a focus in times like this?.

Why must Nigeria be subjected to intimidation by a few?, why must one person threaten to bomb the Federal Capital Territory and the nation is begging and hailing him?

This act of cowardice by the authorities must stop. If the rest of Nigerians decide to incite the citizenry and threaten the security of the nation, what would the country turn out to be?

This is not the first time Nigeria has witnessed bomb blasts. A parcel bomb was used to shatter the foremost journalist, Dele Giwa, during the Babangida era; in 1986, a plane conveying army officers was shattered at Ejigbo near Lagos, the amount of destruction bomb blasts have done to lives and property in Nigeria cannot be quantified but has Nigeria broken up?.

What appears to be happening is that the strength of the Federal Government is being tested because this is the first time a group would come out to declare that it would make Nigeria ungovernable by causing series of bomb blasts in the nation's seat of power.

Can anybody tell the Israeli or American president that he has plans to bomb Jerusalem or New York?. Can what is happening in Nigeria happen in the smallest African country?

My advice to Jonathan is that he should forget the issue of 2011 and face the problem of insecurity squarely. He may not know that his attention is being diverted so that there would be breakdown of law and order and the truncation of democracy. He may not know that good governance is a pre-condition for his eligibility to contest for the presidency in 2011.

Jonathan has several advantages over others that are eyeing the presidency. As a sitting president, he would be campaigning with all the paraphernalia of his office just as all the governors would give him the respect that a president deserves.

Jonathan is facing only a fraction of the problems that would be coming up as he prepares for the contest. Apart from the problems that would arise from within the Niger Delta region, desperate politicians from the North would not just allow him to have a smooth sail. That is why Boko Haram may not allow peace to reign because the extremists think that a leader is anointed on the basis of religion.

More trouble may come his way from the retired generals who think that leaders must be appointed or selected/elected from among them by all means.

Trouble may come from some of the governors who think they were elected on the basis of religion. Jonathan should know that kidnapping in the east may not end easily as it has been discovered to be a lucrative business.

## Jitters As MEND Threatens Another Blast

This is why the security of the nation should be given priority. While the president meets with stakeholders in Igbo land and find ways of ending kidnapping, service chiefs and heads of security agencies should be summoned to keep MEND, Boko Haram and so on in check. Where an organization is illegal, it should be proscribed.

The president should, as a matter of urgency, summon the governors for a discussion on the threat to national security. MEND is no longer a threat to Abuja and the Niger Delta alone but to the entire nation. If the amnesty programme has failed, then, another solution to the Niger Delta problem should be devised.

There arises a challenge for the present attorney general of the federation because the former Attorney General, Mike Kaase Aondakaa, evolved the amnesty programme which brought about temporary peace in the Niger Delta.

The heads of the various security agencies also have a role to play as they must justify the confidence reposed in them by the federal government. The time to act is now, tomorrow may be too late since MEND has threatened to scatter Abuja again.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2010

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## **The Problem With Desperados [opinion]**

Leadership (Abuja)

November 5, 2010 Friday

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**Length:** 1202 words

**Byline:** Ibrahim Sheme

### **Body**

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So much has been said about the propensity of Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to count on the meaning of his name to reach great heights in life. It is related that right from kindergarten, the man had leaned on a smiling providence to lift him up from an obscurity to the limelight. The same streak of good luck has followed him right to where he is today.

It was in politics that his luck shone brightest. He never ran for an election on his own. He always skipped from being a deputy to principal: the Bayelsa State governor found himself in trouble when Jonathan was deputising for him, and he gave way for the latter to ascend the throne; President Umaru Yar'Adua got into deep trouble with his health, and he died. Jonathan became the most powerful man in Africa. How much luck could one ask for?

All this while, there was no proof that the ever-smiling man coveted positions of power and influence. They dropped onto his lap from the heavens, like manna. Well, until now. Today, when the potentials power holds for him are most glaring, Jonathan appears to be running out of luck. For the first time in his life, he is standing in front of millions asking to vote for him. Now that he knows what it means to be president, he also knows what it could mean not to be president. Now he is working hard to remain in his seat. Hard luck, many persons are committed to snatching it from him. The desperation is mutual on both sides.

Jonathan, who might not have even worked hard to marry his wife, is no longer counting on good luck. He has to work for it the hard way. And he is not taking any chances. The presidency of Nigeria is not one you get through sheer luck. Political power is slippery, and those raising the stakes so high for him - the other candidates - are also formidable opponents.

But Jonathan does not want us to believe that he is desperate to get elected. It is those others that are, he tells us. It is not a do-or-die affair. In his Facebook update on Tuesday, he accused his opponents in the race of what he described as "dangerously anxious to the extend of hitting some of us below the belt."

For me, it sounded like somebody saying, "Look, I'm the one who's desperate, but don't tell me I am." This is because the president has exhibited this instinct on more occasions than can be counted, much more than those he denigrates. He also keeps showing that his desperation is growing by the day as the general elections draw near. I have a small list of such inauspicious moments:

## The Problem With Desperados [opinion]

The forced resignation of national chairman of the ruling PDP, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, because he did not believe that power should return to the South because of Yar'Adua's death. He voiced concern that some people were working on making Jonathan run in the presidential contest;

-The president encouraged a group of Northern politicians to sponsor a "national summit" in Kaduna which endorsed his decision to contest in the 2011 polls. This group was a crude counterbalance to another Northern group which had earlier said the region would not back any move by Jonathan to participate in the election because the North's turn had not expired;

-Jonathan's unintelligent denial of the zoning agreement within the PDP when even a primary school pupil could point it out in the document;

-The president's absolution of the MEND from the twin bombing in Abuja on Independence Day when every fact before and after the attack had shown that it was indeed the terrorist group that carried it out. The ongoing trial of MEND leader Henry Okah in Johannesburg and subsequent investigations by Nigerian security organisations have fingered unequivocally at only one group for the crime - MEND. Jonathan had reckoned that a terrorist attack in the North by people from his own state would question his capacity and sincerity as president of Nigeria and so tried to deflect attention from them in such an disingenuous fashion.

-The government's smear campaign against the strongest opponent of Jonathan in the 2011 race, former president Ibrahim B. Babangida (IBB), in order to discredit him and force him out of the contest. IBB has been called names by the Goodluck/Sambo Campaign Organisation and by some shadowy groups linked to the president. Only this week, "former leaders" of MEND were reported to have stormed Bayelsa, Jonathan's home state, asking the Federal Government to investigate the murder of **journalist Dele Giwa** - as if the matter had never been investigated before. Besides, this looks like the case of the kettle calling the pot black - a group of "former" and proven criminals asking the authorities to punish a suspect;

-The smear campaign against IBB and his supporters included the failed to link him to the Abuja bomb blasts. We should also not forget the fact that Chief Raymond Dokpesi, the director of IBB's campaign organisation, was disowned by some political leaders from his native Niger delta region because of his refusal to follow Jonathan. Chief Edwin Clark, the octogenarian leader of the group of elders, is the mainstay of the Jonathan presidency from the delta region. Dokpesi was further threatened by MEND, who said that they would hurt him, his family and his business outfits for his effrontery in backing IBB;

-Jonathan's attempt to force an amendment to the Electoral Act 2010 to allow all his ministers and aides to serve as delegates in the forthcoming primary election. After the Senate had rejected the bill, another attempt of the president to sneak the bill back into the House of Representatives was reported this week;

-The attempted "coup" against Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State, to remove him as chairman of the Nigeria Governors Forum because of his refusal to back Jonathan in the 2011 election and replace him a compliant Governor Gbenga Daniel. The move, which failed woefully this week, was orchestrated by some governors who are hell-bent on making Jonathan the elected president of Nigeria.

Need I provide more proof of Jonathan's desperation to cling to power through the 2011 election? Yes, the president has a constitutional right to contest. The problem is his denial of his party's internal agreement to which he was a signatory and all the other crude tactics he and his campaign team are employing in order to remain in office. One can understand that a man who has never won an election on his own merit would now want to prove his mettle in the ring. But should he be so desperate? The problem with desperados is that they can say and do anything in order to get what they want. And with the instruments of power in their hands, that can be dangerous.

Jonathan should prove his electability through good works now that he is in the saddle, as well as good conduct through his pronouncements and actions. The burden of incumbency has put more responsibility on him than on any other candidate. His campaign team's spitfire reactions to the other aspirants are uncalled for. They only go to prove that the president and the people he gave the job of helping him win the election are not so sure of

The Problem With Desperados [opinion]

themselves, do not trust the good luck he has been known for, and would do anything to win - by hook or crook. That does not sound palatable to our young democracy.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2010

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## **Nigeria's Persecuted Press Fights Back Underground**

The New York Times

April 15, 1998, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 1998 The New York Times Company

**Distribution:** Foreign Desk

**Section:** Section A; ; Section A; Page 8; Column 1; Foreign Desk ; Column 1;

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** By HOWARD W. FRENCH

By HOWARD W. FRENCH

**Dateline:** LAGOS, Nigeria

### **Body**

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Every week without fail since Gen. Sani Abacha seized power in 1993, Kola Ilori has somehow managed to put out Tell, Nigeria's most influential and combative news magazine.

For some issues this has meant scrambling to secretly reprint the magazine after an entire press run has been seized by the country's military authorities, who routinely smash up printing shops and arrest their owners to block publications like his. Other times it has required desperate last-minute efforts to patch together an issue after seeing the bulk of the staff carted away in police sweeps. Once, Mr. Ilori said, he eluded capture by State Security agents only by posing as a lowly truck loader during a police raid.

Tell is officially published in Lagos, but Mr. Ilori uses printers all over the country.

Until late last year, Mr. Ilori was mostly responsible for production matters at the magazine. But the abduction of one of the magazine's top editors and the forced exile of another has left him virtually alone at the head of the enterprise.

For many of its 38 years of independence from Britain, Nigeria had the freest and most diverse press in Africa. But for the last several years, independent journalists have been arrested, beaten, forced into exile, and even assassinated. Nigeria has experienced "the most extreme deterioration of conditions for the press in Africa," according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a United States-based advocacy group.

To keep the police off balance, Mr. Ilori changes sleeping places regularly, sees little of his family, rarely uses the same printing press for more than two weeks in a row, and meets secretly with other reporters and editors to hash out story ideas only under the cover of religious services in churches and mosques.

## Nigeria's Persecuted Press Fights Back Underground

Despite its hit-and-run existence, Tell consistently manages to beat the competition, revealing details of coup plots, tensions inside the armed forces and corruption scandals that make it a must read for the masses, the Nigerian intelligentsia and foreign diplomats alike.

"That we come out every week is the result of sheer ingenuity," said Mr. Ilori, 48, who spoke in long and impassioned sentences at a carefully arranged meeting place. "We have had to perfect a fleet-footed art of mobile production. It taxes your brain, it taxes your blood, it taxes your body, but it is the only way to survive."

Each week Tell publishes a photograph of its last managing editor, Onome Osifo-Whiskey, under the stark headline, "Where is Onime Osifo-Whiskey?" He was abducted at his Lagos home last November as he dressed to go to church, and has not been heard from since.

Having already spent six months in prison, Tell's editor-in-chief, Nosa Igbor, fled the country for Britain in November when State Security agents raided his home after the publication of an article that discussed rumors of a serious illness afflicting General Abacha.

One well-known *journalist*, Christine Anyanwu, has been imprisoned since 1995 and is serving a 15-year sentence as an "accessory to treason" for publishing a story debunking official accounts of a coup plot. Ms. Anyanwu, 46, is reported by human rights groups to be going blind for lack of medical care.

Another reporter, Oni Egbunine, was beaten into a coma by the police last July in punishment for an article that reported corruption by state Government officials in the provincial capital of Owerri.

As widespread as press repression has become in Nigeria, the harshest focus remains on Tell, and a small number of competitors, among them The News and Tempo -- all known for their credibility.

Dapo Olorunyomi, Mr. Ilori's counterpart at The News, was forced to flee to the United States in 1996 after repeated attempts to arrest him. Once he had left, security agents simply began focusing on his wife.

During the next year, Ladi Olorunyomi, a mother of two and staff member of Lagos' Independent Journalism Center, a press training organization, was arrested twice and held for over three months without charge. Never asked about her own work, Mrs. Olorunyomi was repeatedly interrogated about her husband's activities and whereabouts.

"If you walk through newsrooms in Nigeria they are mostly empty, because to stay at your desk is to face arrest," said Mrs. Olorunyomi, who fled to the United States last November. "Even the clean-up men get arrested. That is what is happening to the press under Abacha."

Of the 17 journalists now known to be under arrest in Nigeria, 10 are from the staff of The News.

Many of the founders and top editors of Tell and The News cut their teeth at another pioneering weekly, Newswatch, which was founded in 1985 under the previous military regime of Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida.

Newswatch set new standards in Africa both for production values patterned after Newsweek and Time, and for a no-holds-barred treatment of issues like Government corruption and human rights abuses.

The Babangida Government, of which General Abacha was deputy head of state, set new standards in the brutality it was willing to use to enforce the limits on criticism.

In October 1986, less than two years after its founding, Newswatch's editor, Dele Giwa, was killed in a bomb blast that has gone unclaimed and unpunished.

After the assassination, Newswatch dramatically softened its tone, and many of its top editors, including Mr. Ilori, left in disenchantment.

## Nigeria's Persecuted Press Fights Back Underground

"The regime has grown even harder since then, but we can no longer be stopped so easily" Mr. Ilori said. "They can seize all of our copies at six in the morning and by evening we are back on the street again because we know that this is the last lap in a deadly race between our military rulers and the people of Nigeria.

"One or two of us may disappear, but we are prepared for survival. We cannot afford to fail."

## Graphic

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Photo: Tell, Nigeria's most influential news weekly, faces a campaign of harrassment and intimidation by the Government of Gen. Sani Abacha. (Robert Grossman for The New York Times)

Map of Nigeria showing location of Lagos: The Lagos magazine Tell is published on a hit-and-run basis.

**Load-Date:** April 15, 1998

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## 21st Century Media - New Frontiers, New Barriers

Leadership (Abuja)

May 7, 2011 Saturday

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**Length:** 1441 words

**Byline:** Ruth Tene Natsa

### **Body**

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The above was the theme of this year's World Press Freedom Day which held across the world on the 4th and 5th of this month. Ruth Tene Natsa attended the ceremony in Abuja.

World Press Freedom Day was created twenty years ago by journalists in Africa who were keen in the protection of the fundamental principles of freedom of expression as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - a call repeated this year by the United Nations.

In looking at the above theme, the meaning of journalism or who a *journalist* is must be brought to the fore.

This year's theme was apt considering that the 21st century media are enjoying and at the same time battling with the benefits of new technologies as well as struggling with the challenges posed by new barriers.

The new frontiers were the technological advancement which made the media operate under more favourable conditions, made communication easier and made information more accessible while posing new challenges to both media practitioners and their benefactors.

Profound in Nigeria at the celebration of the World Press Freedom day was the outcry for the harmonisation of the Freedom of Information (FoI) bill, which is said to be a bill, that would ensure the freedom of the citizenry and allow access to information by both media practitioners and the citizenry at large.

In this year's celebration, there was a partnership between the United States (US) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to commemorate the day for the first time.

In his remarks, the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Terrence P. McCulley noted that the establishment and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development of civil societies and democracies across the globe.

He then commended the courage of the Nigeria's media coverage of the April polls which he said were extensive and influenced the electoral process through a vibrant and savvy youths; adding that with the growing penetration of internet and mobile technology, the electorate had embraced social media platforms that are becoming popular around the world. Statistics have shown that more than 90 million Nigerians own mobile phones, while millions have access to the internet.

## 21st Century Media - New Frontiers, New Barriers

He noted that the new frontiers of social media and the internet were building bridges by creating a community of informed citizenry, amplifying their voices by offering a platform to speak freely and to associate with likeminded others.

Another speaker, a lecturer from the department of Theatre Arts, University of Abuja, Dr Kwaghondo Agber, noted that the 21st century has witnessed revolutionary changes in information and communication technology.

According to him, the 21st century had thrown up new media that held out possibilities of demand access to content anytime and anywhere on digital devices such as I- Phone, I-Pads, Androids, Blackberry phones.

The new media, he said are a broad term which emerged in the later part of the 20th century to encompass the equipment and systems used in the private and public sectors to create, store and distribute information.

He said the nucleus of the modern technology is the computer which has the capacity to keep signals in its memory and provide visuals and even audio interpretations to such signals. It offers faster, cheaper, more efficient and effective means of achieving quality in news gathering, processing and dissemination.

The Doctor said the modern media were facilitated by satellites, computers and fibre optics which allowed for increased communication between people all over the world, allowed for better expressions of ideas, allowed for massive storage and retrieval of information and also guaranteed effective and efficient method of information gathering, processing and dissemination.

He maintained that the new media had linked the world into a web that radically broke the connection between physical place and social place, making physical location much less significant for social relationships.

He said satellites had stimulated the growth of news gathering and dissemination agencies such as the Cable News Network (CNN), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), sky news and the American trio of ABC, NBC and CBS.

As much as there are new frontiers, so are there new barriers and challenges facing the 20th century media. These barriers and challenges are grouped into technology, restrictions on use of new technologies, censorship, age and the fear of government that the internet could push forward revolutionary ideas, child pornography, human trafficking and other unwanted information.

While many countries suffer various kinds of censorship, such as North Korea where only 4% of the population has access to internet and none of its newspapers is online. It is such that the internet is only available in cafes and hotels that cater to tourists and contains mainly government propaganda.

With the need to guess opinions on press freedom, a poll was taken to access the world's response to freedom of the press by the World Public Opinion. The outcome was such that different people, countries and nations have differing opinions based on age, religion and education.

Presented with a choice between an argument in favour of media freedom without government control and the argument that "government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it thinks will be politically destabilizing," majorities or pluralities in 15 publics polled felt that that the risk of political instability does not justify government control.

People with greater education tended to support media freedom more than those with less education. This pattern was evident in response to questions on the importance of media freedom, whether the media should be free to publish without government control, whether people should be able to read publications from other countries even those considered enemies, and whether people should have the right to read whatever is on the Internet. Those with college degrees supported media freedom across each of these issues more so than those with less than high school education by magnitudes ranging between 7-14 points. However, even those with the lowest level of education supported media freedom on all these questions.

Education has no effect, however, on people's view of how much media freedom their country has or how much it should have.

## 21st Century Media - New Frontiers, New Barriers

The effect of age showed a different pattern. Older and younger people showed little difference in the importance of media freedom, whether the media should be free of government control, or on whether people should have the right to read publications from other countries. But people 60 years and older (though still a majority of 52%) were less likely than younger respondents (66%) to feel that people should have the right to read whatever is on the internet.

The oldest respondents (40%) also were more likely to say that their country has "a lot" of media freedom than the youngest (26%); and the oldest (42%) were less likely to feel that their country should have "more" media freedom than the youngest.

In celebrating the world Press Day, there can be no doubt that the FOI bill is a necessity as in the words of US Secretary of States, Hillary Clinton, "when a free media is in jeopardy, all other human rights are also threatened. So, in that spirit, let us continue to champion those who stand for media freedom and expose those who would deny it; let us always work towards a world where the free flow of information and ideas remains a force for progress."

The US envoy had also noted that people around the world were calling out for freedom, transparency and self determination with new digital tools; supporting the cause in a way that is faster and more widespread than ever before, with journalists playing a central role. Unfortunately, many of them had been killed or injured as they sought to report the grave challenges facing today's world. He said, the onus laid on the living to support press freedom as a fundamental right to be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

This threat of death to journalists is not limited to the US as many Nigerian journalists have been sacrificed in the realm of duty, famous veterans of journalism are **Dele Giwa**,

The president to the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Mohammed Garba had also noted the violence and threats suffered by journalists in Nigeria as many professionals had been sacrificed on the platform of their duty, but noted that during the recent April polls adjudged to be free and fair by both local and international observers, no **journalist** had been reported killed.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2011

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## Babangida's Age And Agenda [column]

Leadership (Abuja)

August 21, 2010 Saturday

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**Length:** 1351 words

**Byline:** Aniebo Nwamu

### **Body**

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At the peak of the June 12 struggle, in 1994, I was so despondent that I decided to approach an old and experienced friend to seek advice.

I felt like quitting journalism because the job was no longer giving me happiness. My friend, a doctor who was then in his late 50s, advised me to seek greener pastures overseas, if I could. The only viable business in Nigeria, he told me, was government.

By that he meant that except you are in government - as a minister, governor, senator, president, commissioner or even councillor - you won't be rich, especially if you are ethical. "If I were younger, I would have abandoned this country for good. There is nothing left here, you know," he said. The only rich doctors, he added, were those who were not observing the ethics of the profession. I agreed that it was the same in every profession: engineering, law, nursing, teaching, journalism. If I had listened to my old friend, maybe I would have participated in the politics of the Fourth Republic and could have been a senator or a governor today. But is it really true, as my friend said, that there is nothing left in our country except public office and public funds?

General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida has just proved him right. Here is a man who ruled this country for eight years until 1993 but still wants to rule again at old age. I expected that, in the last 17 years he has been out of power, he would have established farms, vehicle-making factories and several other manufacturing firms that would employ millions of Nigerians. After all, that's the spirit of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that his government launched. What did he forget in Aso Rock that he wants to pick up? It was one of the questions we asked him when he invited us to his Minna home last weekend. Truly, he had convincing answers to most questions. Yes, he has bright ideas; but he couldn't convince me that he would perform better in old age than when he was younger.

Although he celebrated his 69th birth anniversary on Tuesday, I put Babangida's age now at 75 or 76. I don't intend to prove that he deliberately lied about his age. No. Many of his age mates simply adopted dates of birth. There was no birth registry then and few parents were educated enough to read the calendar. Even many who belong to my generation do not have birth certificates and have sworn affidavits claiming they are five years younger. When former President Olusegun Obasanjo's first son Gbenga said his father was older than he claimed, everyone knew he was telling the truth: likely, Obasanjo is now between 82 and 85, not 73.

## Babangida's Age And Agenda [column]

I can support my guess at IBB's age with the stories he himself told us last week: By 1948, he and Abdulsalami Abubakar (another ex-head of state) were plucking mangoes at the hilltop where their homes are now located. They were being chased away by the colonial masters' dogs, and they swore that they would live there after their retirement. Again, between 1948 and 1954, IBB was reading Tai Solarin's column, "Thinking with you" (in the Daily Times). So, if one thinks with me, he will agree that IBB couldn't have been reading at the age of 6 or 7. Judging by the age I started reading The Renaissance (formerly The Biafran Sun and later Daily Star), and believing that I started school at an earlier age than he did, I presume IBB was at least 13 in 1948.

Now that Babangida wants to run for president, his opponents are sure to flaunt June 12, the Okigbo panel's report, **Dele Giwa** etcetera to whittle down his supporters. But, are these really "ugly spots"? I have not been asked to campaign for IBB but, apart from his age, I have little else against his ambition. For, if senility sets in and he is in power, the ship of state is sure to drift - as it did under ailing Yar'Adua.

In my heart of hearts, I believe IBB had no hand in the murder of my senior colleague **Giwa**. Rather, I suspect some overzealous security agents who might have done certain things without their bosses' knowledge. The security agencies' inability to catch the murderers should be an ugly spot on the IBB administration and the subsequent regimes. That is probably why many more Nigerians have been assassinated with impunity.

The Okigbo report did not say that IBB stole \$12.4 billion. It said the Gulf oil windfall was not put in "regenerative investments".

As to June 12, I can testify that the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election was not Babangida's most grievous offence as a military leader. As a **journalist** who has interviewed many important personalities in Nigeria and abroad - not disregarding the several "off the record" encounters - I know that, in the quiet of their homes, many Nigerians have given thanks to Oluwa for that annulment. I'm not one of them - no, I'm too enlightened to support anti-democratic tendencies - but, one evening before June 23 of that year, I was in The Guardian newsroom when one Omo-Oba said something like, "Yes, it's now time to deal with these Igbo people." All of us had been rejoicing that Abiola had won when he uttered that rubbish, and, naturally, those of us that were Igbo withdrew into our shells. What have Ndigo done wrong? Their hard work and tenaciousness have brought them nothing but envy and jealousy from little minds. When, therefore, the election was annulled and most of our Yoruba friends were wearing mournful faces, you did not expect many Ndigo to sincerely express sympathy with Omo-Oba who was hoping to "deal with these Igbo people". And, during his campaigns, Abiola once carelessly said he could do without Igbo people, perhaps prompting Arthur Nzeribe to start his Association for Better Nigeria project. The betrayal of Ndigo by their south-western compatriots during the civil war is still boldly written in history books. Even the young ones who don't read have heard the story from their elderly relations. And the way Obasanjo treated the South-East during his last eight years in power tells another story.

Nevertheless, the actual ugly spot on the military regime led by IBB is the way it managed the nation's economy. When we reminded IBB of the belief that his regime institutionalised corruption in the country, he recounted how he had challenged people to step forward and say they bribed him. He spoke of the cleanliness of his ministers and how nobody has been convicted of the crime. But he missed the point. It was probably the effects of the economic reforms introduced by his government that made thieves out of many Nigerians. They had to steal in order to feed their families. Corruption became a way of life: 419 boomed. Civil servants and everybody else who had access to the treasury stole unchallenged. Truly, the situation has got worse since 1993. But the pervasiveness of corruption in the country reached this height for the first time when IBB was in power. From then, also, criminals have not been punished. Everything, like the economy, became practically liberalised!

During the Buhari/Idiagbon era, corrupt politicians of the Second Republic were locked up, put on trial, and were being jailed when IBB staged his coup. Many thought he had come to execute the politicians but, instead, he set them all free. The War Against Indiscipline (WAI) that had started working was neutralised and limited to a monthly environmental sanitation. SAP, which really sapped the energies of Nigerians, happened because IBB relied on textbook economists. Common sense should have told them that there are reforms you cannot implement in an undeveloped country such as this. It's like globalisation being sold to us now. In a globalised world, what has Nigeria got to offer? What do we export? Even the crude oil we have is being exploited by foreigners with imported

Babangida's Age And Agenda [column]

machinery and equipment. We can't refine the fuel we consume, so it has to be imported. Indeed, IBB's government experimented with the lives of Nigerians, and, since then, things have not been the same.

Will things change to the pre-1986 days if IBB returns as president? Maybe he has a different agenda this time, but Nigeria now looks like a knocked engine.

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2010

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## **The world of Achebe: Illustrissimo of African Literature (1)**

The Sun (Nigeria)

April 5, 2013 Friday

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**Length:** 1373 words

### **Body**

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By Obiwu

There was an awkward silence in our Peugeot station wagon as we made the long drive back to Jos, Northern Nigeria, on a quiet morning in March 1990.

The 60th birthday symposium of Professor Chinua Achebe had just rounded up at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in the Southeast. The Peugeot was an official vehicle of the University of Jos which conveyed the university's contingent to the landmark occasion honoring Africa's foremost literary legend.

Apart from the designated driver, I was traveling with Professors Willy Umezinwa (Dean of Arts), Victor Aire (Chair of Linguistics and French), and Francis Ngwaba (late Chair of English). Ngwaba was the first to nudge the silence that pervaded our company. Achebe, he said, had challenged the gods. His remark went unacknowledged and was followed by more silence.

Undeterred, he returned to the subject again. He challenged us to name any other occasion when we knew of writers from every clime converging on the African continent to celebrate an African writer. Everyone was roused. Umezinwa observed, going back to Ngwaba's earlier comment, that the "Eagle on Iroko" symposium we had just witnessed was the kind of event that could drive the gods mad with envy.

Ngwaba then added, rather awkwardly, that we should all be wary of the anger of jealous gods. He spoke of the otherworldly character Ajofia, in Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which kills a man on the day his life is sweetest to him.

He spoke of Jacob who wrestles down an angel and ends up a cripple. As the proverb says, he prayed, hopefully the eagle on iroko has escaped the gun barrel's gaze.

### The world of Achebe: Illustrissimo of African Literature (1)

Another silence followed. On the heels of the Nsukka gathering, the news spread over the network services that Achebe had been involved in an auto accident. Reports claimed that the axle of the Peugeot station wagon in which he was traveling broke and the car ran into a ravine. Achebe, continued the report, broke his spinal cord.

A wet blanket fell over the University of Jos. Professors gathered in small, solemn groups. Everyone speculated about what could have caused the accident, and all but avoided the unspoken fear of all: Was Achebe alive or dead? As we came to work every day, our morning greetings were preceded by: Have you heard anything? All of us knew who the subject was, yet we did our best not to mention him by name.

You apparently ignored, I pointed out to Ngwaba as he and I nestled with one group, the other adage about the eagle that perches on the shooting mark. He gave me a cursory look, before turning to ask everyone if it was true that some old man had cast an evil eye on Achebe.

The famed author was, ipso facto, the subject of urban legends. The closest analogy to the pall that shrouded Achebe's crippling accident had been signified by the writer himself in that ominous passage in *Things Fall Apart*: that it is a taboo in Umuofia to call a snake by its name at night; it is called a stick. Some relief finally came with a report that he had been flown abroad for medical treatment.

I met many notable writers for the first time at the Achebe symposium, including Chinweizu, Chukwuemeka Ike, and Michael Thelwell. Professor Ben Obumselu introduced me to the late John Munonye and Ken Saro-Wiwa. Niyi Osundare and Obiora Udechukwu gave stirring performances at the night poetry session.

Professor Wole Soyinka could not come, but he reportedly sent Achebe a much talked-about gift of white ram through Femi Osofisan. In other words, it was Achebe who introduced to Nigeria, and Africa, the idea of the writer as a figure of public celebration - and mourning.

In his fiction and poetry, Achebe repeatedly avers that where one thing stands, another stands beside it. Such pervasive conflict of honor and mourning on the Nigerian literary landscape could, perhaps, explain why the ovation that attended Soyinka's award of the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature was literally turned to ashes by the letter bomb that killed the laureate's close friend and journalist, Dele Giwa, in October 1986. Here is, therefore, the plot that overdetermines much of Achebeana fiction.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the celebratory, transitional rites of his great mentor Ezeudu would also lead to Okonkwo's fatal shooting of the late warrior's sixteen-year old son, an accidental crime for which he is forced into a seven-year exile with his whole family.

In the midst of his planning - on return from exile - to initiate his sons into the ozo title society, give two of his daughters out in marriage to noble sons in-law, and take the fourth and highest title in the land, Okonkwo kills a court messenger in a fit of rage and dies by suicide hanging.

The Pumpkin Leaf Festival, in *Arrow of God* (1964), is not only a fertility rite; it is also an occasion for Ezeulu to take on his person and body the burden of communal purification that is signified in the pumpkin leaves that are flung at him by the celebrants, subjects who are - as sinners - both innocuous and vicious.

It is at the height of his power, when he is determined to prove that Umuaro could not eat the new yam without his permission, that the community deserts him and his God Ulu for the opportunistic Christian church.

The great Ezeulu psychically disintegrates to the point of being reduced to the dismal, feminine function of sweeping the dusty compound with a broom. We find the replication of such bewildering interplay of light and dark in human affairs through *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *A Man of the People* (1964), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). In no other work is Achebe's epicentric idea of hope and betrayal more illustrated than in his final testament, his ultimate indictment of Nigeria's political leadership in the autobiographical bestseller, *There Was a Country* (2012). Achebe's enduring legacy, however, does not lie at the level of the imaginary alone. No other individual African writer has excited the consciousness of generations of Nigerian and African youth more than Achebe.

### The world of Achebe: Illustrissimo of African Literature (1)

His discovery of African literature was arguably his second best contribution to the world. The path-breaking influence of his *Things Fall Apart* and his founding editorship of the Heinemann African Writers Series were instrumental to the inauguration of African literature as a body of knowledge and an academic discipline. Achebe's individual writing alone - his fiction, poetry, essays, and autobiography - has produced generations of lively intellectual pursuits and thousands of academic papers, theses, dissertations, books, and boundless careers in scholarship, creative writing, and related fields across the arts, humanities, education, social sciences, medicine, and physics. *Things Fall Apart* alone has reportedly sold over ten million copies and has been translated into over fifty world languages. No other single individual has made more contribution to the development and generation of postcolonial discourse than Chinua Achebe. Because of his work, African literature - which he colossally bestrode for fifty-five years - is today a multibillion dollar enterprise in global grants and academia, travel and research, publishing and marketing, politics and popular culture, and allied professions on five continents.

Achebe could not have died a happy man - after all, when you are Achebe or Shakespeare or Mandela you must know that happiness is the Disneyworld of buffoons and harlequins.

There is no doubt, however, that Achebe died a very satisfied man, satisfied in knowing that he didn't leave any thought unexplored or any chicanery unexposed. He could have taken the easy way out, put some money together from millions of book sales - which was far more than any one of his peers could boast of - and from corrupt government lobbyists, and bought a private island in the Caribbean or somewhere off the coast of southern Africa. Where was the fun in turning down presidential awards once and twice (2004 and 2011) as Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic, even at the risk of "offending the sun" of successive Nigerian governments?

To be continued on Monday Obiwu is the author of the Amazon poetry bestseller (February 2012), *Tigress at Full Moon*. He is a professor in Ohio, United States. Contact: [Obiwu1@gmail.com](mailto:Obiwu1@gmail.com)

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2013

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## Jimoh Ibrahim Cheated Us, Says Ekpu

This Day (Lagos)

February 28, 2013

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Length: 1364 words

### **Body**

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The former chief executive officer of Newswatch Communications Limited, Mr. Ray Ekpu, Wednesday told a Federal High Court, Lagos that the Group Managing Director of Global Media Mirror, Mr. Jimoh Ibrahim, does not like to pay debt, insisting that he (Ibrahim) short-changed him and the other directors by making only part payment to their retirement benefits.

Ekpu made the statement while being cross examined by the defence counsel, Bolaji Ayorinde (SAN), in the ongoing trial in the suit filed by minority shareholders who are angry over the take over and management style of Newswatch Magazine by Ibrahim.

The shareholders - Nuhu Wada and Professor Jibril Aminu, had filed the suit to challenge the method through which Ibrahim acquired the purported majority shares of Newswatch.

The veteran journalist said Ibrahim cheated him by refusing to pay him a balance of N30 million.

"N79.5 million was given to me out of N109 million due to me and Ibrahim cheated me by keeping the balance of N30 million. Four of the directors had meeting with Jimoh Ibrahim and he called a lady, who is an accountant to read the figure to us; what we were to be paid, figures less than what we expected which we submitted to the board on May 5, 2011.

"When we told him that the figures were less than we expected, he said that is the money available. He just paid us what he wanted. Out of the money he paid, he said he will collect 10 per cent as tax and give us receipt which he never did," Ekpu stated, adding that efforts to make him pay the balance through letters written to him about the issue did not yield any result.

The court also admitted in evidence copies of the memorandum of understanding containing the names of other companies under the Newswatch group when the plaintiffs counsel, Adekunle Oyesanya (SAN) didn't object. Prodded by Ayorinde to disclose how much was paid to other directors, Ekpu insisted that he was only aware of his own, adding that he got to know that his colleagues were also cheated and short-paid when they began to complain as well.

The trial judge, Ibrahim Buba, later adjourned the matter to March 18 and 19 for continuation of trial.

At the earlier hearing on Tuesday, a mild drama ensued when Justice Buba announced he was sent a present by one of the parties and expressed displeasure over the unsolicited gifts sent to him by some unknown characters.

### Jimoh Ibrahim Cheated Us, Says Ekpu

The gift, possibly sent to show the judge "the new look Newswatch", which is the subject matter of the suit, unidentified persons parceled copies of the Newspaper and sent to the judge. The judge became furious over the gift and threatened to withdraw from the suit if the parties were not interested in his continuing with the case.

Justice Buba subsequently raised alarm over the gifts, saying parties must be warned to desist from doing anything that would undermine his integrity.

Obviously displeased with the gift, Justice Buba looked at Ibrahim's counsel, Bolaji Ayorinde (SAN) and asked whether he (Ayorinde) wants him (the judge) to conclude the case, to which Ayorinde consented.

Justice Buba said: "Do you want me to conclude this case? I asked the question because after the last sitting, I found an unsolicited gift on my table and when I opened it, I found two complimentary copies of Newswatch Daily of February 10 and 11, 2013. My secretary told me that she can identify the person that brought it", he said, adding that sending copies of the subject matter of a suit before him was not ordinary.

"It is not ordinary because a judge is also on trial over the case he is handling.

If any of the party is not comfortable with me, such person should let me know, and I will return the case file to the Chief Judge for re-assignment to another judge. I must, however, call on parties to refrain from doing things that will undermine the integrity of the court," the judge stressed in a short bench ruling.

Counsel to the plaintiff, Oyesanya expressed shock at the development, but added that he had the greatest confidence in the ability of the judge to do justice in the matter irrespective of any kind of intimidation or harassment.

Similarly, Ayorinde, who denied knowledge of the development also expressed confidence in the integrity of the judge, but urged the court to give him time to investigate the circumstances leading to the development.

However, Wada who had earlier commenced his own evidence in chief had entered the witness box, where he was further cross-examined by Ayorinde.

Under cross-examination, he insisted that Newswatch was not distressed before Ibrahim took it over, but that they only invited him (Ibrahim) to invest in the company owing to the need for business expansion.

The court admitted four editions of Newswatch Magazines of January 15, 2007; August 3, 2009; April 19, 2010 and November 19, 2011 as exhibits after Ayorinde through Wada tendered them.

In addition, Ekpu opened his testimony before the court where he had stated that at present, he has 4.3 million shares in Newswatch, adding that his shares at inception of the company was 75,000.

Ekpu recalled that himself, the late Dele Giwa, Soji Akinrinade, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed were the founding fathers of Newswatch.

"Although, our shareholding has changed since then because there have been delusions. For instance, in 1992, the four of us decided to shelve up to five percent of our shareholdings. We sold the shares and gave the company as an interest free loan, although the loan has since been repaid," Ekpu explained.

Before the court adjourned tomorrow for the continuation of Ekpu's testimonies, he (Ekpu) also admitted the existence of some subsidiaries of Newswatch, which are Newswatch Books Limited and Newswatch Properties Limited.

According to the suit, Wada and Aminu, who were representing minority shareholders and former directors of Newswatch, accused the new management under Ibrahim of systematically working to kill the company's main product, Newswatch weekly magazine and replacing same with daily newspapers, to be published by a newly incorporated company-Newswatch Newspapers Limited - an organisation in which Ibrahim's company, Global Media Mirror Limited owns a majority shareholding.

### Jimoh Ibrahim Cheated Us, Says Ekpu

Wada and Aminu averred that Ibrahim, the new Chairman of Newswatch Communications Limited and the company "have not called a general meeting since the said new illegal take-over of the company."

They argued that although Ibrahim and his company, Global Media failed to comply with the conditions contained in the contract- a Share Purchase Agreement - of May 2011 between Newswatch and Global Media, Ibrahim and his company "wrongly assumed" the management and control of the company and shut down its operations to the utter detriment and loss of the petitioners.

They also noted that by Clause 3.0 the 2011 agreement, Ibrahim and Global Mirror was to acquire 51 per cent stake in Newswatch Communications on the condition that they pay N510million as purchase price; by Clause 4.0 the money was to be paid on or before May 5, 2011, and by Clause 13.0 Global Media was required to pay additional N500 million within 90 days of its takeover of the company.

"Without complying at all with any of the aforementioned conditions of the agreement, the second respondent (Global Media), through the instrumentality of the third respondent (Ibrahim), went ahead and took over full control and management of the first respondent (Newswatch Communications)", they stated.

They argued that since the company was shut in August last year, it has lost about N15.780million in revenue and profit, part of which ought to accrue to its shareholders, including the petitioners.

The petitioners are praying the court to among others, nullify the May 2011 agreement; an order directing Ibrahim and Global Media to pay the N15.780 million lost suffered by the company so far and 21 per cent interest on the judgment sum before judgment and 10 per cent after judgment is given and until it is paid.

They are also praying for an order directing that any verified money by Ibrahim and Global Media in Newswatch Communications be refunded to them by the receiver/manager from the funds realised from the operations of the company.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2013

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## **Before the Next Terror Victims [opinion]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

May 2, 2012 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1318 words

**Byline:** Timawus Mathias

### **Body**

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I stared at the gory picture, tears running down my face; an image that would be my torment through the week. And it was not to be my last! For, I saw others, just as the week went by, at Bayero University, Kano, and on the streets of Jalingo. The blood of innocent - too much of it!

The young man lay lifeless and prostrate on his back, in his own blood, still wasting out from his mangled flesh and flowing on the tarmac. His guts were splattered beside him and his right leg blown clean off from just below the knee. I cried, not for the young man, for he was already on the other side of life - death. I cried because I suddenly realised someone who knew him must have been in the crowd, and would run to the young man's home to relay the bad news to his family. Would it be a mother? Would it be a wife, equally young? Would it be his children - too young to understand why daddy, the bread winner is not going to come home again - ever! It would be the worst day in this life, and all for what? The dead man is one of the 8 that died at the This Day attack which a spokesman has claimed, was perpetrated by Boko Haram! He certainly did not come to ThisDay in expectation of this gruesome end! He came I presume to feign for food, using whatever means he was capable of - him and the seven others!

What did they do to be killed? And poor students of Bayero University Kano, along with their two professors and lecturers. The whole week, they looked forward to the worship of Sunday! A chance to sing and clap in praise of God, to fellowship with friends of the same faith and to be told by their pastors that they can begin the week, ransomed, healed, restored, and forgiven! Oh life! Little did they know; for how would they know? While they planned all week to come to this worship the God they were coming to pray to had allowed the devil to take possession of human minds - 20 and more bent minds. While the students chose their Church dresses, the men selected their weapons. While they made their hair and cleaned up for a morning with the King, their assailants were in counsel with the devil. A bullet in the magazine, in place, same time as a pair of trousers got ironed. Fuel in the bikes, as the shoes took their polish. The little offering money in the pocket and hand bag, and on the other side, grenades and rockets, tucked away and both teams had begun their way to the halls used for Church. The Titanic would hit the iceberg! And ended would be, lives in their prime, none of them knowing what they got killed for. A nation bleeds. A conscience dies in mortals who relish the anguish and enjoy a sense of victory. And the devil imagines he is winning, because the killers can sleep!

It hurt when President Goodluck Jonathan told Radio Deutsche Welle that the insecurity in Nigeria was being exaggerated. "Their type of confrontation is a matter of concern. In terms of safety, Nigerians are safer than most.

### Before the Next Terror Victims [opinion]

The security situation in Nigeria is being blown out of proportion. It is exaggerated", the president said President Goodluck Jonathan made this assertion in faraway Germany in order to woo German investors to come to Nigeria and displayed the highest degree of naiveté. First the Germans did not believe him. Their embassy in Nigeria was in agreement with the US, and the Australian embassies' situation assessment which warranted a unilateral announcement that more attacks were being planned by the extremists - announcements that the Nigerian National Security Adviser quickly discountenanced, saying everything was under control. Of course, like the German's, Nigerians did not believe their government. Their helplessness is how they sit like ducks and are plucked off violently without being able to lift even a finger in defence, like the young man that lay in that "prostate finality of death" so untimely, and so cruel.

But there is reason to give thanks to God, even for the loss of lives, because the pressure of the Boko Haram insurrections has caused the truth which sets free, to begin to come out, for whatever ailment God names, has a cure He has also named. After a spending spree from a Federal Budget which allocated a lion's share of N921.91 billion, the National Security Adviser, Owoye Azazi, has told a bewildered nation that "the current escalation of insecurity in the country, particularly the rampaging activities of the dreaded extremist sect, Boko Haram, is traceable to some undemocratic practices by the political parties during elections, especially the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP)." This thesis cost the nation N921.91 billion?

Mr Azazi, said the festering insecurity in the north eastern part of the country, which has been exacerbated by the frequent and deadly attacks of the extremist Boko Haram sect across the country, could be traced to the politics of exclusion of the PDP in the region.

"But, then I must also be quick to point out that today, even if all the leaders that we know in Boko Haram are arrested, I don't think the problem would end, because there are tentacles."

It stands to reason where those tentacles are tethered - to powerful people in the government, keeping tab on arrests of the "extremists" pinpointing the jails and steamrolling rescue and where necessary, and killing for cover up. The tentacles are tethered on merchants of arms and security schemes, who for the money they make, the killings is big business.

President Jonathan has found himself between the blacksmith's hammer and the anvil. Under PDP pressure particularly the powerful block of Governors, the President has dissociated himself from Azazi's comments, as if he was hearing them for the first time! His kith and kin sensing their own Azazi is in boiling water, hit President Jonathan from the other side - he must sustain Azazi. Meanwhile all hell seems to have broken loose, with talks of the country's dismemberment in the air. Radio Biafra has resurrected and is replaying the nightmares of 1966 and the years of war.

Then trust him to pick his moment to poke a finger in the eye. Former President Obasanjo speaking at the 2012 Cambridge Africa Business Network chided the Jonathan Government's approach to the Boko Haram disaster. "All these security problems pooled together are nothing compared to the civil war from which the nation pulled through," the former president reportedly said, underlining his ego of the best leader Nigeria ever had.

The coming days will be interesting, even as Nigerians are filled with trepidation that more deadly attacks could occur. The kingpins are talking. Deployment of IEDs in Nigeria began with the parcel that killed renowned **journalist Dele Giwa**. General Abacha was to see more deployments in the heydays of NADECO, leading to the humiliation and jailing of General Obasanjo with a death sentence. From here he was sprung out of prison and made President, but not before Andrew Owoye Azazi on issues linked to the burglary of weapons from 1Division of the Nigeria Army, during his watch, - weapons that turned up in Niger Delta where Jonathan was Governor of Bayelsa. Azazi was sanctioned and retired. But not before under the watch of Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, leader of Boko Haram was murdered, and many suspects shot on a video that turned up on Al Jazeera triggering today's mayhem.

Unless we account for the stolen weapons, and unless we account for the bomb technicians that Obasanjo sacked ignominiously from the service to the labour market with their technical knowhow - useful in times like this, Andrew

Before the Next Terror Victims [opinion]

Owoye Azazi is right. The PDP Government is behind Boko Haram, the cause, and the antidote, paid for, from the security budget.

There is that flash again. A young man lies on his back, dead and mangled, bereaved family, wailing, bewildered. Students cut down in their prime in Bayero University two professors, four PhD holders, to teach no more, their God given Boko has turned Haram.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2012

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## **Free Speech, Reputation And National Security [column]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

May 12, 2011 Thursday

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**Length:** 1384 words

**Byline:** Jideofor Adibe

### **Body**

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When, in December 1993, the United Nations General Assembly set aside May 3 of every year as the World Press Freedom Day, the aim was essentially to sensitise the world about the importance of press freedom to democracy and to honour journalists who died or suffer privations because of their trade.

This year's celebration coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek - a statement of free press principles advanced by African newspaper journalists in 1991.

My personal opinion is that May 3 should not just be an occasion for showcasing the relationship between press freedom and democracy or threats to free press but also for interrogating how free speech should be balanced with the need to protect people's privacy and hard earned reputation as well as the imperative of national security. There are several issues here:

One, press freedom is part of the argument for free speech - the ability of people to speak their minds without censorship. Freedom of expression is a broader concept than freedom of speech because it goes beyond verbal speech to include any act of seeking, receiving or imparting information or ideas irrespective of the medium used.

Proponents of the freedom of expression advance several moral, philosophical and political arguments on why this should be accorded special protection.

Their arguments include that freedom of expression is vital for the discovery of truth, that it is an essential aspect of self-fulfilment and human dignity, and that because there are sufficient grounds to be suspicious of government, it can be a bulwark against arbitrariness and hidden agendas.

It is also argued that freedom of expression is indispensable in a democracy because the 'best of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market'. In this sense, the health of a democracy can be gauged from the vibrancy or otherwise of this marketplace of ideas.

In mature democracies, political speeches, including those that 'shock and awe' such as racist ideas by British National Party (BNP) and Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front party in France enjoy a high level of protection as they are seen as making useful, even if unacceptable, contributions to the marketplace of political ideas that undergird their democracy.

## Free Speech, Reputation And National Security [column]

The most powerful argument against outlawing such groups is that doing so will drive them underground and lead to the romanticisation of the ideas they espouse. It is also argued that without the capacity to tolerate 'unacceptable' or dissenting ideas, democracy will be in abeyance.

In our dear country, despite the new social media and increasing globalisation, there are still several ways in which freedom of the press is circumscribed.

These include the use or threat of pompous libel proceedings, suppressing the publication of unfavourable news stories, denial of government adverts to 'unfriendly' media houses, or buying up and destroying copies of newspapers/magazines that run unfavourable stories. In some instances journalists have been murdered or harassed for publishing stories that embarrassed some powerful individuals.

Two, because freedom of speech competes with other equally important human values such as the right to privacy, reputation or national security concerns, it is never absolute - even in jurisdictions like the USA where the First and Fourteenth Amendments give it a special protection.

This calls for delicate balancing acts between these vital human values. In many advanced countries for instance, many print media houses libel-read their materials to avoid being drawn into costly defamatory lawsuits.

Similarly because the basis of nationhood is settled in these countries, there is often strong self-censorship on matters of national security and those that could be considered as invasion of privacy. In many Nigerian media organisations however, these simple precautionary measures appear to be luxuries.

Quite too often opinions and rumours are passed off as facts while people's hard-earned reputations are attacked with impunity in the name of 'fearless journalism'. Self-censorship, especially on matters of national security or issues that could deepen the chasms in the country's regional, ethnic and religious fault lines seems to be, at best, at its infancy. If there is a code of responsible journalism practice, it is not being vigorously enforced.

Three, the theme of this year's celebration, "21st Century Media - New Media, New Barriers" is quite apt. There is no doubt that the social media - internet, mobile phones, Facebook and tweeters - have helped to advance the course of press freedom by creating a community of 'citizen journalists' who are unencumbered by time, space, or even resources.

In the recently concluded general elections many helped to monitor the transparency of the processes by publishing live updates of events at various polling units. Despite the obvious importance of the new social media in advancing the frontiers of press freedom, the ability of many Nigerians living in Nigeria to access them remain however constrained by low internet penetration, epileptic power supply, poor access to computers, insufficient training on the use of these new resources, poverty and poor pay as well as other constraints associated with underdevelopment. Some 'citizen journalists' also frequently abuse the freedom and anonymity (many write under aliases) offered by cyberspace to unleash the beasts in them.

The sort of ethnically-charged, rude and provocative comments on some Nigeria-focused weblogs and features-aggregating websites simply beat the imagination. And most of these 'internet warriors' are based in the mature democracies of Europe and North America where people often disagree without making themselves disagreeable!

May 3 is also an opportunity to remember the home-based journalists who grandstand in their opinion pieces about corruption and the failings of the political leadership but expect to be 'facilitated' before they can publish some stories or give undeserved favourable slants to their write-ups. Corruption is both a moral and systemic problem, and the Nigerian journalists involved in these unholy practices must first remove the logs in their eyes before they can pontificate on the numerous failings of the country's political leadership. The change we seek must start with us.

Four, the World Press Freedom Day is equally an opportunity to reflect on the environment in which Nigerian journalists ply their trade. Several have died in active duty - Dele Giwa of Newswatch, Godwin Agbroko and Abayomi Ogundeleji of ThisDay newspapers, Bayo Ohu of Guardian newspapers, Edo Ugbagwu of The Nation and

## Free Speech, Reputation And National Security [column]

Nathan Dubak and Gyeng Bwede, both of Light Bearer newspapers of Jos, Plateau State. Their killers remain at large. Then there are media owners who live obscenely opulent live styles but have no qualms owing their staff several months' salaries. I believe there is an urgent need for a law criminalising owing media practitioners (and in fact any worker) salaries as such a person, in the quest for survival, could be goaded into dehumanising activities or undertakings that could undermine the country's putative moral fibre. But why is no one writing about the media houses that owe their staff for several months even though such media houses are known by everyone? Why is the NUJ not drawing attention to the plight of these journalists - at least to name and shame the owners of such media houses? And why must a ***journalist*** continue to work with a media house that has not paid him or her several months' salary?

The report that Governor Ohakim of Imo State has congratulated his nemesis Rochas Okorocha and said he would not challenge the outcome of the elections in court, is very welcome. Even more touching is Ohakim's declaration that he and Rochas fought an election, not a war, and that the process of reconciliation must start immediately. This is a very commendable, statesman-like statement, from a man who is not usually associated with such finesse. Circumstances have a way of radicalising or de-radicalising people. If Governor Ohakim continues to maintain such a conciliatory posture, it will speed up the process of his rehabilitation, and his presumed sins in Imo State will eventually be forgiven.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2011

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## **Between IBB And His Mentor, the Hannibal [analysis]**

Leadership (Abuja)

September 27, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1338 words

**Byline:** Ahuraka Yusuf Isah

**Dateline:** Abuja

### **Body**

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Former Military President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida was once asked who has been his most trusted counselor, guide or mentor in life, and to the surprise of many, he named Hannibal.

explores the military and political similarities of the two Army Generals.

The fact that in his book, "A Concise History of Warfare", Field-Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, the World War II British Commander, did not give any account that Hannibal showed extraordinary military process in the originality and vision of his strategy like Scipio Africanus, Alexander and Julius Caesar of his medieval time, the choice of Hannibal by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida as his mentor, therefore, becomes difficult to comprehend.

By the account of history, Hannibal was remarkable in handling men. He invaded Italy with a motley army recruited from all parts of the Western Mediterranean . He trained it and led it to win great victories. Altogether, for sixteen continuous years, Hannibal maintained the war with Rome in Italy without once releasing his army from service in the field, but keeping the vast number under control without any sign of disaffection towards himself or towards each other. He was courageous and popular with his men.

Since no army general ever reigns in history to the end, by 202 B.C, the final battle of the second Punic War was fought at Zama that led to the defeat of Hannibal.

Each army was 40,000 strong, with Scipio stronger in Calvary boasting 4,000 against Hannibal's 2,000. Not the Hannibal's 80 elephants could be of help, because as they pounded towards the Roman army, Scipio ordered a blast of trumpets and horns along the whole of his line. The sudden blare caused the elephants to panic and set in confusion.

In the appraisal of this war generally, Hannibal was probably the better tactician, but Scipio was undoubtedly superior to Hannibal in strategy. It was this which in the end mattered most and which marks out Scipio as one of the great captains of history.

Of course out of the second Punic War emerged the beginning of the Roman Empire, and during the second and first centuries Rome was continually at war to preserve and extend her power in the Mediterranean.

## Between IBB And His Mentor, the Hannibal [analysis]

## Emergence of Babangida

Very little was recorded or heard of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in the Nigerian Civil War front. Except that as young army officer, he was hit by bullet while on top of a tree trying to spot enemies position.

But by February 13, 1996, Lt. Col. Babangida (as he was then) was said to have been directed by General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma to go with armored car to level the FRCN building where Col. Dimka held hostage. But Babangida defied the order and did otherwise. He negotiated with Dimka to vacate the building, and in exchange paved way for him to escape from the building without firing a single shot.

General Danjuma was said to had fumed and highly annoyed with Babangida not keeping to instruction and even promised to deal with him militarily. That could not mature as effable Babangida sent words across to some journalists that it was because of them he failed to carry out the order, since some of them would have become part of the rubble including Dimka.

Babangida became the toast and darling of the journalists then, he was taunted a "diplomatic soldier", "democratic solider" or a solider with human-kindness",

Nothing was heard of Babangida until General Muhammadu Buhari and General Tunde Idiagbon military government came on board. Babangida, as the Chief of Army Staff found his way to deliver a paper in the Trenched Hall of University of Ibadan ostensibly to dismiss insinuation in some quarters that he was not literate enough as a military officer. His velvety voice and pronouncements got the students carried away and they gave him a resound high ovation.

Babangida contributed immensely in Buhari becoming a head of state, notwithstanding, he was made a top gun too. It has to be so as Buhari found it difficult to take responsibility for fear of ascription, thereby making his 2-IC over important and too strong, hence reasons were made to overflow in the army to give way for a change, this time around from unintended beneficiary to one of those that brought the change in the first instance.

Undoubtedly, Babangida appeared to be the first to have embarked on a comprehensive reform in the country. For good or bad, some people felt that was the beginning of the modern Nigeria . He said it was an attempt to re-engineer Nigeria because the larger part of the population was engaged in economic production in the country. Either as an artisan, skilled or unskilled labour, there was something to be engaged doing. With just a budget of N15.6 billion in 1986, economic productivity was at its peak and more policy initiatives and fiscal measures were adopted than many regimes of this country combined. Policy initiatives and fiscal measures too many to enumerate here.

The letter-bombing of high-profile **journalist, Dele Giwa** during this regime gave it more image crisis than it could ever control. Not only a new dimension of crime linked to a government of a rural country like Nigeria then, but it was condemned worldwide.

The June 12, 1993 presidential election which was acclaimed the freest and fairest sub-Saharan region was also believed to have been won by the late M.K.O Abiola. The result was never disclosed till date.

These are Babangida's Achilles heels which his opponents have always wanted to cash upon. But the caveat is that the damage done with the June 12, 1993 presidential election was corrected with Obasanjo's election in 1999. Abiola's lost in 1993 was Obasanjo's gain in 1999.

General Babangida's military regime was known to have imbibed the "culture of settlement", an aphorism for corruption in high places, to deal with some political problems facing the government. But corruption that took place during General Olusegun Obasanjo's democratic government had dwarfed whatever one may consider as corruption then. The Nigerian patrimony, agencies and parastatals were rehabilitated, refurbished or renovated and then sold at a give away price to the so-called "investors" (government officials).

Penultimate 2007 election, the hostility Obasanjo maintained against Babangida and all the personalities that stopped his third term bid kept Babangida off from contesting. He did not for once said that he was contesting.

### Between IBB And His Mentor, the Hannibal [analysis]

But now he was among the first to declare openly that he would contest the 2011 presidential election. Not even when the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan has indicated his interest to contest the same election.

Babangida is confident, and many people believe that too, that if there is free and fair election he will win. But as an establishment man, he is more than aware that Jonathan would reach out for incumbency factor. Not even when Obasanjo, who adorns absurdity more than necessary, has filed behind Jonathan.

Why is Babangida still adamant and wanting to contest when he is aware that with all the permutation on the ground, the presidential election is a fait accompli for Jonathan? The crude oil account has been drawn to the minimum while frantic effort is being made to borrow from World Bank ostensibly to guarantee the success of Jonathan in the poll.

Perhaps, for fear of the verdict of history, Babangida prefer a defeat. The north has told him that he is the cause of their political travail, for bringing Obasanjo to power in 1999 who turned around as a thorn in the northern flesh. He is in the race because many people, including foreigners, are apprehensive that this election may fail or lead to nowhere. Election would be conducted and a winner would emerge, but just as it is possible to win the judgment without securing justice, so it can, if incumbency advantages are factored into it.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric, the larger part of the north is feeling cheated. There is a palpable fear and anger amongst the larger populace in the north similar to the season of General Aguiyi-Ironsi's Decree 34 of those days.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2010

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## The Second Coming of Babangida [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

April 15, 2010 Thursday

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**Length:** 1298 words

**Byline:** Tayo Ogunbiade

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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Comments have been flying back and forth over what is perceived to be the moves of former president General Ibrahim Babangida's to join the 2011 presidential race.

His highly-publicised visit to Abeokuta two weeks ago has been interpreted in several ways. One headline said he had "kicked off his presidential campaign". While another reported him saying: "I'm consulting on 2011". What took him to the Rock City? His well-publicised visit to Abeokuta was in his capacity as the chairman of the 54th birthday lecture for Governor Gbenga Daniel of Ogun State. His entry into Abeokuta was greeted with excitement and enthusiasm.

Whatever you make think of him, the General's popularity has certainly not waned over the years. It is not unlikely that he was shrewdly testing his political acceptability in Abeokuta. As he made his way into the lecture hall - wrapping his agbada around his medium frame- he was hailed loudly and warmly. Shouts of "IBB and Maradona" were let out.

He waved back appreciatively, throwing his fist in the air. Many who were seeing him in real life for the first time still recalled the famous gap-toothed smile and said so. The ripple of excitement in the hall was palpable.

The Master of Ceremony, Arewo Taiwo Alimi went down memory lane with his recollections of the IBB years. He for instance told the audience that while the General was in charge he promoted national unity by insisting that military governors understudied administrations in other states.

The initiative saw the military administrations in the South choose states in the North and vice versa as part of an overall strategy to share experiences and knowledge.

Whatever one thinks of Nigeria's former president his re-entry into the consciousness of the public is deliberately timed. He is clearly seeking to cast himself as a leader of substance and credibility. During the conferment of a chieftaincy title over the weekend he said: "

it is not an accident of history that I have been engaged in the development process of our country". Certainly the man called the "evil genius", "Maradona" and a host of other sobriquets, has come out of his foxhole and as always his visibility is causing ripples.

## The Second Coming of Babangida [analysis]

On assumption of power through a bloodless coup in August 1985, Babangida's maiden address to the nation in part noted: "My colleagues and I are determined to change the course of history". Few will disagree that this did not actually occur. Nigeria certainly embarked on a journey from which some argue she is still reeling from.

But what else do we remember about that era? In 1986, the nation received with shock one Sunday early afternoon, the news of the death of **Dele Giwa** from a bomb blast. The news spread like wild fire and set in motion a series of mysteries still unresolved. The anonymity behind that dastardly incident has never been resolved for his family, colleagues and the public. The horror of that day is still fresh in the memory.

Graphic photographs of the remains of the **journalist** were pasted on the walls of the Newswatch office for the world to see what a nation had done to one of its sons.

On the political front many politicians remember with fondness the two - party system which the transition to civilian rule programme introduced. The SDP and NRC were ideologically described respectively as being "a little to the left and a little to the right". There was huge relief when the president declared he had no interest in running for civilian office.

He was happy to midwife the process. But because it was the military dictating and nurturing democracy and there was bound to be a muddling up of the issues. Khaki boys conducting democratic procedures? Predictably the scalpel missed its way and the entire delivery was a stillborn.

Regardless, a quick perusal of IBB's website presents a long list of institutional reforms under his watch. However, perhaps the greatest blemish on his report sheet is the annulment of the June 12 elections which late Chief MKO Abiola is widely credited to have won. Has the General attempted to explain to the nation the thinking behind some decisions he took that indeed did change the "course of history"? The 1993 annulment was to set off a chain of events that plunged the nation into a period of darkness.

The recent weeks have seen plenty of commentary on his appearances in public. He appears to be loved and loathed in equal measures. His adversaries see him as the root of the nation's woes and every conceivable 'sin' is hung around his neck. His blunt refusal to appear before the Oputa Truth Commission led many to term him as unremorseful and unrepentant.

His seeking of a court injunction to prevent being summoned to testify before the Panel bordered on arrogance and flagrant disregard for his Nigerian compatriots. The seeming disregard for the feelings of the people did not do him any favours. Many were waiting eagerly to hear directly from the General's mouth the answers to many unanswered questions. Perhaps that day will still come. This does not take away the fact that he still has a huge following of loyal admirers and well-wishers.

The sad passing away of his wife Maryam earlier in the year was evidence of his standing within the realms of the political elites.

That gathering at his Minna base was not the first time a huge turnout pointed to the fact that he clearly had not lost his touch for popularity and that he could still command a crowd as proof of his popularity.

In the run up to the 2007 election, the marriage of his daughter Aisha also proved to be a rallying point for political juggernauts of all shades. Judging by the throngs of political associates that attended the wedding ceremony there was an indication that the wily General still wielded massive political influence.

And while many were still asking will he or wont he, the General known for his Maradonic moves pounced. He went on to stun friends and foes alike by picking up the expression of interest form from the PDP National Secretariat in Abuja under the full klieg lights of the media. The excitement and frustration that followed that deft move was however put to rest when he suddenly withdrew all together from the presidential race.

Post- 2007 elections, there was not much in terms of the political thinking coming out of Minna. IBB as he is known to those close to his circle turned 68 last year. Come August he will clock 69.

## The Second Coming of Babangida [analysis]

In other climes, that's the age for retirement and doting grandparenthood. But apparently not so in this part of the world! The magnetic pull of political power is hard to resist. Some argue that this is part of the reason why the likes of Mugabe, Gadaffi, Mubarak and several other African leaders have clung to power for so long and never short of justifying their positions on leadership.

The recent visit to Ogun State was deemed by political analysts to be a renewed bid to skilfully announce his comeback into the presidential ring. Last weekend he was conferred with a chieftaincy title, Dike Doziani by the Asagba of Asaba, Professor Chike Edozien. The conferment of chieftaincy titles from various ethnic groups in the country is part of the strategies consummate politicians apply to gain political acceptability in geo-political zones outside their own.

Others marry wives from a different ethnic background or marry off their children into prominent political families. IBB has implemented all but one of the strategies. Over the weekend, he confirmed that the speculation about his presidential ambition is correct. Are we about to see him pick a wife from across the River Niger as part of the requisites for the presidential race and further solidify his political standing? What ever course he chooses to travel one thing is clear: we have not seen the last of the gap-toothed smile!

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2010

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## Unmasking Adenuga [opinion]

This Day (Lagos)

April 29, 2012 Sunday

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**Length:** 3083 words

**Byline:** Nduka Nwosu

### **Body**

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This is an explosive blow by blow account written in free flowing style by two adventurous journalists and profilers. It rips across big business and the inherent risks, intrigues, love and sadness, death, and escape from the jaws of death, disappointments and finally the big catch - the telecommunications giant -Globacom that thrusts Michael Adenuga into the league of global business, as told by Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe.

Mike Adenuga's story remains a writer's delight any day. Add Africa's richest man - by Forbes magazine's estimates - Aliko Dangote to it, and your pay day is made in the art of profiling. More importantly, they are prodigious subjects for reporters in search of redemption. Why? Because a writer once described journalists as writers who fell by the wayside. Put in simple language, they are chroniclers in a hurry.

But every once in a while, a ***journalist*** emerges as a writer, wins a double crown and reclaims his or her birth right. This perhaps defines the present incarnation of Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe, both parading till date five titles including two business best sellers: 50 Nigeria's Corporate Strategists: Top CEO's Share Their Experiences in Managing Companies in Nigeria and Nigeria's Marketing Memoirs: 50 Case Studies, and now Mike Adenuga, Africa's Business Guru.

The Nigerian scene is replete with such writers. Tony Momoh in the 80s penned his Simple Strokes, a reporter's notebook based on a holiday in Britain, Naiwo Osahon's novel Sex is a Nigger's Game and Ben Okri, who worked as a reporter in Uche Chukwumerije's Afriscope when the hope of a university education was not forthcoming, are a few examples.

In The Famished Road, Okri's world like Adenuga's, sets the pace for the journey to the unknown, the unauthorised biography Awoyinfa and Igwe set sail to chronicle. "In the beginning there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world... a dream can be the highest point of life".

This dream in biographical sketches became real right from the day Awoyinfa and Igwe tendered their resignation in the National Concord rather than be deployed to the editorial board. Before that, however, they had brought to the bookstands the best sellers that built their Taj Mahal, which according to Awoyinfa was supervised by Igwe from joint resources.

## Unmasking Adenuga [opinion]

Critics may argue that the twins of two worlds - the multicultural art of writing and reporting may have opted for the material dollar at this time, gripped by the buccaneering spirit. No, they were only worthy evangelists in the fine art of writing - good ambassadors of a genial, vanishing culture.

The preface sets the stage: "In this gripping book, Mike Adenuga: Africa's Business Guru, money, power, politics, high-wire intrigues, betrayals and bloody escapes from the jaws of death, blend into an explosive alchemy as award winning journalists, Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe, unmask the mystery of the enigmatic African billionaire, Dr Mike Adenuga, Jr., the first man in the world to single-handedly float a mass consumer telecommunications company, Globacom.

"This riveting book is a product of five years of investigative efforts by two of Africa's most tenacious writers. The story of Mike Adenuga is an inspiring and an unorthodox entrepreneurial manual drawn from the long-concealed secrets of Africa's most elusive personality and certainly one of the richest black men in the world"

In the opening chapter, what initially looked like an assassination attempt, a stunning, blood-chilling rehash of an armed robbery attack unfolds: "Around him, there was blood, blood, everywhere. Blood oozing from the ruptured arteries of his fleshy body. Precious blood wasting on the floor, like a vandalised oil pipe ruptured by some rampaging fuel thieves. And amidst the splatter and blotches of blood on the floor lay Mike Adenuga groaning. He had just been shot. Shot point-blank in the sanctity of his home, his castle... An argument had ensued between them, with the rebel robber saying adamantly: "Let's finish the job. We have to finish this job. We must kill him. We must kill him."

In one fatal moment of unprovoked madness, he pulled the trigger and bang! Shot point blank. It's lights out for Adenuga!

Beyond this mild beat, Awoyinfa and Igwe present the image of addicts of the gutsy adventure story of crime and criminals, where action rips along in a series of explosions, what another writer described as a blood and cyclone adventure saga full of action, where menace mingles with violence and horror with mystery stashed on mystery, death on brutal death.

On a humorous note, however, they are glad the man survived the bullets of the black angels of the night to give themselves a self appointed assignment. They continue: "If he had died at that point in December 1982, perhaps the story would have ended there. If he had died, we wouldn't be embarking on this long, arduous, literary epic, a journey to unmask this enigmatic, shy, evasive and reclusive business colossus, who shares some character traits with the Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich. Abramovich, the Russian Oligarch who had quietly amassed immense wealth and was living his life unobtrusively, until he bought a top football team in the English Premiership called Chelsea. Then the Pandora box of global media glare exposed him to all the troubles it contains."

Like a fellow writer Brian Moore whom the lucid and celebrated Graham Greene extolled the way he brought his subtle sensibilities into several varieties of genre fiction, in Awoyinfa and Igwe's new book, what they excitedly described as their Opus Magnus, "Stale old forces embrace fresh new spirits." Example: "Okay, I would show you that I am playing God and kuku destroy you once and for all" to which the frightened and weather beaten Adenuga replies President Obasanjo, with his knees crawling on the floors of Aso Rock, his palms stretched full length in the charged, steamy atmosphere: "Sir, I am your son. Please don't be angry with me." Obasanjo: "I shouldn't be angry? Why shouldn't I be angry? See you now. You would come and prostrate and when you leave here, tomorrow, you would go and be publishing your adverts, abusing me. No be so (Is that not true)?"

Again in Africa's Business Guru, bedraggled characters turn what should have been a sweet farewell into a bitter retreat. Another example: "Their discussion progressed on a cordial note until IBB brought up the issue of restoring Adenuga's licence. Obasanjo pointedly accused IBB of hiding behind Adenuga to play in the telecoms market without the courtesy of disclosing his vested interests to him. Babangida refuted this charge, declaring he was not in partnership with Adenuga.

"Obasanjo said there was a full security report on the matter, but Babangida dismissed (the) so called security report as fiction concocted by his EFCC boys. The discussion soon degenerated into acrimony. Presidential Villa

## Unmasking Adenuga [opinion]

insiders said that an enraged Obasanjo bullied and practically chased IBB out. Obasanjo was shouting, 'Get out, just go!' to a retreating IBB."

The book reveals how generous the businessman was to Obasanjo donating a multi-million library to Obasanjo's Bell University, yet the man bluntly refused to grant his licence. At the launch of the Obasanjo Library, this is the account of story behind the library's launch: "Adenuga had gone to Abeokuta with Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi for the occasion and the duo had decided to go to greet Baba first. But they were intercepted by a man in a white Kaftan robe who turned out to be Obasanjo's cousin. The cousin politely said Baba wanted to know how much Adenuga was going to donate. Incidentally, Adenuga had raised this question with Ogunbiyi on their way coming. 'How much do you think I should donate to this thing?'

'I don't really know may be N100 million,' Ogunbiyi suggested.

'That's exactly how much I have in mind,' declared Adenuga.

"Now the question from Obasanjo's emissary was curious and unusual, he thought, but nevertheless, he had no choice but to inform the man that he planned to donate N100 million, thinking the man would be very impressed. Wrong. Obasanjo's cousin brought out a piece of paper and handed it to Adenuga. 'Sorry sir, but Baba says you can't donate less than that amount,' the man had written.

"Inside the piece of paper was the sum of N250 million scribbled in Obasanjo's handwriting with a red pen. 'No problem,' Adenuga told the emissary, wondering if others were subjected to the same experience, but also knowing he dared not ask anybody, lest he be betrayed. He later showed Ogunbiyi the piece of paper. 'I'll give anything he wants,' he told Ogunbiyi. 'I'm afraid of that man o. N250 million is about the price of an oil well,' Adenuga added."

A rose is still a rose, sang Aretha Franklin in her sweet epiphanous ballad. Roses dominate the prose of Awoyinfa and Igwe as they present themselves as the good ambassadors of a genial cause. In a breezy shakedown cruise spanning 682 pages, their poignant narrative opens with another familiar note: "This book started as a journey, actually in Springfield Illinois while on an international visitors programme - a long tortuous journey to unravel the mystique of a great Nigerian, an African business leader we have come to know, study and admire for his courage, tenacity and indomitable spirit of enterprise, outsized dreams and vision, leadership, can-do spirit, competitive and winner-takes-it all mentality, his legendary generosity and for so many other things you will come to discover in this book. But as they say, there is also perhaps, the dark side of the moon."

Writing the Mike Adenuga story for Awoyinfa and Igwe was like finding a Byzantine treasure trove, and this deserves to be chronicled in prairie, prosaic, language. The investigative skills came to play as the elusive businessman extraordinaire became his famous self - the Scarlet Pimpernel with the magical powers of appearance and disappearance, one moment he is here, as the master wordsmith and Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka would put it, the next moment he melts into mystery land.

The duo treat the book the way a hunter treats a wild beast with a reporter's superego, the type of game that awakens a lion from the den to make his kill for the day.

Awoyinfa and Igwe must have absorbed a popular saying among the people of Western Samoa, that from the direction of the wind, you can tell a story from the beginning. And so Adenuga himself sets the stage for the great voyage: "Essentially running a business is similar to leading a military operation or orchestrating a political campaign, or performing as a great athlete. The fundamental principles are the same. The over-riding objective is to out-manoeuvre the opposing forces; to outsmart the other party; to outperform the competition; to outwit the other guy-to achieve. This may sound harsh. But that's the way it is."

The young Adenuga, we are told, sold once goat feed courtesy of his entrepreneurial mother who early in life pushed her children to hawk primarily to acquire street wisdom and that explains how excited Adenuga was to announce to Mrs. Oyin Adenuga: 'Mama, we have found oil,' when his upstream exploration company struck one. In the American dream, it is clear Adenuga admired his university slogan, Ride with Pride at the North Western

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Oklahoma State University, Alva, and transformed it into 'Glo with Pride', when he launched the mobile network - Glo.

The American sojourn, wrote the chroniclers, transformed Adenuga into a cab driver. "It was as a cabbie that Mike Adenuga met the assassinated Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa, who was also a cab driver in New York. Life as a black cab driver in New York was as risky as it is today. You could easily get killed. But they did it because they needed to survive. And they made good money. They were not regular taxi drivers who had their taxis painted yellow and black. They were gypsies. You found them around the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island, whereas the official yellow cabs were found mainly in Manhattan."

We are also moved into Adenuga's world of business, his arrest and flight into exile where his business empire flourishes, his family life and his divorce from his first wife Fola who still speaks passionately of the golden years of bejeweled diamonds and jet set lifestyle, her devastation by the court that gave the husband custody of her children including the child in the womb. Fola, we are told, is restored as a member of the Adenuga family by her children and the matter of divorce is left behind without necessarily returning to the house.

At Devcom Merchant Bank, the writers unveil Adenuga's second wife to be, Titi Adewale who came for a job and transfixes the boss into another world with her God-given curves. "Chief Orji Uzor Kalu is one of Adenuga's friends of the early years. They were into merchandising, arms deals, crude oil selling and government contractors. They were the Babangida boys. Kalu remembers that in those days he and Adenuga used to have slang for a woman endowed with heavy breasts and big buttocks. The slang was 'Burkina Faso'. 'Burkina' (for the big breasts) and 'Faso' (for the big buttocks).

"In an unequal world we live, a woman could have Burkina and not necessarily have Faso. But Adenuga prefers his women to have the full complements of Burkina and Faso in their figure. As for Miss Adewale, she was a fully endowed lady. And once Adenuga set his eyes on her, he never removed them. Like her name, Titi titillated Adenuga in no small measure."

This is Adenuga unveiled. The story is told in beautiful prose that will make banner headlines and best sellers.

In summary, the billionaire philanthropist is summarised in the epilogue as he leaves his legacy to young businessmen in the making, on the Path to Guru: 50 Entrepreneurship Lessons, what the writers call "some nuggets of the business philosophies and timeless principles that have worked for Mike Adenuga not only as captured in this book but also espoused by Adenuga's personal credo."

The 50th and last credo reads: "Like all mavericks, the strength and secret of the Guru is the ability to think out of the box, the ability to act in unconventional ways that have brought about paradigm shifts. Unconventional ideas provide the keys to innovation, to differentiation. It is the magic sesame that opens the door leading to the path to the Guru."

#### From Concord to Corporate Biographers

In spite of the fact that Brian Moore was described as a writer who lacked an appreciative audience with minimal black ink support from paying customers, "he had profoundly marked his time with over 20 novels, swimming the current like an arch-angel flying through the heavens." Unlike the lucid Moore, Awoyinfa and Igwe with less than a dozen of similar efforts, are already celebrants, swimming the current like arch-angels as well, and the secret according to Igwe, whom Awoyinfa generously and respectfully defers to, the image making skills of their outfit - Corporate Biographers, is that "Mike has his head on the clouds and I have my feet on the ground."

You would have imagined that having distinguished themselves as grandmasters in casting screaming headlines for the tabloid right from the Weekend Concord to The Sun, the inseparable twins of the pen would have embraced the art of sleaze journalism with "lurid voyeurism", Far from it; they warn in the opening invocation in Africa's Business Guru: "This story of Adenuga, we are told, is not a hagiography. If it is, then we have failed as journalists whose role is to present the good and the bad sides of our subject. As you will discover in this book, we delved too deeply into Mike Adenuga's life to ferret out his strength(s) and weaknesses, his positives and negatives, including some of the

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things he might not normally like to be published. We didn't set out to hurt him, but just to do our job, the way journalism is done all over the world."

So the question is: how did this seasonal monsoon rain of profiling drench Awoyinfa and Igwe such that their ship refused to slip its mooring in the newsroom? And as the saying goes, how did their muse pour inky rain on their pens? The simple answer is that Awoyinfa and Igwe belong to the genre of ambitious journalism.

They maximised their input as creative writers when they joined forces with businessman and lover of journalism Orji Uzor Kalu to float The Sun newspapers, a successful tabloid and if you like a re-incarnation of the Weekend Concord, which till date recorded the highest print run ever in print journalism with 500,000 copies at a time weekend titles were hardly a good sale except perhaps the Sunday Times in the then Daily Times Group.

Recalling those early beginnings, Awoyinfa had been posted to the north as a staff writer and Dele Giwa impressed with his style of reporting, created a Reporter's Notebook for him as a weekly column after his brilliant script on an illiterate reporter who worked for a Hausa title under the New Nigerian Newspaper Group. "I was not keen on reporting," Awoyinfa recalls, "I was more impressed with creative writing and after leaving the Mass Communication Department with a degree, I had my idea of what I wanted to be, a columnist working under Giwa."

'Awoyinfa in Britain' was another scintillating column that appeared in the Sunday Concord for three months as a Harry Britton Fellow and as assistant editor. Awoyinfa was attached to the Sunday Sun in Newcastle in the United Kingdom, and while there he developed a deep passion for tabloid journalism and according to him, "My confidence level grew. I was creating headlines and like Nigerian soldiers who returned from Burma after the Second World War, to discover things were no longer at ease, I was no longer content being an assistant editor. I wanted to edit a title."

Igwe, on the other hand, was fast forwarded into his dream profession after a diploma programme at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism. He was freelancing for Sunday Concord and no one had seen him. Then the break: a story on the ordeals of school children who left home early to be at school on time, was given a human angle touch. Then destiny brought him to Sunday Concord on a day everyone screamed Eureka: "We have found him."

Igwe confessed he admired Awoyinfa's writings from a distance. When they eventually met, a strange chemistry struck and after two decades plus, the corporate biographers and profilers are still waxing strong.

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## **It's Unfortunate We Have Recycled Leadership in Power - Ajakaye [interview]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 23, 2011 Saturday

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**Length:** 1630 words

**Byline:** Yaqoub Popoola

### **Body**

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, the bishop of Ekiti Catholic Diocese, in this interview with Correspondent,

, speaks on the controversial minimum wage, insecurity in Nigeria and other burning national issues. Excerpts...

It is quite unfortunate. What we should have done we did not do when Boko Haram first raised its ugly head. Instead of going to the root cause of the so-called struggle, we decided to start where we should not start. The leader of the Boko Haram was arrested and killed. We did not investigate the brains behind this because there must be some powerful people behind that struggle. Till now, we have not got to the origin of the whole thing. Some people are now apologising to them; that is not how to go about it.

Apologising to criminals? In an ideal society, the governors apologising would have been interrogated by the security agents. It is unfortunate that this is happening in our society and we are not helping the matter. Our security agents speak more but little action; they threaten others that are deficient. It was when the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Hafiz Ringim, threatened that they were battle-ready that those people took the battle to his doorsteps. Even if you are planning, security strategy should not be discussed on the pages of newspapers, radio and television. But assure the people that you will try to curb; don't blow your ego. When you blow your ego, the enemy is not happy; you don't even know the enemy.

When soldiers go to war, in the bush, they use camouflage. That is what security is all about. Before election, there were some candidates, both presidential and vice presidential, blowing hot that "if we lose, you will see what will happen". In an ideal society, they would be investigated and tried. Words are golden; you have to think and weigh what you say before you say it. To me, our security agents should know how to be real security agents. You don't present your strategies. Even a football team would not present its tactics, so that the opponent would not know the tactic. But it is only in Nigeria that you see our security men blowing siren here and there. If there are some armed robbers somewhere, instead of the police to go there quietly, they are blowing siren. What is the meaning of that? I am coming; to chase them away or for them to be prepared. There is what we call undercover security tactics. We are not tactical and these people are out to destroy the government of President Goodluck Jonathan.

When we should be planning strategies - economic, political - and putting in place structures, the man (President Jonathan) is busy thinking about security. When there is insecurity in the land, the land cannot progress. I pity the president and I pity us too. It is not just for the security agencies; it is for all of us. Some people are saying that there should be compromise. What sort of compromise with criminals by God's grace? If we do that, all of us are

### It's Unfortunate We Have Recycled Leadership in Power - Ajakaye [interview]

under threat. Honestly, it is sad that we are wasting ourselves. The human life is of dignity; it is only in this country that I see that the life of a chicken is more important than the life of a human being. Who will come and invest in a place where there is no security? This is why I said powerful people are behind these bombings and they are out to derail the administration of the president.

It is unfortunate that the first bomb we would hear of was on October 1986 that killed **Dele Giwa**; till today, we don't know the killers. Bombs are becoming a kind of toys. This is not acceptable; those who are behind it should be fished out. If a driver drives carelessly, the driver should be arrested, not the conductor. Our country should not be like other countries; we should be one. Look at the newest country in the world, the South Sudan; about two million people died during the war between the North and South Sudan. Is this where we are going? This is why it is sad because we should be enjoying the fruits of democracy. Some people may say I am wrong. The last election opened the door of democratically-elected government, transition from selected civilian government to elected democratic government. We must give kudos to Professor Attahiru Jega, the president and Nigerians for the success we recorded during the election.

That the National Assembly passed the FoI bill and the president appending his signature is a victory to the society. The society now has the right to know what is going on within and outside the government, and anybody holding a public office is under obligation to give feedback to the people. Having been passed and signed into law, each state assembly is expected to domesticate it, meaning that the state is prepared to operate openly. That Ekiti House of Assembly just inaugurated and decided to domesticate it means that the state is ready to operate the law. I felt sad that Ogun House of Assembly comprising who should know what should be done now say that only media organisations of the state-owned media should cover their affairs; it is going back to the Dark Age. I had expected the media, the state governor and the NUJ (Nigeria Union of Journalists) to have issued a statement to condemn it and to take these people up. We should not allow that. Even if we don't have the FoI Act, we should not allow this to happen in our society. We are in a democracy and democracy means openness. If there is an abuse, there should be disabuse, not that you now pass a law and say that if a **journalist** of a media organisation erred, you should not hit the people with a hammer; it is not done that way because people have the right to know; they should not gag them. This is why journalists have a great role to play. This is a new dawn; there must be a new attitude. I encourage other state governments to emulate Ekiti.

The background of a person matters and that is why I have been saying that there should be a searchlight on people who want to lead us. It is very important to know their antecedents. Political position is a sensitive position because today's president could be tomorrow's prisoner and today's prisoner could be tomorrow's president. That is why we need to be very careful. The FoI Act should not just be a paper; it should be actualised and the way to actualise it is that the **journalist** should be up and doing. There should be no room for armchair journalism anymore. In the past, we used to say 'publish and be damned'; but this time around, let us publish with responsibility. If there is information that is dangerous, that could dent the integrity and security of the land, any **journalist** that worth his name should know that that should not be published. The FoI Act is a baby that should be tenderly taken care of. Anybody who is gagging the press is not fit to be a democrat.

It will affect governance in the state. If the president has signed the bill into law having been passed by the National Assembly, a state now says no and decides to go against the Federal Government amounts to felony. We are in a country that has law. People will now be very careful; they will now know that it is not business-as-usual. A **journalist** who will make a research will carry it to the logical conclusion and follow it up. The FoI Act has empowered journalists to follow up stories, to make research. I have been saying that if the media people go on strike for one day, the whole world would be like a cemetery; so journalists have serious impact in the society.

This is serious because many of them are not well paid, not well catered for. They have noses and help the society to know what is going on and that is why the society should appreciate them too. Also, a good **journalist** should not lose his integrity, the dignity. Don't destroy your tomorrow today because today determines tomorrow. I am happy with the FoI Act, but I will be happier if it is practised as it should.

Who are those that are there? It is not just a matter of the civil servants; there are certain things that a **journalist** can know if he wants to, and that is why a **journalist** must be nosy. The law is there; it is not a respecter of any

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person including me. We follow the law and stand by it. There are ways we can get rid of them if we are more united. If everybody is afraid, timid, we will not be able to do what we should do. All of us can stand up to fight evil; there is no human factor that cannot be surpassed.

The problem would not have arisen if it had been well discussed. You don't just bring out policy statement. Some people in Abuja cannot just sit down there and be formulating policies and laws without knowing their country. Even for a parish to be created, particularly in this diocese, the priests and the lay people there would be invited to know whether they have the strength. The Vatican will make thorough investigation of the population, the financial strength, the spiritual aspect of it and the economic strength would be considered. And you don't rush into it because when you rush in you will also rush out. I could remember when we had one Minister of Petroleum and there was a law that we should not be buying petrol in jerry cans. He was addressing journalists and one **journalist** had to ask him: "Okay, what if I have a generator, that generating set is using petrol, and there is no petrol, will I remove the tank or bring the generating set to the filling station because I want to buy petrol? Or what of if my car, the fuel finishes on the road, will I remove the car's tank and bring it to the station?" And the minister said "we did not think about that". This is the type of people we have in government and it's unfortunate. It is also unfortunate that we have recycled leadership in power. I appeal that let us have peace and harmony; but there cannot be peace and harmony without justice.

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## **My Dark Days With Anyim - Sen Ita-Giwa [interview]**

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**Byline:** Emmanuel Aziken

### **Body**

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Though She Was Never a **Journalist**,

is, however, etched on a special platform in the history of the profession in the country. Brought up by a mother, Mma Bassey Ita, who was one of the first women to make a name in the profession, she subsequently married Mr. **Dele Giwa**, who himself became an icon of the profession towards the end of the last century.

Senator Ita-**Giwa** has, however, made a name for herself in other endeavours notably politics where she rose to become a senator and subsequently, Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters.

Since she left office she has devoted her time to children charity following perhaps in line with her advocacy for the interest of the people of Bakassi, through which she got the nickname, Mama Bakassi.

In this interview with

, Senator Ita-**Giwa** narrates how the challenges she faced in the Anyim Senate strengthened her, discusses her present devotions to children charity and reflects on her experiences in the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, affirming that the legacies of the former President are yet unmatched.

She also canvasses support for the present Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters, Senator Joy Emodi, affirming that Emodi's success in pulling through the gender unfriendly Anambra political grounds would help her succeed. Excerpts:

Well, I have been very, very busy trying to ensure that my people are properly resettled. Currently, I am trying to organise my usual charity ball to raise money to get more children into my home, more displaced children from Bakassi into my house so that I can further do things that will improve their lives, educate them and give them hope for tomorrow. So, there are still many things that one is doing at the moment that I cannot begin to enumerate. Right now, I am in the South-South, trying to create awareness, I am going round to the South-South Governors to get them involved in my programme for the children of Bakassi.

Currently I have ten children directly under the programme who are now in one of the best schools in the South-South, The Access School. It was like my pilot programme and it has enjoyed tremendous success. I can say that today we can look at it as a success story because the children have done very well in school and they are growing

### My Dark Days With Anyim - Sen Ita-Giwa [interview]

properly and take good positions in their classes. The children appreciate what one has done for them and they are utilizing the opportunity very well.

Now, I am working on taking another twenty which will raise the number of children to thirty. I wish I could take a hundred but I am working on that. There are many children that need that opportunity to be taken out of the swamps to be put in good schools.

Well, I did all that I did for my political party which is the strongest party in Africa to win the election and I did that also because I felt that my party had the best candidate and we had a very, very good material I felt will bring peace and unity to this country. Most importantly, I was very active in that process because I also wanted to contribute my efforts for us to strengthen this democratic process.

That election remains the most transparent election till date. What I did wasn't for any gain or appointment. I was also moved by the active role the wife, (Dame Patience Jonathan) played to ensure that her husband won the election, I had no choice but to support her.

I think she contributed very well to her husband's election. I believe she could play more important roles by ensuring that women of this country are actively engaged in politics. Although women have been given more roles in the government, but I think she should not rest, she should continue to enlighten Nigerian women and build up their confidence.

It is not only in appointments, but also in elective positions. She should ensure that women do better than they did this time. There should be programmes to strengthen the confidence of women for them to take part actively in politics.

I do not believe in joining issues especially with my leaders that I have respect for and that also includes Gen. Babangida. But in my own opinion as somebody who worked closely in the last four years of the Obasanjo administration, I think to me it remains the best administration so far. I don't have to join issues with anybody. People have their problems and that is personal, but in my own opinion working with that man 24/7 I know how much commitment and passion he brought to his job.

Obasanjo is passionate about Nigeria he is just a misunderstood person, but that is my own opinion and I will not shy away from that and in my own opinion to date it remains the best administration so far. Let us watch what will happen now and I hope people will come together to also help this present democratic administration match the Obasanjo administration in terms of actualization of programmes. Nobody is 100% perfect but in my own opinion, it remains the best administration.

I do not react to gossip because as far as I am concerned I have not seen anybody that has openly come out to say that he is going to challenge Imoke. However, it is not out of place for there to be opposition in a healthy democracy. Although Cross River State has remained a politically peaceful state, but then I do not quarrel with the opposition because it is only healthy in a democracy. However, it is up to the incumbent Governor to ensure that he actualizes his dreams and aspirations and ensure that he carries out projects and programmes that are important that will further endear him to the people so that he can have an easy ride.

It is for him to ensure that he does things that will endear him more to the people, meet people's needs and aspirations.

It is not for me to judge whether or not the Governor has done sufficiently well. First of all, you will appreciate the fact that Cross River State is not as economically buoyant as other states. There are challenges which the Governor has had to meet.

I am not in a position to defend or campaign for the Governor, but all I am saying is that under the circumstances the Governor should try to make sure that he meets the needs and aspirations of the people. It is too early in the day for me to say whether he has done well or not. I am a Christian and I cannot judge people like that.

When the time comes, I will address the issue.

### My Dark Days With Anyim - Sen Ita-Giwa [interview]

It has been very, very difficult. Normally, I organize my charity balls where we raise money and actually, the children have become like my children now, though the challenges are there.

Though, I wish I could just go there and pick up a hundred more children. There are thousands of children looking for opportunities for education, for healthcare and so on. I am currently preparing for another red ball from which I wish to raise money to further meet the needs but its been very difficult, being that I have had to carry out most of the responsibilities single handedly.

Among the elites, for those God has given the opportunity to do well in life I think it is only proper that we give back to society what God has given to us because today, I have a name not only in Nigeria and it is because of what I have done for my community, and with all sense of modesty, it is because of my political success and this political success came out of the support of the people, the masses. So, it is only proper that I try to give back and try to create more Ita-Giwas from the area.

I think what I tried to do as Adviser to the President on National Assembly matters was to try and establish some level of cordiality and collaboration between the executive and the legislature. I will also say with some sense of modesty that I did succeed during that period.

I did four years of sleepless nights ensuring that projects were executed, ensuring that every issue that came from the executive to the National Assembly that needed immediate attention was given that attention by ensuring the collaboration between the two arms of government.

Under the circumstances there is nothing more that I could have done at the time, but as a politician, I still have my hopes and aspirations for this country, I am praying that we enjoy a peaceful country, that security and infrastructure issues are handled and then.

I am still working because I am not finished with my political career yet. I have not finished, I am taking a break to address my charity issues definitely I shall come back to the active scene. For now, I am in the background pursuing my charity causes which are very, very close to my heart.

What is your opinion on the proposal for a single term for the President and Governors? Is there any relationship with the third term proposal that came up while you were Special Adviser to the President?

I do not want to reduce it to tenure elongation or as some people are trying to do, to link it to third term.

If people sit together and say that a one term tenure of six years is healthy, is good for the country so that people go there and put their all in that six years, yes I will support it. Yes, I will support it if it is a single tenure that will allow people put in all efforts to ensure that they succeed during that period.

Some people tend to go to sleep knowing that they have a second term, so if that single term will work for this country, will make people stay active and ensure that they carry out all the electoral promises, yes, I will support it.

Senator Joy Emodi is a very experienced politician and also a very, very experienced lawmaker because she has been my colleague from when we were in the Constitutional Conference.

I think with her wealth of political experience and if a woman can climb in a very gender unfriendly place where she comes from (Anambra State) and she has managed to climb to this level, then I think that she will be able to succeed. The best thing for her to do is to continue making sure that that cordiality and collaboration continues and ensure that the members of the National Assembly are always well informed of any programme from the embryonic stage, not when the issue is almost concluded.

People want to be carried along and given information. When they get information, they are ready to go along. Mind you, those people are the representatives of the Nigerian people. So, for effective representation, they have to be part of whatsoever decision is taken in this country, so once you ensure that, she will succeed.

### My Dark Days With Anyim - Sen Ita-Giwa [interview]

Those were my dark days but at the end of the day I was able to come out and God helped me to see the light because I knew that there was light at the end of the tunnel and it did come up. Those are the things that you must experience as a politician that will make you stronger and that is why I still remain standing in this country. All those things really strengthened me. And today, Anyim is my friend and I am glad that he is Secretary to the Government and he will do well. In politics, we reconcile.

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2011

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## A Life in Justice [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

May 10, 2014

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**Length:** 2107 words

**Byline:** Adedayo Adejobi

### **Body**

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In a season of many deaths, the sad news of Justice Chukwudifu Oputa, no doubt comes as rude shock. The life and times of a man who was appointed to investigate abuses during 15 years of military rule, which ended when President Obasanjo took office as elected president on 29 May.

The Oputa panel no doubt put Nigeria's ex-military rulers under fire, as it took a stronger stand against former military rulers. The Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission was one of the greatest show on earth, as it came to terms with the past of ex-military rulers, looking at the most shameful episodes in the country's history and making the main protagonists accountable for their actions. The Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission set up by the Obasanjo administration in year 2000 was chaired by Justice Oputa and it examined human rights abuses when President Obasanjo was in power previously as a military ruler from 1976 to 1979. The body constituted Chief Chukwudifa Oputa (a Court Justice) as the head, Reverend Father Matthew Kukah as secretary, Mrs Elizabeth Pam, Dr Mudiaga Odje, Barrister Bala Ngilari, Mrs Modupe Areola and Alhaji Adamu Lawal Bamalli as members. Dark memories of the Nigerian civil war echoed at the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa panel, as Ohanaeze Ndigbo and the Arewa Consultative Forum engaged each other in a fierce dispute over the cause of the war. Ohanaeze's presentation, as articulated by UcheChukwumerije, a former Information Minister hinged on the premise that the North, working in concert with some other parts of the country, embarked on a deliberate programme to marginalise and exterminate the Igbo. Chronicling timelines of the Oputa Panel sittings, the Oputa Panel began sitting officially took off proceedings October 23rd, 2000, seeing Major Hamza Al-Mustapha testify on November 27th 2000. Between the 8th December, 2000 and April 18th 2011, Babangida and some former military intelligence chiefs were favoured in a high court ruling not to appear before the Panel on personal security grounds, while Ogoni people appeared before the Panel in Port Harcourt and the Enugu sitting of the Panel received testimonies and petitions, with Ohanaeze testifying. Unexpected especially being the principal who constituted the committee, President Olusegun Obasanjo was summoned and he appeared before Panel to give evidence, with Arewa Consultative Forum testified before Panel in Abuja where star witness, Major General Ibrahim Haruna was cross-examined. October 18th 2001 marked the last day of the sitting Panel, seeing Ibrahim Babangida getting a favourable judgment from the Court of Appeal, on the premise that the Oputa Panel cannot summon Babangida to defend himself and his security chiefs on the murder of Late Dele Giwa.

After the panel submitted 60 boxes of a six volume interim Report to President Olusegun Obasanjo on the 28th May 2002, Babangida jointly filed with the former Director of Military Intelligence, Col. Halilu Akilu and Brigadier General Kunle Togun, asking it to stop the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, from implementing the

## A Life in Justice [analysis]

report of the Oputa-led Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission. Till date, as far as shocking and useful the revelations in the Oputa Panel were, the reports are yet to be published and those indicted are yet to be punished accordingly - what a country! The Oputa Panel can be likened to the tale of a neglected supposed remedy for Injustices. Going down memory lane as a burdened journalist at the defunct 'The Comet', I can never forget when the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Two Division of the Army during the Nigerian-Biafran War, Major General Ibrahim Haruna (Rtd) was called upon to testify for the second day running of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) at the Oputa Panel for his alleged dastardly role in the war on 8th October, 2001, he declared that he had no regrets for the Asaba massacre in which over 500 Igbo men (civilians) were killed by his troops. He also revealed that Nigeria's late Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa had a foreknowledge of the 1966 coup that claimed his life. It was said that the then GCO Aguiyi-Ironsi informed the Prime Minister of an imminent coup a week before the coup, but he just didn't shove. On the 14th of January, the British government were said to have given him invitation to pass the night at the British High Commission in Lagos to escape the coup, he turned it down revealing that the mutineers will still kill him there! Major General Haruna who was cross-examined by the Ohanaeze Ndigbo's counsel, Chief Anthony Mogbo (SAN) who said whatever action he or his troops took during the war was motivated by a sense of duty to protect the unity of the Country. Hear him in his own words, "As the Commanding Officer and leader of the troops that massacred in Asaba, Owerri and Ameke-Item, I acted as a soldier maintaining the peace and unity of Nigeria." He went further, "If General Yakubu Gowon apologised, he did it in his own capacity. As for me I have no apology, it was as barbaric as the 1966 coup; it was as barbaric as the pogrom, if there was also any other atrocity, the Kano extra judicial killing was as barbaric as that." Haruna also recommended that General Muhammadu Buhari, General Yakubu Gowon and General Ibrahim Babangida be charged with failure to investigate the 1966 coup during their different terms as head of States. He said, "Charge Buhari, Gowon, Babangida for not investigating the 1966 coup on the grounds of dereliction of duty." The clown forgot to mention the trial of the perpetrators of the July 29th retaliatory coup.

On further questioning as to the rationale behind Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) tagging the 1966 coup an 'Igbo Coup' in spite of Alhaji Balewa, M.D Yusuf then a police officer, Col. Maimalari and many others of Northern extraction having prior knowledge of the coup, he declined response, but disclosed that the North had planned a Jihad on the day of the coup, insisting that the statement "Igbo, Igbo, Igbo you are no longer part of Nigeria" credited to the former Prime Minister (Balewa) was a misinterpretation of the actual intent. On the Gideon Akaluka incident of 1994 in Kano, Gen Haruna said that it was wrong to say that the Kano State government never punished the killers of Mr Gideon Akaluka, saying 20 unarmed persons were victims of extra-judicial killings which were supposed to be a deterrent. In his words, "My Lord, I do not know who ordered the extra-judicial killing, nor where they were killed. All I know is that the Kano State Government killed 20 people linked to the barbaric act." In his highly inhuman and highly insensitively unguarded words, "As the commanding officer and leader of the troops that massacred 500 men in Asaba, I have no apology for those massacred in Asaba, Owerri and Ameke-Item. I acted as a soldier maintaining the peace and unity of Nigeria," he declared. Going by the above, Major General Haruna showed that he is just like his boss Gowon, although I love his guts as to being bold to declare his position without mincing words, unlike Gowon who pretended to be remorseful whilst keeping a posture of innocence despite the fact that commanders under his watch were killing and maiming innocent lives. At the remembrance of the Oputa Panel, one can't help ask whatever happened to the likes of Lt Gen Bamaiyi, Sabo, Major Mustapha and the rest of the Oputa commission fame. Are they still in jail or roaming as free men pursuing normal businesses? These amongst other questions adroitly beg for answers.

Nigerians were no doubt extremely naive to have expected anything good to come out of a Human Rights Commission that Obasanjo, who apparently stands labeled as one of the most dishonest and genocidal kleptomaniacal Heads of States ever, set up. Another drama that played up was a dreary chapter in the nation's annals which were revisited at the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (HRVIC) as President Olusegun Obasanjo filed his defence over the burning in 1978 of the famous Kalakuta Republic. The property was owned by family of the late afrobeat maestro, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. The stage for probing revelations about the military invasion of the republic was set when Fela's younger brother, Late Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti a human rights activist, filed a petition at the panel. Being a strategic politician with a well-laid out game plan, Obasanjo set up the commission for his own selfish reasons and had nothing to do with human rights. He seemingly hand-picked the cases. Although the likes of the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon who had a critical role-play faulted

## A Life in Justice [analysis]

the setting up of the Oputa panel saying that only God could bring about the much-needed reconciliation in the country, again emotionally tendering a public apology to the people of Asaba for the mass killing of their kinsmen during the civil war, pointing out that he did not approve of the killings..

The report which captured the strength and weaknesses of the media coverage of Nigeria's version of the post-military era of the truth and reconciliation panel set up by the Federal Government to assuage the pains of victims of human right violations was thrown to the thrash. A member of the dissolved Justice Chukwudifu Oputa Commission on Human Rights Abuses, Reverend Father Hassan Matthew Kukah's request asking the government to release the commission's report to prove its sincerity to correcting the wrongs in the country, fell on deaf ears. The Oputa public sitting was some national dialogue. It was a major national dialogue that brought some recommendations. For those who read in detail, they will discover that, perhaps, if we took that panel report seriously, Nigeria had no need to set up another dialogue. A commendable Justice Chukwudifu Oputa's panel gave clues to those who killed **Giwa**, saying they may never even be publicly known unless the federal government bows to pressures from well-meaning Nigerians to reorder a thorough investigation into the gruesome murder. The Oputa commission on further hearing of two petitions on **Giwa**'s murder December 11 reported that the military made deliberate efforts to cover up and frustrate official investigations into how **Giwa** died. With the foreboding that his cover will be blown-away, Babangida sought to Battle Oputa Panel, as he and his ex-security chiefs, Brig. General Halilu Akili, and Col. Kunle Togun, rushed to the Abuja High Court presided over by Justice Binta Murtala Nyakoto to listen to arguments from lawyers he hired with a view to stopping implementation of the report of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission. A truth-seeking Justice Chukwudifu Oputa went home disappointed, as the matter was not heard but instead adjourned. Typical of our nation with its dark life, Nigerians like Justice Chukwudifu Oputa who gave their time and efforts to the success of the commission with a view to providing accountability, were no doubt worried that the President kept quiet and allowing the Panel's report gather dust in the archives. The silence over the report was simply an 'spoken but unspoken' word saying human rights violations has gone with the Wind.

The Oputa panel report may not have been capable of addressing all aspects of human rights abuses in the country, but Nigerians wanted to have a pedestal upon which they could gauge what to do and what to expect, especially as the nation approached the real transition, which was from civil to another civil rule.. Now that a man who championed a just cause is dead, failure to immortalise him would in no small measure reinstate Nigeria as a banditry state where state power is solely organised to shield criminals. Living former President Olusegun Obasanjo would have assuaged the feelings of Nigerians as well as restored the confidence reposed by Nigerians in the ability of the panel to carry out its functions uninhibited, instead it used the state to shield abusers of human liberty. It is evident that myriad of atrocities which played out years before the Panel was set up are being replicated in present day Nigeria, but with graver dimensions. Nigeria might not have Mandela in the land, but a simple reality of life borrowed from the law of Karma for the unwary people, is that the day of reckoning for those who had used and abused their public offices to violently violate the fundamental liberties of other citizens is near. Posterity will judge! ® Having lived a worthy life in Justice for the cause of humanity, Nigeria owes Justice Chukwudifu Oputa a great deal, by immortalising him in every way possible.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2014

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## **'Our writers are the best in the land'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

July 31, 2016 Sunday

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Length: 1903 words

### **Body**

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In its ten years of existence, The Nation has proved its mettle by being both professional and commercial success. OLUKOREDE YISHAU tells the story of the newspaper's many professional honours Gbenga Omotoso, Sam Omatseye, Steve Osuji, Olatunji Ololade, Adekunle Yusuf and Seun Akioye work for The Nation.

But that is not all they have in common. Year in, year out, they win awards for the newspaper They are some of the many award winners who ply their trade in this newspaper Their incisive stories and columns have made this newspaper a force to reckon with.

Omotoso, Omatseye, Ololade, Yusuf and Akioye share this winning streak with the likes of Collins Nweze, Taiwo Alimi, Gboyega Alaka, Olukorede Yishau, Emmanuel Oladesu, Chikodi Okereocha, Taofeek Salako and Evelyn Osagie. This enviable club also parades stars such as Shola O'Neil, Joseph Jibueze, Azeez Ozi-Sanni, Muviwa Adetula, Sina Fadare, Adedeji Ademigbuji, Oluwakemi Dauda and Kunle Akinrinade.

From its investigative desk to its business desk to its political desk, great stories have been churned out and external assessors have had no choice but to authenticate them as some of the best pieces of journalism produced in the country. No wonder in its 10 years of existence, its reporters have won several laurels at the Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMA), the Diamond Awards for Media Excellence (DAME), the CNN African **Journalist** of the Year, Wole Soyinka Awards for Investigative Journalism, Quill Awards, Golden Pen Awards, Schneider Awards and Rotary Awards.

Aside reporters and writers who have won awards in the newspaper's name, there are others who now ply their trades but have won laurels elsewhere. This class includes multiple award-winning Muviwa Lucas, who now oversees the property section, Lucas Ajanaku, who was a finalist in the CNN African **Journalist** of the Year, and Raymond Mordi, now Deputy Political Editor Omotoso, who edits this newspaper, and Omatseye, who chairs its editorial board, have shown the light to the reporters by winning awards regularly.

For no less than five times, Omatseye won the Columnist of the Year He has also won the DAME Informed Commentary Prize thrice. In 2010, he won the commentary category of both NMMA and DAME Omotoso won the 2012 Alade Odunewu Informed Commentary Award at the 21st DAME The piece that earned him the prestigious award is "A comedian's fate", which he wrote on November 3, 2011.

The piece, said the organisers, wittingly analysed the "Baba Suwe vs NDLEA" saga The DAME judges described Omotoso as a "witty columnist and one of the most experienced editors around". The audience burst into laughter when extracts from the article were read in the hall.

'Our writers are the best in the land'

His winning came some days after Omatseye won the Columnist of the Year at the NMMA, a development which made Managing Director Victor Ifijeh remark that "it shows the strength of our writers, who are clearly the best in the land". Significantly, twice the newspaper won the Newspaper of the Year at NMMA and DAME At the NMMA last year, the newspaper proved that the best writers and reporters have found a home in The Nation.

Of record 35 nominations, this newspaper won in 13 categories at the prestigious NMMA the highest by any publication. It won Editor of the Year, Investigative Reporter of the Year, Columnist of the Year and 10 others.

Omotoso is the reigning Editor of the Year (NMMA). He won in the same category three years ago.

Assistant Editor (News) Yishau won two prizes at the event witnessed by former Governors Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Gbenga Daniel. He won the Columnist of the Year, with a piece titled "Time to deploy Mbu to Maiduguri".

He also won the Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter of the Year with his entry titled "October 1 and other stories". Yusuf won the Investigative Reporter of the Year category with his story on how lead poisoning has killed many in Zamfara Last November, he won the Wole Soyinka Investigative Reporter of the Year for his three-part series on the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

Nweze won two awards: Banking and Finance Reporter of the Year and Money Market Reporter of the Year Salako won the Capital Market Reporter of the Year prize. O'Neil won the Buba Marwa Prize for Defence Reporter of the Year with his story "Inside the mess soldiers call home in Warri".

O'Neil was also runner-up in the Environment Reporter of the Year category. Osagie won the Female Reporter of the Year prize.

She was also runner up in the Education Reporter of the Year category. Fadare won the Olagunsoye Prize for Culture Reporter with his story " Magun: Myth or reality".

Oladesu, who is the Group Political Editor, won the Lateef Jakande Prize for Political Reporter of the Year The Ernest Sisei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year was won by Jibueze, who also last year won the Diamond Award for Media Excellence (DAME) in the judicial reporting category. He won both prizes with his piece "How sabotage, blackmail and undue delays are killing the judiciary".

Okereocha, a serial award winner, won the Chevron Prize for Oil and Gas Reporter of the Year In 2014, at the NMMA in Owerri, the newspaper won eight awards from a record 17 nominations. The newspaper proved that it parades some of the best commentators in the industry, with Editorial Board member Osuji emerging the Columnist of the Year Omotoso was runner-up in this category.

Yusuf won the Olagunsoye Oyinlola Prize for Culture and Tradition Reporter of the Year and the Chevron Nigeria Prize for Oil and Gas Reporter of the Year He won the Culture and Tradition Prize with a story titled "Help, Nigerian languages are disappearing!" published on November 13, 2013. His story, "How Nigeria lost \$11b to vandalism and theft" won the Oil and Gas Prize.

Yusuf, earlier in 2014, won the Quill Award in the Industry reporting category. Ololade , who in 2014 won the CNN African **Journalist** of the Year award in the health and medical reporting category, got two awards at the Owerri event.

His "Kalakuta Republic: A decade after" published on October 26 won the Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter of the Year He also won the Gani Fawehinmi Prize for Human Rights Reporter of the Year with his "Fractured lives", published on September 14, 2013. Akioye also did this newspaper proud at the 2014 event held at the International Convention Centre, Owerri by emerging winner in two key categories.

Akioye emerged the Alex Ibru Investigative Reporter of the Year, with his entry, "Money, money everywhere, yet flood pains remain", which traced how donations made by governments and philanthropists after the last major flood in the country were spent. He also emerged winner of the NAFCON Prize for Environment Reporter of the Year His entry, "Even the rich envy us the way we live", was published on April 20, 2013.

'Our writers are the best in the land'

Akioye won the Golden Pen Reporter of the Year with the same story. The same story also won DAME that year In August 2013, Akioye emerged the winner of international environment award, the WASH Media Award organised by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), Geneva and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

The award was presented during the World Water Week in Stockholm At the 2014 NMMA, The Nation's Dauda clinched the Maritime Reporter of the Year Award. At the 2013 NMMA, which held in Ikogosi, Ekiti State, The Nation won six top awards, including Newspaper of the Year Omotoso won the **Dele Giwa** Prize for Editor of the Year The Editorial Board, which has won laurels for its editorials on critical issues, won the prize for Editorial Writing.

Yishau won the Intercontinental Bank Prize for Capital Market Reporter of the Year Ms Joke Kujenya, then an Assistant Editor (Investigations) with this newspaper, clinched the Peter Odili Prize for Power Reporter of the Year and Nweze won the UBA Prize for Money Market Reporter of the Year At the 2014 DAME, where it won the Newspaper of the Year, the organisers said ": In emerging The Newspaper of the Year for the first time at DAME, The Nation put up an impressive fight, elbowing out The Punch in a close finish. The Nation won five DAME award in Informed Commentary, Development Reporting, Health Reporting, Political Reporting, and Judicial Reporting.

It also came second in six categories, namely Informed Commentary, Development Reporting, Child Friendly Reporting, Business Reporting, Editorial Writing, and Press Investigative Reporter of the year Finally, it also recorded two third place positions in Press Investigative Reporter of the year award and Development Reporting. Established in 2006.

The Nation has gradually emerged as a paper of record, parading some of the most enterprising reporters and columnists in the land. Guided by its Editor-in-Chief and Managing Director Victor Ifijeh and the Editor, Gbenga Omotoso, and Sam Omatseye, its chairman of the Editorial Board, and a host of other key officers, The Nation is truly one of Nigeria's leading newspapers giants.

Omotoso also emerged the Editor of the Year Editorial Board Chairman Sam Omatseye won the Informed Commentary Prize. The newspaper's reporters also won four other awards in Development Reporting, Judicial Reporting, Political Reporting and Health Reporting categories.

" Of the 19 awards up for grabs that night, The Nation won seven, the highest by any newspaper, just like it did at that year's NMMA With the array of investigative and incisive pieces churned out by its reporters last year, it will not be surprising if baskets will be needed to carry its awards this year Already, the floodgate has opened with Ololade winning the Quill Awards. Ololade's several other awards are: Diamond Award for Media Excellence Anthony Enahoro Prize for Political Reporting (2012) Winner, Diamond Award for Media Excellence UNICEF Prize for Child-friendly Reporting (2012) Winner, Ernest Sisei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year(NMMA-2012) Winner, BAT Prize for Industry Reporter of the Year (NMMA-2012) Winner, Ernest Sisei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year, Nigerian Media Merit Award (NMMA-2011) Winner, Ibrahim Buba Shekarau Prize for Education Reporter of the Year, NMMA-2011 Winner, BAT Prize for Industry Reporter of the Year NMMA-2011 Diamond Award for Media Excellence Prize for Best Judicial Reporting of the Year (2010) Winner, Ernest Sisei Ikoli Prize for Newspaper Reporter of the Year (NMMA-2010) Winner, Gani Fawehinmi Prize for Human Rights Reporter of the Year NMMA-2009 Winner, Olu Aboderin Prize for Entertainment Reporter of the Year NMMA-2009.

His entry, which won the CNN award, "This marriage will kill me Tragedy of Nigeria's child brides" took an in-depth look at the trauma suffered by Nigeria's child brides. As well as often being married to men decades older, they are also brutally circumcised.

This practice can cause severe medical complications. This, combined with the fact that many have bodies too young to cope with childbirth, means that they are left enduring lifelong, excruciating pain.

These girls are also often betrayed by their families, finding themselves ostracised and forced into desperate situations to survive. He is set to leave for London for a training programme as a result of his outstanding performance at the Quill Awards.

'Our writers are the best in the land'

This year sure promises to be another year of reward for excellent reporting and writing.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2016

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## Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

The Nation (Nigeria)

February 16, 2014 Sunday

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Length: 1733 words

### **Body**

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To Ojavun-Emai deep in the rural bowels of good old Edo State for some bucolic pleasure and rapture with nature. This is the famed old Bendel countryside with its alluring rolling hills, its magical forests, its breathtaking scenic beauty and the sheer expanse of arable lands. This is the land of brave men and women who do not take hostages with their sharp and sizzling tongue.

In a situation of national strife and confusion, there is nothing more healing and therapeutic than escaping to the countryside. It acts like a soothing balm to frayed and frazzled nerves. In the post-colonial nation, the city is where it hurts most; the city is where it is most dangerous; the city is where the pathologies of the urban denizens are most pronounced and most severe; the city is the citadel of lost souls. See Paris and die, as they used to say.

There are even more compelling reasons to leave the city and head for Ojavun-Emai via the famed Sabongida Ora. The treasures and jewels in this part of the country, both human and natural, are inestimable, to put things in a rather oblique manner. And yet despite having journeyed all over the nooks and crannies of this vast nation, this is one magical corner that had so far eluded yours sincerely. Several opportunities missed, it was beginning to look like a rendezvous permanently postponed, until last Saturday that is. When are we going to see the land of Michael Imoudu?

But let us cut to the chase, drop this sentimental waffling, and get to the real reason for going to Ojavun-Emai. As everybody knows, in journalism there are two major disincentives: Censorship and self-censorship. The one is more direct and overt, invariably arising from threats from the powers that be. The other is more covert and oblique, almost certainly arising from warnings from the inner powers that be and the natural human instinct for self-preservation. The antennae of trouble advises you to avoid certain topics and issues.

It was Sonala Olumhense, the notable Nigeria ***journalist*** and aficionado of fine music, who coined the classic phrase for self-censorship in the eighties. He called it going to Afghanistan. Whenever the home terrain gets too hot, the discerning ***journalist*** escapes to some forgotten and misbegotten corner of the globe for some safe topics. But it may well be that the remarkable Ishan pen-pushers spoke too soon. Nigeria is big enough to accommodate strategic detours. Why go to Afghanistan when you can go to Sabongida Ora? Internal self-deportation is better than external self-expulsion.

The country is certainly getting more interesting by the day. The stakes are being dramatically raised. It is going to be a desperate scrape. This week in faraway London and on Bloomberg, the old bruiser from Owu dropped another bombshell to the effect that Jonathan agreed to spend only one term. That one is presumably for international

### Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

consumption. The battle line is sharply drawn. Obasanjo is the Joe Frazier of contemporary Nigerian politics. Once his mind is made up, old Smokin Joe would keep coming at you until you dump him on the canvas that is if he doesn't fell you with a sledgehammer. See folks? I will rather be in Sabongida Ora.

Only last week in this column, we published what was purported to be Okon's own snipers' list. An avid reader of the column who goes by various aliases but most notably Tata or Iska Countryman promptly shot back: "Oga Snooper, I worked hard to get your name off the list" To his minatory mentors, Tata argued that it was no use killing the messenger because it brings bad luck. After conceding Snooper's divine skills as an obituarist, the internet cricket warned Snooper never to mention the word revolution in this column if he doesn't want his name back on the dreaded list.

Well, there is no point mentioning revolution when the real stuff is already with us. Last weekend as soon as the Arik flight landed in Benin, one could sniff revolution in the air. The old city of Benin is draped and emblazoned in revolution. Twice in the last four years in this column, we have had to draw attention to the slow transformation of this historic city from a sleepy rustic municipal village to a glittering metropolis.

This Saturday morning as one began to make his way from the sexed up airport through the city and on to the outskirt, you have a feeling of a complete transformation. The colonial clutter and cataract were gone. This was not the clogged up agrarian catastrophe you knew by heart in the seventies.

The streets of Benin are wide and well-paved again, just as the dazed and dazzled Portuguese explorers met them in the fifteenth century. There is a feel-good atmosphere everywhere. Snooper is reliably informed that even the great and wise old king of Benin has flatly insisted that even if the walls of the ancient storied palace have to make way for modernity, so be it. Thank you very much sir.

You soon got the imprimatur of the man running the show even inside the bus taking you to Sabongida. The big brother is watching you. Like Bakayoko, the epic character in Sembene Ousmane's Marxist novel, God's Bits of Wood, Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole is everywhere and nowhere in particular. But you feel his overpowering presence everywhere. Oshiomhole is an African big brother: tough but compassionate; caring but not careless. It surely takes a tough man to rein in this tough breed.

Inside the bus, Louis Odion, the intrepid and feisty Edo Commissioner for Information, had been running some colorful, abrasive and irreverent commentaries particularly about the political dinosaurs that held the state to ransom. But the driving was getting in the way. The rogue driver, a comically mustachioed fiend if you have ever seen any, could not care a hoot about the august personages he was ferrying. Piking no pass piking, as they say in that corner of the country. After a particularly nerve wracking feat of dangerous overtaking, Louis finally snapped. "I will report you to Comrade", he shrieked at the devil. This seemed to have calmed him down immediately. Comrade is not for camaraderie when it comes to indiscipline.

Snooper is very familiar with the landscape and topography of the old Bendel country side, its flora and fauna and its memorable mix of vegetation. After a few acute remarks about where the road was leading and the rural intersections ahead, Sam Omatseye remarked that his footloose majesty seems to know everywhere in the country. Needless to add that some of the journeys tell their own story and the tragedy of modern Nigeria.

Almost 30 years earlier, we were on the same road to bury Dele Giwa in his ancestral village. Snooper remembers that on the road leading to Fugar and Agenebode, Adesua, a former student, miraculously materialised like a beautiful mirage on the side of the road among the crowd waving Dele an emotional goodbye. A few years earlier, Snooper was a regular fixture on the same road.

This time around, it was as a gesture of solidarity with the Nigerian Tribune and the African Newspaper group. Alhaji Umoru Omolowo was the police commissioner in the old Oyo State during the infamous electoral heist of 1983. He retired from the force shortly thereafter. But as a gesture of punitive indignation, he had sued The Nigerian Tribune for defamation in his hometown of Okene.

### Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

Tribune's lawyer, Barrister Akin Ige, is a great crony and Snooper could not abandon the poor chap to the mercy of the fierce masquerades of Okene. It must be said for posterity that in court, Alhaji Omolowo was ever polite, courteous and solicitous of our wellbeing. The case eventually collapsed. So much for the rigid binary divides of Nigerian politics.

By now, we had arrived in Sabongida Ora. There was something eerily unsettling in the air. The place was exactly as one had dreamt about and imagined. There was a feeling of *Déjà vu*. Rustic, idyllic villages nestling in the commodious expanse of agrarian paradise. All over the community, you noticed several glinting, freshly coated red-roofed school buildings standing side by side with the dilapidated pigsties that passed for schools in the old era.

Again, Louis Odion was very helpful. The administration of the wily Adams Oshiomhole had deliberately left the old buildings as a museum of educational atrocity to remind the people that they were once held in bondage by educated barbarians. The point is well made. Oshiomhole is a wizard of telling tropes and searing symbolisms.

Lest we forget why we were actually in the rural nirvana. We had come to Ojavun-Emai to pay our last respects to the late Madam Elizabeth Okheren Ifijeh, beloved mother of Victor Awolowo Ifijeh, the Managing Director of Vintage Press, publishers of The Nation newspaper. Huge banner posters of mama beaming a winsome and most beatific smile adorned the entire route.

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**Load-Date:** May 20, 2014



## Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

The Nation (Nigeria)

February 15, 2014 Saturday

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Length: 1736 words

### **Body**

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To Ojavun-Emai deep in the rural bowels of good old Edo State for some bucolic pleasure and rapture with nature. This is the famed old Bendel countryside with its alluring rolling hills, its magical forests, its breathtaking scenic beauty and the sheer expanse of arable lands. This is the land of brave men and women who do not take hostages with their sharp and sizzling tongue.

In a situation of national strife and confusion, there is nothing more healing and therapeutic than escaping to the countryside. It acts like a soothing balm to frayed and frazzled nerves. In the post-colonial nation, the city is where it hurts most the city is where it is most dangerous the city is where the pathologies of the urban denizens are most pronounced and most severe the city is the citadel of lost souls. See Paris and die, as they used to say.

There are even more compelling reasons to leave the city and head for Ojavun-Emai via the famed Sabongida Ora. The treasures and jewels in this part of the country, both human and natural, are inestimable, to put things in a rather oblique manner. And yet despite having journeyed all over the nooks and crannies of this vast nation, this is one magical corner that had so far eluded yours sincerely. Several opportunities missed, it was beginning to look like a rendezvous permanently postponed, until last Saturday that is. When are we going to see the land of Michael Imoudu?

But let us cut to the chase, drop this sentimental waffling, and get to the real reason for going to Ojavun-Emai. As everybody knows, in journalism there are two major disincentives: Censorship and self-censorship. The one is more direct and overt, invariably arising from threats from the powers that be. The other is more covert and oblique, almost certainly arising from warnings from the inner powers that be and the natural human instinct for self-preservation. The antennae of trouble advises you to avoid certain topics and issues.

It was Sonala Olumhense, the notable Nigeria *journalist* and aficionado of fine music, who coined the classic phrase for self-censorship in the eighties. He called it going to Afghanistan. Whenever the home terrain gets too hot, the discerning *journalist* escapes to some forgotten and misbegotten corner of the globe for some safe topics. But it may well be that the remarkable Ishan pen-pushers spoke too soon. Nigeria is big enough to accommodate strategic detours. Why go to Afghanistan when you can go to Sabongida Ora? Internal self-deportation is better than external self-expulsion.

The country is certainly getting more interesting by the day. The stakes are being dramatically raised. It is going to be a desperate scrape. This week in faraway London and on Bloomberg, the old bruiser from Owu dropped another bombshell to the effect that Jonathan agreed to spend only one term. That one is presumably for international

### Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

consumption. The battle line is sharply drawn. Obasanjo is the Joe Frazier of contemporary Nigerian politics. Once his mind is made up, old Smokin Joe would keep coming at you until you dump him on the canvas that is if he doesn't fell you with a sledgehammer. See folks? I will rather be in Sabongida Ora.

Only last week in this column, we published what was purported to be Okon's own snipers' list. An avid reader of the column who goes by various aliases but most notably Tata or Iska Countryman promptly shot back: "Oga Snooper, I worked hard to get your name off the list" To his minatory mentors, Tata argued that it was no use killing the messenger because it brings bad luck. After conceding Snooper's divine skills as an obituarist, the internet cricket warned Snooper never to mention the word revolution in this column if he doesn't want his name back on the dreaded list.

Well, there is no point mentioning revolution when the real stuff is already with us. Last weekend as soon as the Arik flight landed in Benin, one could sniff revolution in the air. The old city of Benin is draped and emblazoned in revolution. Twice in the last four years in this column, we have had to draw attention to the slow transformation of this historic city from a sleepy rustic municipal village to a glittering metropolis.

This Saturday morning as one began to make his way from the sexed up airport through the city and on to the outskirt, you have a feeling of a complete transformation. The colonial clutter and cataract were gone. This was not the clogged up agrarian catastrophe you knew by heart in the seventies.

The streets of Benin are wide and well-paved again, just as the dazed and dazzled Portuguese explorers met them in the fifteenth century. There is a feel-good atmosphere everywhere. Snooper is reliably informed that even the great and wise old king of Benin has flatly insisted that even if the walls of the ancient storied palace have to make way for modernity, so be it. Thank you very much sir.

You soon got the imprimatur of the man running the show even inside the bus taking you to Sabongida. The big brother is watching you. Like Bakayoko, the epic character in Sembene Ousmane's Marxist novel, God's Bits of Wood, Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole is everywhere and nowhere in particular. But you feel his overpowering presence everywhere. Oshiomhole is an African big brother: tough but compassionate caring but not careless. It surely takes a tough man to rein in this tough breed.

Inside the bus, Louis Odion, the intrepid and feisty Edo Commissioner for Information, had been running some colorful, abrasive and irreverent commentaries particularly about the political dinosaurs that held the state to ransom. But the driving was getting in the way. The rogue driver, a comically mustachioed fiend if you have ever seen any, could not care a hoot about the august personages he was ferrying. Piking no pass piking, as they say in that corner of the country. After a particularly nerve wracking feat of dangerous overtaking, Louis finally snapped. "I will report you to Comrade", he shrieked at the devil. This seemed to have calmed him down immediately. Comrade is not for camaraderie when it comes to indiscipline.

Snooper is very familiar with the landscape and topography of the old Bendel country side, its flora and fauna and its memorable mix of vegetation. After a few acute remarks about where the road was leading and the rural intersections ahead, Sam Omatseye remarked that his footloose majesty seems to know everywhere in the country. Needless to add that some of the journeys tell their own story and the tragedy of modern Nigeria.

Almost 30 years earlier, we were on the same road to bury **Dele Giwa** in his ancestral village. Snooper remembers that on the road leading to Fugar and Agenebode, Adesua, a former student, miraculously materialised like a beautiful mirage on the side of the road among the crowd waving **Dele** an emotional goodbye. A few years earlier, Snooper was a regular fixture on the same road.

This time around, it was as a gesture of solidarity with the Nigerian Tribune and the African Newspaper group. Alhaji Umoru Omolowo was the police commissioner in the old Oyo State during the infamous electoral heist of 1983. He retired from the force shortly thereafter. But as a gesture of punitive indignation, he had sued The Nigerian Tribune for defamation in his hometown of Okene.

### Going to meet Pa Michael Imoudu

Tribune's lawyer, Barrister Akin Ige, is a great crony and Snooper could not abandon the poor chap to the mercy of the fierce masquerades of Okene. It must be said for posterity that in court, Alhaji Omolowo was ever polite, courteous and solicitous of our wellbeing. The case eventually collapsed. So much for the rigid binary divides of Nigerian politics.

By now, we had arrived in Sabongida Ora. There was something eerily unsettling in the air. The place was exactly as one had dreamt about and imagined. There was a feeling of *Déjà vu*. Rustic, idyllic villages nestling in the commodious expanse of agrarian paradise. All over the community, you noticed several glinting, freshly coated red-roofed school buildings standing side by side with the dilapidated pigsties that passed for schools in the old era.

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**Load-Date:** May 31, 2014



## **The Return of the Parcel Bomb [column]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

February 07, 2013

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**Length:** 1452 words

**Byline:** Jideofor Adibe

### **Body**

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The recent report that the police detonated a parcel bomb addressed to the Minister of Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala will obviously heighten the pervasive sense of insecurity in the land.

Where can Nigerians now hide and feel secure? Travelling by road and returning safely to one's home is often regarded as God's divine favour - given the frequent carnages on the roads and the menace of armed robbers. Many say their last prayers before flying on our air spaces. In some parts of the North, the fear of bombs and killings by Boko Haram and groups purporting to be acting in its name is the beginning of wisdom. In several states in the South, everyone now appears to have a certain kidnap value - some are kidnapped because of millions of Naira ransom to be extracted while others are reportedly seized and allowed to 'bail' themselves with re-charge cards. Across the country, in your home, office or public space, armed robbers and sadists can strike any time with fury, killing and maiming as if human lives were worth less than those of chickens. Or should we talk about inter-communal and indigene/setter feuds that erupt occasionally in different parts of the country and which often pits neighbours against one another?

With the widespread sense of insecurity comes, in typical Nigerian fashion, fear mongering and merchandising. For instance at the height of Boko Haram's bombings, several text and email messages were being circulated warning people not to buy oranges, garden eggs, yams and other food items from the North because Boko Haram had allegedly put poison in them. Never mind the near impossibility of poisoning millions of food items that come from different sources in the North and for which the group allegedly doing the poisoning could also be victims. But this is Nigeria.

Back to the parcel bomb. There are conflicting stories about the incident. While the Post-master General of the Federation Ibrahim Mori Baba for instance affirmed the incident of the parcel, he could not confirm if it was a bomb or not - according to several reports. However, an un-named Nigeria Postal Service official was quoted by the Guardian of 4 February 2012 as saying that they came to work in the morning on Monday (4 February 2013) and noticed a funny looking package with two N50 postage stamps on it in front of their premises and notified their boss who promptly invited the anti-bomb squad. This source was further quoted as saying that when the anti-bomb squad came they controlled human movement around the area and went into work with their instruments and after a while they heard an explosion, followed by another explosion. For this source therefore, the parcel was a letter bomb. The FCT Commissioner of Police, Mr Aderenle Shinaba apparently had a different take on the incident. While he admitted that there was something that was packaged in carton that looked like bomb at the gate of

### The Return of the Parcel Bomb [column]

NIPOST in Area 10, he claimed that their investigations showed that the parcel had nothing to do with improvised explosive device (IED).

Despite the conflicting stories on whether the parcel was a bomb or not, what is clear is that the intent of the sender of such a parcel was not a love message but to kill or scare. And the greater danger is that it could unwittingly inspire mischief makers and terrorists into realizing that the postal system, including courier services, could be another channel for conveying their evil designs.

To be sure, parcel or letter bomb has been part of the arsenal of terrorists and mischief makers for as old as there has been a Post office. For instance as early as the 18th century, the Danish historian Bolle Willum Luxdorph in his diary of 19 January 1764 noted that one "Colonel Poulsen residing at Børglum abbey was sent by mail a box. When he opens it, therein is to be found gunpowder and a firelock which sets fire unto it, so he became very injured." Again as early as 1915, Thomas R. Marshall, Vice President of the United States, was the target of an assassination attempt by letter bomb. In 1947, several letter bombs were sent to President Harry Truman in the White House by Zionist terrorists, which fortunately were all intercepted. On August 17 1982, Ruth First, a South African communist and anti-apartheid activist was killed by a parcel bomb mailed by the South African government to her home in Mozambique. In April 2011 in the UK, Neil Lennon and two high profile fans of Celtic Football Club were sent parcel bombs. The two suspects in the case recently bagged a five year jail term each for the crime.

In Nigeria, parcel bombs were virtually unknown until October 19, 1986 when the flamboyant ***journalist Dele Giwa***, one of the founders of the iconic Newswatch magazine was killed by such a bomb. Since then, there has been only one such recorded incident in the country. This was on December 22 2009 when a bomb exploded on a man at the Onipanu area of Lagos. The man was said to have walked into the building housing Superscreen Television in Onipanu part of Lagos State (Ikorodu road), with some parcels containing bombs, one of which accidentally went off, blowing off his fingers and his face. The man claimed that he was asked to deliver the parcel to the most senior person in the TV station.

One of the lessons of the letter bomb story should be not only to call our attention to the extensive insecurity in the country but also to alert us to the fact that some of our flanks remain dangerously porous amid the banality of evil in the country. It should be recalled that when Ngozi Iweala's mother Professor Kamene was kidnapped last year, the Co-ordinating Minister of the Economy fingered oil marketers - though there was nothing from the statements of the arrested suspected abductors that pointed to the complicity of the fuel subsidy cabal. It is instructive that the suspected parcel bomb was again addressed to the Finance Minister, which naturally raises questions and suspicions. If appointed public servants must be able to do their job with the necessary boldness, it behoves on the government to move decisively and unmask the person or persons behind the parcel. While this is not necessarily an endorsement of the manner in which the Finance Minister does her job, the fact is that unless public officials are assured of their security, including protection from intimidation, they cannot give their best.

I am by the way not impressed by the grand-standing of the Postmaster General of the Federation, Malam Ibrahim Mori Baba who reportedly said: "The issue is that on Friday [1 February 2013], somebody just came, we couldn't understand whether that person was a sane person or insane and wanted to get to the post office, but, unfortunately, for him, the gate was closed and he couldn't have access to our building and he left the parcel. This is because there are processes that have to be done and these processes are that we weigh it and, then, determine how much you will pay; we also have to examine it in your presence" (Blueprint, online 5 February 2013). Yes, the Post Office may have 'processes' but the truth is that the 'Nigerian factor' stands tall there - as in virtually every other public institution in the country. A determined mischief maker or terrorist can still get such a parcel bomb through the postal system despite the alleged 'processes'. After all every Ministry, Department and Agency in the country have 'processes' for ensuring transparency in both employment and utilization of allocated resources which are just simply largely observed in the breach. Therefore rather than a triumphant beating of the chest as the Post-Master General seemed to have done, the incident should be a wake-up call for extra security measures to ensure that the Post Office, including courier agencies, are not unwittingly utilized by merchants of death to perpetrate mayhem.

### The Return of the Parcel Bomb [column]

With people, especially those in authority positions and the high and mighty now likely to be afraid of opening their mails and parcels, it becomes necessary to wonder where one can go looking for succour in the country. The spaces appear to be further shrinking - from physical insecurity to material insecurity, including food insecurity. Nigeria is in dire need of being fixed. And the country cannot be fixed without the issue of extensive insecurity in the land being addressed.

It is true that many of the problems of insecurity in the country pre-date the Jonathan administration. What Nigerians want to see and believe is that the situation is getting better, not worsening, and that the government is on full throttle in addressing the problem. Right now Nigerians and the government appear to be on different pages on the matter.

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2013

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## Florence - a Woman of Substance

This Day (Lagos)

December 04, 2015

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Length: 2114 words

### **Body**

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Senator Florence Ita-Giwa, former Presidential Adviser on National Assembly Matters and ex-wife of the late founding Editor of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa, still looks graceful and exudes the energy of a woman half her age. Although she would be 70 in a few months, her youthfulness, enduring beauty and elegance belie the passage of time. She spoke to Mary Ekah about what preoccupies her these days, the secret of her ever youthful looks, and her most challenging issue at the moment

As Chairperson of the Carnival Calabar Band Association and leader of one of the frontal bands, the Seagull, tell us the inspiration behind the annual carnival? The Cross River Christmas Festival was initiated by the Donald Duke administration as a month long festival of cultural and entertainment activities in the month of December, designed to promote the state as the leading tourist destination in Nigeria and indeed Africa, with the Calabar Carnival as the high point. Commandably the Senator Liyel Imoke administration took the Calabar Carnival to the next level. From the enthusiasm and passion of the present governor, Professor Ben Ayade, it appears he is poised to take the carnival to an even higher level. As a band leader and Chairman of the committee of band leaders, I and the other band leaders fully intend to cooperate with the governor to make this year's carnival which will hold on December 28 the best ever. In fact, it will be magical mark my words.

You seem to be spending a lot of time in Calabar these days. Why? As an elder stateswoman I have a duty to rally support and help ensure a conducive atmosphere for the Governor to perform and achieve his laudable programmes. The political environment in the state is gradually getting peaceful again unlike in the past when rumours and gossiping reigned. Cross Riverians deserve peace and the restoration of their dignity and confidence.

Now that you are not involved in active politics, what are you doing presently? Politics does not begin and end with elections or political appointments; the fact that my party PDP is no longer in power at the centre does not mean I am not politically engaged. Even if the PDP won at the centre, did not automatically mean that I would have been given an appointment. In fact, one is not in politics for the sake of political office alone and in my opinion politics is a good platform to impact one's society positively.

I am too busy with my charity foundation and other pressing social issues to be worrying about appointments. Having said that, you must realise that my primary constituency is Cross River State where I have a duty to provide political leadership for my people and in this regard I am in constant touch with the current governor of my state who I am pleased to say is very respectful of elders and genuine leaders in the state who are interested in supporting him to achieve his laudable goals for the state. Governor Ben Ayade is doing a good job of trying to carrying everybody along as he tries to heal the wounds inflicted on some vital stakeholders in the state.

### Florence - a Woman of Substance

I am urging all aggrieved parties to sheathe their swords and cooperate with him to restore unity within the state and contribute to the development of the state. I am still playing a motherly political role in the state despite incidences of political victimisation in the past. This is in addition to my other duties with my foundation and as the traditional mother of the Efik Kingdom as well as being a national celebrity of note. And as a proud Efik woman I wish to express my elation at the appointment of an Efik Lady as Head of Service of the federation.

You have affected so many lives through your foundation. Can you talk more about its activities? The Foundation for the Children of Bakassi as the name signifies is set up primarily to promote the wellbeing of the thousands of disadvantaged Bakassi children who through no fault of theirs have been rendered homeless and almost hopeless by the ceding of their ancestral homeland to Cameroon. What we do is take in as many children as possible and provide them a decent home as well as the best quality education. Today, some of the children have passed through the best primary and secondary schools in Calabar and are in the best private universities in Nigeria and Ghana, upon graduation in a few years they shall be proceeding to Europe and the Americas for post graduate studies.

What is the driving force behind this gesture of yours? The driving force is simply passion. My antecedent as the political leader of Bakassi people obliges me to put my money where my mouth is when it comes to serving my people. I cannot fold my arms and watch my people suffer. Can you imagine a situation when for over three years 3000 Bakassi indigenes were made to languish in a refugee camp in their own country without provisions made for food and water for them and to think that the situation persists to this day? I have had to intervene several times with my personal resources, my consolation is that immediate relief appears to be in sight, given the compassion and commitment exhibited by the present Governor and his recent pronouncements.

You have been a strong pillar to your people over the years. How do feel doing this as a woman when there are men who could champion the cause? I have never subscribed to the notion that my gender precludes me from taking charge when the need arises. It just so happened that at the time the Bakassi issue was coming to a head I appeared to be the most prominent Bakassi indigene around so the onus of taking leadership in the crisis fell on me and as the daughter of a famous nationalist and pioneer female journalist, I believe providence had equipped me for the task. However, the men have been totally committed to the Bakassi cause and we have worked together to where we are today to the glory of God. They have assisted me to fight this cause over the years and I will be failing if I neglect to give them kudos.

Amongst the causes you have fought for your people, which has been most challenging? The causes I have fought on behalf of my people have been many and have revolved around defending the rights of my people to decent treatment within the framework of a united Nigeria. My most challenging issue at the moment is seeing to the proper resettlement of my Bakassi people after the ceding of our homeland. In this regard, I am appealing to the powers that be to expedite action on the proper resettlement of my people.

Would you say your efforts have yielded its expected results? The resettlement of the Bakassi people is non-negotiable and will be pursued to its logical conclusion. I am however confident that the present federal administration will not politicise the issue and once they settle down to governance I shall alongside my governor who has exhibited total commitment to the struggle, be making a case for my people.

What is the way forward for your community and Nigeria as a whole? The way forward for Bakassi is for all concerned to see to it that the injustice done to us with the ceding of our ancestral homeland without consulting us is ameliorated by the proper resettling of the Bakassi people with our traditional, political and vocational institutions intact. When this is done a signal would have gone out that Nigeria cares about the fate of Nigerians and thus engender a greater sense of belonging for all Nigerians. That is the way forward for us all.

Tell us a bit about your career as a politician? My career as a politician has been very fulfilling in that I have participated in four elections and won. Incidentally every election I have won has been as a candidate of what could be termed the opposition party in my state at the time. As a politician I was Deputy Minority Leader in the Senate and later was appointed Special Adviser to two Presidents. So I have every cause to be thankful for a successful

### Florence - a Woman of Substance

political career. However, that is not to say that there has been a level playing field for women in politics in Nigeria. It is my opinion that a lot can yet be done for women to take their rightful place in politics.

What would be your assessment of the representation of women in running of the national affairs? My assessment of the involvement of women in governance is that we were making steady progress under the PDP administration and that if we continued; women would have had an even larger role to play in governance. As it stands now, I am hoping that the gains we made in the past are not reversed. I am however inclined to give the current administration the benefit of doubt in this regard for now.

The president recently was in Cross River State on a working visit, his first to any state. How do you see the visit? It simply means that Mr. President and Governor Ayade are prepared to get on with the business of governance without the pressure of political leanings. I was particularly pleased when he offered to commit the federal government to supporting the Bakassi Sea Port and Cross River State super highway project.

What is your assessment of Governor Ayade and the projects the President came to commission? I believe Governor Ayade is a visionary leader who has shown respect for leaders and elders in the state. The fact that he brought Mr. President to the state is a commendable feat, considering the partisan differences existing. The Bakassi Sea Port and Super Highway projects are very significant in many respects. In my opinion the twin projects will serve as catalyst for the accelerated development of not just Cross River and the North Central zone where the road will terminate but indeed the entire Central African region flanking Cross River State. I salute the exceptional intellect that conceived both projects, especially the Bakassi Sea Port which will go a long way in ameliorating the plight of my long suffering people of Bakassi, who through no fault of theirs have become refugees in their own country.

Let's talk a bit about your growing up days. What were your childhood fantasies? I grew up in very interesting times under very unique circumstances. My mother was a leading journalist who worked in different parts of eastern and western Nigeria in the 50s, 60s and 70s. This exposed me to different cultures and experiences. While my mother may have wanted me to follow in her professional footsteps I was more interested in nursing and eventually trained as one. Did I ever contemplate being a politician or philanthropist?

May be not consciously but I often felt a pull to be an activist. It is said that a good politician is in fact a pragmatic activist. However, my antecedents as the daughter of a traditional ruler father and activist journalist mother must have eventually nudged me in this direction.

What has been your greatest moment in Life? I consider the lovely children that fate and the Bakassi crisis has thrust into my care and the ability to take good care of them as my greatest achievement in life. Nothing and I mean nothing has been more rewarding for me not even winning an election or getting a high profile appointment.

Have you had a lowest moment you felt like you have lost your bearings? As for failures or regrets, I don't countenance them, because there is nothing that cannot be changed in time as long as one is alive. So even what I consider my lowest point in life which was when Bakassi was ceded, I still believe that as long as I am alive the struggle for the proper resettling of my people will be won eventually.

You seem to have a super tight schedule, how do you get time to relax and unwind? In spite of what you term my super tight schedule, I have to find time to relax and reboot otherwise I will just burn out. Usually after my last engagement for the day is done, I retire into my world of self pampering where I relax by listening to music or watch movie, have my care giver give me a facial treatment or massage and generally have what I call my, "me quality time".

What is the secret of your ever girlish looks? I don't know about "girlish" looks. I would rather say that one is aging gracefully. As a Calabar woman I am not scared of age because we appreciate that aging is inevitable, that is why from an early age we start preparing our bodies to age gracefully and beautifully. This is what I have done all my life and as a mother and role model to many younger women and girls I recommend that you do not be afraid of the prospect of aging. It is inevitable; work hard to become your own woman with independent means. Find time to look after your body by adopting a healthy lifestyle, and always keep a smile on your face and hold on tight to your God.

**Load-Date:** December 4, 2015

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## Journalists At the Mercy of Gunmen

Daily Independent (Lagos)

May 3, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1483 words

**Byline:** Joe Omokaro

### **Body**

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Barely ten days after the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Ogun State Council, raised the alarm that lives of journalists practising in that state were in danger, a reporter with The Nation newspapers, Edo Sule Ugbagwu, was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Lagos.

That alarm was as a result of several threats by unknown persons and was specifically for safety of those practising in Ogun State. However, it was incidental that the alleged threats, though not directed at journalists in other parts of the country, had raised concerns among practitioners in neighbouring states.

Ironically, The Nation's reporter in Ogun State, Ernest Nwokolo, is among the eight journalists whose lives were said to have been pencilled down for elimination in the state. Secretary of the Union, Wole Shokunbi, in a petition to the Commissioner of Police (CP) in Ogun State, Musa Sani Daura, over threat to lives of journalists in the state, noted that "journalists in the state are law abiding people who have been discharging their traditional function without fear or favour."

Shokunbi disclosed that "Nwokolo was being trailed by some men who described themselves as security officials," noting that in "every rumour, there is always element of truth. Hence, we don't want to leave any chance which necessitated our letter to your office." He urged the police boss to "look into the issue with the utmost urgency it deserves."

The letter dated April 12, 2010, read in part:

"This is to inform you that eight of our members from Ogun State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), have been marked for elimination by unknown assassins for reasons yet-to-be ascertained. One of the journalists, Ernest Nwokolo of The Nation Newspaper, is being trailed by some men that described themselves as security officials. The Nation of Friday April 9, 2010, on page three, reported the story with headline "Unknown men trail The Nation reporter in Ogun," he attached a copy of the report as annexure.

"It was also rumoured that the other seven journalists have been marked for elimination by these unknown assassins and in any rumour, there is always element of truth, hence we don't want to take chance which necessitated our letter to your office.

## Journalists At the Mercy of Gunmen

We are using this medium by calling on you to use your good offices to look into this issue with the utmost urgency it deserves.

"Journalists in Ogun State are law abiding people, who have been discharging their traditional function without fear of favour. We have never engaged in blackmail and have been accurate, objective and sincere in reportage of events. Also, our constructive criticisms have helped in nurturing the country into the present democratic dispensation.

Sir, we are appealing to your command to save our soul from this scenario."

But the questions begging for answers are that: Has the CP taken any step to guarantee the lives of the armless journalists or he waved off the threats as mere propaganda? If he has taken some steps, how many people has he quizzed in respect of the petition? The fear is anchored on the fact that investigations into previous gruesome murder of journalist have never seen the light of the day. The case of Dele Giwa, founding Editor-in-chief of Newswatch magazine, killed in 1986, readily stands out in this regard. His killers are yet to be known and prosecuted.

However, Sani Daura, who acknowledged receipt of the petition by the Ogun State council of NUJ, assured the safety of the journalists.

Daily Independent Correspondent in Ogun State, Segun Adeleye, who incidentally, is one of those whose life is being threatened, reported that Daura, acknowledged the petition at the Eleweran, the police command headquarters, Abeokuta, the state capital, while fielding questions from journalists on Wednesday April, 21.

As an assurance of protecting the lives of the journalists, he promised to detail a patrol van around the vicinity of "Iwe-Iroyin House," the operational base of the journalists.

But that assurance is still a shadow, because he said proper action will not be taken until the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Ogbonna Onovo, visits Ogun State or approves his request.

His words: "We are working on that. As soon as the Inspector-General comes around and approves of same, we shall act swiftly to detail a patrol vehicle around the council secretariat," the Police Commissioner assured.

However, Daura said that in the interim, he has "detailed the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of operations and the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) to do something as fast as possible."

"Like any other segment of the society, we shall provide adequate cover for the NUJ members, it is an important segment to us, because we can neither be heard nor be seen without you," the CP said.

Detailing a patrol van within the premises where the journalists operate is not enough to guarantee their safety, concerned analysts have said. "Will the police van escort them to various professional assignments? Will the police provide security for them at their homes? What happens to them during their leisure times?" an obviously infuriated editor of a Lagos based national daily asked.

Observers insist rather that there should be police foot patrol in every street of major cities and towns. The policemen should be armed with communication gadgets to effectively curtail heinous crimes such as the assassination of journalists and other prominent Nigerians, they added.

### SSS Invites NUJ Executive

While the police are giving shadow protection to the journalists, the Department of State Security Service has invited the Executives of the Ogun State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), to throw more light on the petition, alleging threat to lives of select members of the union by yet-to-be identified men. Secretary to the Council, Comrade Wole Sokunbi, who signed the petition on behalf of the members, after her special congress, obliged the SSS on Wednesday April 21 and Friday 23, when he responded to their invitation at the Oke-Mosan office of the security operatives.

## Journalists At the Mercy of Gunmen

The Secretary said the SSS operatives told him to report any "strange movements around his members" to them. The invitation is coming after four men in an unmarked Peugeot 406 trailed the Correspondent of the Independent titles, first from Abiola Way/Olorunsogo on Tuesday and later to Oke-Aregba area, close to his residence.

The unmarked car is one of the various vehicles carrying either Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) number plate or OGD Vanguard or no number at all, whose occupiers could not be ascertained.

Similarly, two men on motorcycles, popularly called okada rode from the Kugba/Oke-Aregba axis of Abeokuta, the state capital, last Sunday, pointing to the residence of the Correspondent.

While Shokunbi and his team were answering questions from men of the SSS, back at the head office of The Nation newspapers in Lagos, unknown to Nwokolo, the life of his colleague, Ugbagwu was also in danger. If Ugbagwu had taken cognizance that the threat to his colleagues in Ogun State could be extended to others in Lagos and to other parts of the country, he would have probably taken precaution.

### Vanguard Reporter Escapes Death

Apart from those in Ogun State whose lives are being threatened, a reporter with the Vanguard newspaper in Benin City, Edo State capital, Simon Ebegbulem, also raised the alarm that his life was in danger.

According to him, on Monday, April 26, at about 8.30p.m after closing for the day's job was going home, but noticed a car trailing him from Sapele Road, Benin, to Adesuwa and to Ugbor Road where he lives. He said, he had to double his speed in an effort to escape from his assailants, but rammed his car into a gate causing him head injury and his car badly damaged.

Many, in fact, consider the murder of Sule Ugbagwu as one too many against journalists in the country, as a way to cow them from being upright in the discharge of their noble and dignified profession.

About six months ago, another journalist with The Guardian, Bayo Ohu, was murdered in similar circumstance. In February, Lagos State CP, Marvel Akpoyibo, paraded two people in connection to Ohu's murder.

Elimination of journalists as last resort to cover up misdeeds or for selfish purpose, only paints a picture of a barbaric and lawless society and a failed state. A society that abhors the truth and uprightness but thrives in corruption, greed and ignoble activities will end up experiencing retrogression in all spheres.

The gruesome murder of journalists and other prominent Nigerians without getting the real killers is a challenge to the country's national security, it has been suggested.

Government should live to its responsibility of providing adequate security for its citizens and mete out punishment to any violator of the laws of the land, no matter how highly placed or protected with artificial immunity, analysts insist.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2010



## An Illustrious Wordsmith At 70

Daily Trust (Abuja)

May 21, 2014

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**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** Mohammed Haruna

### **Body**

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Yesterday, one of Nigeria's most accomplished journalists and wordsmiths, Daniel Ochima Agbese, clocked 70.

He was born on May 20, 1944 into Agila royalty in Okpowu Local Government of Benue State. It speaks volumes of the man's character that few of his acquaintances, and proportionately fewer still of the millions of readers he must have gathered in his long and illustrious - but hardly materially rewarding - career as a columnist, *journalist* and author, ever knew he was a prince. All his life he'd always referred to himself as simply Mister, apparently because he did not suffer from the superiority complex of your typical Nigerian Big Man.

Yet Dan, as those on a first name basis with him call him, had sufficient virtues to make him feel proud and superior to most Nigerians. To begin with, God gave him a good head and a way with words. This was obvious from his academic career which begun in earnest when he returned to the classroom in 1970 after a three-year teaching career followed by another year as a library assistant and ending with a four-year stint as a staff writer with the New Nigerian during its heydays in the late sixties. Before all this he had attended Government Teachers Training College, Keffi, between 1960 and 1962.

It was as a staff writer under the tutelage of Malam Adamu Ciroma, the first indigenous editor of the New Nigerian and the creator and principal author of the famous humour columnist, the anonymous Candido, that Dan left to pursue a degree in Journalism at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), the second university in the country after the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), to establish a degree course in the profession.

At UNILAG, Dan became a prize winning student and, upon graduation in 1973, earned himself a second class upper division. That, in combination with a three-year stint as the chief sub-editor of the Nigeria Standard, then published by the then Benue-Plateau State, must have earned him a place in 1976/77 to do a Masters degree at probably the best Journalism school in the world and custodian of the most prestigious journalism awards worldwide (The Pulitzer) - the Graduate School of Journalism of Columbia University, New York City.

As with UNILAG so it was with Columbia; there he became the best of the 16 international students in the class and among the best of its entire 160 students.

Dan's fascination with and love of the written word probably dated back to his days as a library assistance - possibly before. His move from there to the New Nigerian seemed then natural enough; after all, the written word is the principal commodity of both.

## An Illustrious Wordsmith At 70

Once he returned to class to read journalism it seemed he had made up his mind to stick with it as his life-time career and forget about being a librarian. However, as the man himself said in an interview with the newsmagazine Verbatim (October 21, 2013) which looks like an offshoot of the defunct (?) Newswatch he co-founded in 1985 with the late **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Mohammed - all three of them among the country's best and brightest journalists and columnists - he developed second thoughts about remaining a **journalist** after graduation while still a student at Columbia.

"Actually as far back as 1977, when I was in graduate school in the US," he said, "I didn't think I was returning to journalism, I thought I was going into book publishing. This was because I had had a long association with book publishing from the period of my youth service in 1973/1974. I was a reader for Heinemann educational books in Ibadan, and so I picked up a lot of interest in writing books. And I had hoped that if I returned I would set up a book publishing company, but it didn't work out that way."

As things turned out, Dan stuck to Journalism. However, even though he did not become a book publisher, he wrote several of them. Indeed he wrote enough to make him the most prolific author among Nigerian journalists since time.

So far the man has six books to his credit, three of them (*The Reporter's Companion*, *The Columnist's Companion* and *Style: A Guide to Good Writing*), practical guides to Journalism that should be compulsory reading in all our Journalism schools, one (*Nigeria, Their Nigeria*), a satirical dig at Nigerians and their country after the fashion of that famous evergreen, *How to be a Nigerian*, by Peter Enahoro whose editorship of a national newspaper at 26 in the early sixties remains unbeaten, and two (*Fellow Nigerians: Turning Points in the Political History of Nigeria* and *IBRAHIM BABANGIDA: The Military, Politics and Power in Nigeria*, to date, the most authoritative and most definitive biography of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the man whose eight-year military rule has re-defined the country's political economy like no other before and after him) on Nigeria's politics.

Dan has also edited three books, *Newswatch Conversation With Babangida*, *The Energy Crisis in Nigeria* and *In the Service of My Country: Selected Speeches of Abdullahi Adamu*, the two-term civilian governor of Nasarawa State.

All books are a reader's delight for their readability, insight, humour and precision. Take, for instance, his virtue of readability. Dan began Chapter Two of the book with a quote from Jim Rohn, the late American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker. "Learn to express, not to impress," he quoted Rohn as saying. Dan kept faith with the motivational speaker in all his books and columns; he never wrote to impress anyone. Instead, he used everyday words, used concrete words instead of the abstract, used simple rather than convoluted sentence structure, etc. In short, the man was a stickler for all the rules in the manuals on how to write well.

Five years after *Newswatch* came out, the company decided to compile its house style. "I was," he said, "assigned the task. I still don't know why." This wasn't false modesty; all his three colleagues were good to write the house style. But then even the most casual reader of the man could see why; of all the magazine's four co-founders, he was the most experienced, and arguably the most expressive, writer.

Take for another example, his virtue of humour, one of the several tools he listed in *The Columnist's Companion* as useful, even necessary, for effective punditry. In his preface to *The Reporter's Companion* which he dedicated to his first daughter, Aje-Ori, who had paid the ultimate tribute to her father by going one better in taking a doctorate degree in Mass Communication and teaching it at a university abroad, he said he had intended it to be a guide for sound editorial judgement for editors. "More or less midstream," he said, "I changed horses - for the love of reporters. This book is evidence that you can change horses midstream."

Obviously all those Peoples Democratic Party chieftains, most notably Chief Bode George and Dr Amadu Ali, who told Nigerians in the heat of President Olusegun Obasanjo's Third Term campaign in 2005 that it would be disastrous for Nigerians to change horses midstream never read Dan's book.

Again in his introduction to *Style* which took him ten years to write, he said he missed several deadlines which he could not explain. "Several deadlines," he said, "were given for the completion of the style book. All of them were

## An Illustrious Wordsmith At 70

breached...Well, if you wait long enough for a miracle it always happens. So there." It's hard to beat such self-deprecating sense of humour as a tool for effective writing.

Among Dan's virtues were not only his good head and a way with the written word. The man also possessed the courage of his convictions and a diligence for accuracy, balance and fairness in pursuing news stories. I saw these and other virtues first hand as his deputy when he edited New Nigerian between 1982 and 1984.

Before him I had acted as the editor for 11 eleven months. I was denied confirmation because the management and chieftains of the ruling National Party of Nigeria said I was too headstrong. Instead, Dan was brought in as editor at the time he was the Director of Information in Benue State, then also ruled by the NPN.

Clearly there was politics in his appointment but it was an appointment no one, certainly not I, could quarrel with; Dan was older and much more experienced as a journalist than me by the time he was appointed.

Four years after his appointment, if those in authority thought they had a lapdog for an editor it became obvious to them that they made a great misjudgement. Day in day out Dan published stories and ran editorials that they found uncomfortable. When he was not running such awkward stories he was rejecting stories the authorities tried to foist on him that were clearly more public relations than news.

Predictably, Dan's editorship of the New Nigerian did not end on a happy note. Sensing the authorities had had enough of his unyielding insistence on professionalism and might push him out anytime, he decided to jump. Thus, his departure in 1984 to co-found Newswatch which eventually hit the streets in January 1985 as Nigeria's first weekly newsmagazine to be owned principally by professional journalists themselves.

The rest, as they say, is History. Newswatch ran without missing a beat for 27 years, except for it ban by the authorities a couple of times, once for a period of six months, due to its hard-hitting stories and scoops.

Since its controversial take-over last year by Chief Jimoh Ibrahim, the controversial business mogul, Dan and his colleagues have established a book publishing company, May5Media, which has since published two book, one, Moving in Circles, a selection of their columns, and the other on the life and times of the rebel leader, the late Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu.

Shows you, doesn't it, that old journalists and old writers, like old soldiers, never die.

Here's many more returns of yesterday to one of Nigeria's best writers, humourists, satirists and, above all, most professional and most courageous journalists.

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2014

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## Dele Giwa - IPC Calls for Justice

This Day (Lagos)

October 20, 2016

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Length: 177 words

### **Body**

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The International Press Centre (IPC) has calls for justice on the gruesome murder of **Dele Giwa** precisely 30 years ago. **Giwa**, the founding Editor-In-Chief of Newswatch Magazine was assassinated through a letter bomb, October 19, 1986. Prior to this incident, **Giwa** was known to be an intelligent and enterprising **journalist** who was always on the frontline. The Director of IPC, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, in a statement yesterday as part of the activities to mark the 30 anniversary of the renowned journalists, described his killing as the most drastic act of intimidation of the press in the Nigerian history "The death of **Dele Giwa**, has over the years shown just how journalists could be endangered.

Many other journalists have been killed, and we must not relent in the pursuit of justice for them, and the safety of journalists in Nigeria." IPC therefore uses the opportunity of the 30th anniversary of the gruesome murder of **Dele Giwa** to plead with the President Muhammadu Buhari government to reopen the case, as justice is a very important element of development.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2016

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## Another Journalist Murdered [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

April 26, 2010 Monday

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**Length:** 1574 words

**Byline:** Godwin Haruna and Akinwale Akintunde

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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She cried endlessly, hysterically until tears could no longer flow. With her hands spread towards heaven, she screamed: "Take me to a collapsing house and let me die with my husband. This house is too strong; take me to Mushin or any collapsing house so that I can be with my husband. They have stopped me from going to see him at Ikeja where his body was taken (the morgue) so, take me to where I will die and be with him."

These were the shrill words of Mariam, widow of Mr. Edo Sule Ugbagwu, who was gunned down yesterday in Lagos. Edo, a senior judiciary correspondent with The Nation Newspapers, lived at 39 Church Street, Banmeka-Shasha, Alimosho council area of Lagos State.

Struggling to free herself from the grip of sympathizers, Ugbagwu continued: "I want to die now or I will roll on the ground. Those who killed my Edo have turned me into a mad woman. Can't you people see me? I am drowning by this big river by my side. But the people that did this will never know peace, their house shall be desolate."

Ugbagwu's gruesome murder yesterday came less than a year after the Assistant Politics Editor of The Guardian, Mr. Bayo Ohu was gunned at his Egbeda residence in Lagos.

An account by a member of the family was that the late ***journalist*** was going out with his wife before the incident. A few metres from the house, he told his wife to wait for him as he went back home after receiving a number of calls that some guests were waiting for him at home where he later encountered two fierce men who gunned him down in cold blood.

THISDAY gathered that he was shot at close range at about 6.47pm in the presence of his younger brother, Okloho. He was aged 42 years. He hailed from Oturkpo in Benue State. Ugbagwu joined The Nation on July 31, 2006. He also worked in The Comet newspaper, now rested.

His wife remained hysterical as at last night due to the heavy impact of the murder. Family sources said she screamed all through the night after the shooting and continued wailing even till yesterday afternoon. Friends and relatives had a difficult time calming her down.

She recalled that she and her husband left the house in the evening to do some shopping. They did not go out with their car.

### Another Journalist Murdered [analysis]

On their way out, her husband received a call. She said she thought she heard him describing their house to the caller. He excused himself, asking his wife to wait behind so he could quickly get something from the house. She waited.

Soon, a car drove by; the occupants stared at her, then the car made an unhurried u-turn. Instinctively, she returned home to know why her husband had not joined her, only to find him in a pool of his own blood.

According to the account of the family, the last three calls Ugbagwu received were from 08033351048 at 6.29pm, 6.33pm and 6.46pm. He also dialed the number at 6.26pm, 6.28pm and 6.46pm.

Ugbagwu's younger brother, Okloho, witnessed the shooting. He gave an account of what happened: "Around 6 to 6.30pm yesterday (Saturday), I was resting in my bedroom. Then my brother called me. I woke up to go and see him. As I walked into the parlour, I could not find him there."

"When I tried to ask where he was, whether he was outside or in his room, then two men just rushed in, two armed men. I think one was with AK47 and a pistol; the other one was with a pistol."

"They said I should lie down, and they were asking, 'Where is the money!?' I said, 'What money?' They said, 'Where is the money, Where is the money?' I replied again, 'What money?'

"When I was telling them there's no money, there's no money, then Edo opened the door from his own bedroom. He asked me what happened. I said these people are asking me of money and I don't know them. They were still saying where's the money, where's the money."

"Then immediately he shouted at them, and then there was commotion. He said they should get out of here! Then I heard gunshots; they killed him."

"They later said I should go into the room, after they shot him. When I heard no voice again, I opened the door, came out of the main gate. I saw a red car, it must be a Honda outside, driving away."

Asked if they ransacked the house after shooting him, and where the wife was, he said: "I don't think they ransacked the house. The wife was outside."

The Police Public Relations Officer of the Lagos State Command, Mr. Frank MBA, said: "It's an unfortunate incident. It will be difficult for me at this stage to give details. We're still gathering information. But one thing I can say is the fact that we have launched a wholesale investigation in this matter. The Commissioner of Police was personally here last night. The Area Commander was here."

"The visit of the commissioner was to underscore the importance we attach to this killing. It was to underscore our determination to get to the root of this matter and to do so quickly. I would say that it would be preemptive for me to give details for now, so I'd rather crave your indulgence that you give us time so that we can fast-track our investigation."

"As soon as we're able to conclude our preliminary investigation, we'll be able to address you properly. At this stage, we're not interested in labeling this crime as murder, assassination or armed robbery. We're interested in solving the problem."

"It is only when we've made progress with our investigation, when we have probably established motive that we'll be able to describe the crime in concrete term."

Earlier in a brief chat with THISDAY, the Divisional Police Officer of Shasha, Mr. Omoteso Adetutu, in whose jurisdiction the murder took place, said only the PPRO would divulge the outcome of any investigation. Adetutu said he could not offer any assistance as the case has been transferred to Panti. Pressed further, he declined comments directing the reporter to the state command.

### Another Journalist Murdered [analysis]

Reactions have trailed the gruesome murder of the **journalist** described by colleagues as amiable and unassuming. The Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER) expressed deep shock yesterday in a statement signed by Mr. Seyi Fayemi, a programme officer with the pro-media rights group. He commiserated with the families of the deceased and the management of The Nation newspaper, saying that the killing of the **journalist** has once again proved that the media practice in Nigeria is at its peril.

"What ever might have been the cause of his death, the fact is that it was not natural, it was man-made meaning that it could have been avoided. This killing is coming less than one year after the brutal murder of Mr Bayo Ohu, the assistant politics editor with The Guardian Newspapers.

"We view this killing as irritating and a further confirmation of the fact that human life is not worth more than a cockroach in Nigeria. A government that cannot guarantee our right to existence, a police force that watches as the best brains in the country are wasted by the noose of the gun is not worth to be called a decent society.

"We must emphasise here that while we will be glad to see the police fish out the killers, we are almost 100 percent sure that the killers will not be found, since murder has become an organised cartel with the hands of the security operatives deeply entrenched. Abayomi Ogundeleji, Omololu Falobi, Godwin Agbroko, Bayo Ohu, Dipo Dina were hacked down by gun men and their killers were never found, so there is no basis to trust the police high command and the Federal Government of the day since death of innocent citizens appear to mean nothing to Nigerian leaders."

Also in its reaction, the Egbe Irapada Oodua (EIRO) strongly condemned the malicious murder of the **journalist**. "The killing of this **journalist** has further proved that Nigeria will continue to go down the dark alley of global reckoning until the country is restructured to guarantee self determination so that indigenous communities can find a solution to the problems of murder without clues which has become associated with the country," declared Dr. Akinroju Olukunle, head of publicity, EIRO.

He noted that crime and high profile murder cases have been the trademark of Nigeria simply because the leadership does not believe in the country, does not work towards the country's peace and therefore does not even encourage the protection of the sacred values of human life.

"It should be expected that nothing will come out of the murder of this innocent **journalist**, because that is and has been the pattern since the murder of Mr **Dele Giwa** of Newswatch magazine in 1986. Since then more than 20 journalists have either been murdered, missing or died in circumstances surrounded by mystery. The lack of leadership commitment to the peace and well being of the people is epitomised by the lack of any price or dignity associated with human life in Nigeria," Olukunle said.

The group called on the Acting President Goodluck Jonathan to, for once, show commitment to the value of human life by immediately removing the Lagos State Police Commissioner, under whose tent three notable journalists have been murdered in less than two years.

A statement by the Management of Vintage Press Ltd, publishers of The Nation Newspapers, which was signed by Mr. Gbenga Omotoso, Editor of the newspaper, urged the police to fish out the perpetrators of this dastardly act.

The statement said Ugbagwu joined the company at inception in 2006. He had a Bachelor's degree in Mass Communications and English from the Bayero University, Kano. Ugbagwu is survived by his widow, Mariam, brothers and sisters.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2010



## **77 Hearty Cheers for Kongi**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 17, 2011 Sunday

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**Length:** 1680 words

**Byline:** Yemi Adebisi

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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For foremost literary icon, Prof. Wole Soyinka, who added another year to his glorious and eventful life, tributes have continued to pour out like a fountain, since last week.

President Goodluck Jonathan was one of the voices in the endless list, who are extolling him for his contribution to humanity as a literary giant and human rights activist. The President, sent a congratulatory message to the first African Nobel laureate in Literature, who clocked 77 years on Wednesday July 13. He described him as a national treasure and a source of inspiration to generations of Nigerians. "We take great pride in your exceptional intellectual accomplishment. We also cherished that fact that you have remained unwavering in your commitment to the quest for the entrenchment of democracy, good governance, equity and justice in our nation," said Jonathan, wishing him a more robust health and several more years for fulfilling services to humanity. Part of the activities to celebrate the 77th birthday of this great playwright and mobile library (as described by a literary critic), in Lagos was a lecture packaged on local government system and media roles.

The lecture, entitled, Re-evaluating Local Government in Nigeria: What responsibilities for the media was organised by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism.

It was a gathering of who-is-who in the media, politics, academic, electoral body and students.

Though he was not physically present, the event was predominantly overtaken by showers of encomium on the great literary giant, WS, as fondly called by close friends, from virtually all the speakers while evaluating the worth of his contributions in the socio-cultural and political hegemony of the country.

The guest lecturer, Bayo Olukoshi, professor of African Politics and Government and Director of the United Nations' African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (UNIDEP), Dakar, Senegal, in collaboration with other discussants such as Dr. Abubakar Momoh, Hon. Afeez Ipesa-Balogun, Kadaria Ahmed and Muyiwa Adekeye, paid glowing tributes to Soyinka for inspiring the younger generation, who adores him as a role model.

Olukoshi indicted the local government in Nigeria as an institution that spectacularly mirrored the colonial Sole Native Authorities in post-independence era.

## 77 Hearty Cheers for Kongi

Lamenting the inability of the council to deliver, he said: "We are badly governed. We are also under-governed. When Governor Fashola delivered to the people what ordinarily should be done by the local government, we see him as a hero."

He specifically observed that the local government councils in Nigeria were regrettably dysfunctional in structure and failed in their roles, stressing that they had never become a foundational structure for democracy and development.

Among other things, he noted that the laxity of the local governments in Nigeria was traceable to such factors as lack of autonomy, prolonged military rule, lack of strong revenue base, corruption and lack of true federalism.

He also blamed the under-performance to the failure of successive governments to depart from the concept of decentralised despotism on which foundation the local government system was built.

"Military rule created distortion and inconsistencies that weakened the local governments and subjected them to the whims and caprices of the federal and state governments," he said.

He therefore called for the revitalisation of the system, maintaining that local government must be developed in the interest of democracy and development.

Olukoshi, asked the media to use their investigative powers to build awareness on the roles of the councils. "Ministers of government were forced out of office in the seventies because the media exposed their corrupt tendencies," he recalled.

Prof. Ropo Sekoni, one of the speakers, urged the media to bring the repertory of the local government on the front burner, assuring that the Freedom of Information Bill (FoI) passed into law after 10 years of incubation would assist them in carrying out their work as effective watchdogs.

However, Soyinka had earlier on Sunday July 3, lamented on the future of Nigeria, describing it as a country with no more genuine role model to take up the leadership struggle for the betterment and emancipation of desired society. He said those who really meant well for the leadership struggle had all died and thus left yet-to-be-filled vacuum.

He made the remarks in his address as a special guest of honour at the symposium to mark the 45th birthday of the President, Campaign for Democracy (CD.), Dr. Joe Okei-Odumakin, at the Airport Hotels Ikeja, Lagos.

He declared that whenever he looked around for a possible self-replacement, he found it too difficult to vouch for any model especially among the youths.

In his assessment, only very few of the so-called activists in Nigeria stand out for the genuineness of what real human rights groups or personalities should be. "When I look at the vast majority of those calling themselves leaders, I lament even privately because our youths no longer have role models; role models have all gone, the only few model we have left is the one we have all come to celebrate today. When I look around and I feel the consistency of Odumakin, I am comfortable that I will be leaving a good legacy in a good campaigner," he said, urging Nigerian women to, like Odumakin, take up the challenge of asking questions with the motive of putting things right.

Vice-Presidential candidate for the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC,) Pastor Tunde Bakare, who was also in attendance recalled that he joined politics to effect unavoidable change in the nation's polity and social strata. "If you do not seek power, you cannot change policies; that was what struck me to join politics."

Soyinka's literature spans round all forms of life and gives recognition to the relevance of women in the society. Unfortunately, Soyinka rarely discusses the women in his life just like one his home-based jolly friends, Odia Ofeimun, the great poet. Be that as it may, in 1998 a piece was written by William McPheron from Stanford University, on this subject in commemoration of the 70th birthday of Professor Soyinka 'exposing' how romantic the great writer was and probably is even at 77. His discussion with Chief (Mrs.) Laide Soyinka, the elderly wife of the don really confirmed that 'Prof' is as ever romantic as his literature.

His report:

"Don't ask me about Wole Soyinka," Laide Soyinka said with a note of finality. "I am not going to talk about Wole Soyinka. Or, am I Wole Soyinka? If you want a story about Wole Soyinkia, go to Wole Soyinka and interview him. As for me, no way! I am not going to say a word. I won't talk about Wole Soyinka."

She recalled her encounter with **Dele** Momodu (Publisher of Ovation magazine), who as an editor with Weekend Concord, Nigeria's highly successful first Saturday newspaper, cornered the lady for a world-exclusive interview.

"**Dele** Momodu told me he wanted to do an interview on me as a woman of substance," said Chief Laide Soyinka, "but, he ended up doing such an elaborate thing on me and Wole Soyinka. No, I won't allow you do the same thing this time around. You won't get me like **Dele** Momodu did.

If you want to do a story on Wole Soyinka, go to Wole Soyinka and interview him. As for me, I am not ready and I am not going to talk about Wole Soyinka."

Ask her how she feels about the Nobel Laureate, and her response comes tumbling out with the speed of light. "Of course, I love him," she said. "How do you marry somebody you don't love? Indeed, I love him. I admire him. It was this affection between us that led to the marriage. How could I have married someone I don't admire?"

If there was one moment when Soyinka's elderly wife ever felt proud of her husband, it was when the famous professor received the celebrated Nobel Laurel award in Stockholm, Sweden, 1986, just when an equally famous Nigerian **journalist**, **Dele Giwa**, first Editor-In-Chief of Newswatch magazine, was bombed out of life through the infamous letter bomb.

"That was the crowning glory of his literary achievements," said Mrs Soyinka. "That was the international stamp of authority that he is the King of Literature in Africa, indeed, in the Black World."

She then traced the genesis of the romance between her and the Nobel Laureate to the good old days in the University College, Ibadan, UCI, where they met for the first time. "We met at the University College, Ibadan," she said. "I had been admitted to read Arts."

She explained that her husband was a contemporary of the late Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, both of whom were years ahead of her in the academia.

She also related that the literary icon did not finish his Bachelors programme at UCI, since the college had not been upgraded to the level of a full-fledged university at that time. "University College, Ibadan had facilities for intermediate and not full degree," she continued. "So, Wole didn't complete his full degree programme at Ibadan, he went over to Leeds to do that."

Along with academic pursuits, there was a flourish of romance at the premier university, where a good number of successful Nigerians met their spouses. For instance, she said, Professor Chinua Achebe got his heartthrob, Christiana, from the University College, Ibadan, just when Professor Wole Soyinka was wooing her.

"Christy (Achebe) and I were colleagues at U.I.," she said. "We both resided at Queen Elizabeth Hall. Christy was a lovely girl, very pretty girl and my good friend."

"All the people who later became important in Nigeria had attended the University College, Ibadan at that time. One of such people is Gamaliel Onasode, who read Classics, and Emeka Anyaokwu, I think, he also read Classics."

So, also did late (Chief) Bola Ige. At that time, Onasode was boyfriend to Bimpe (Aboyade). Although Onasode didn't end up marrying Bimpe because he dumped her for another girl from his hometown. It was later that late Professor Ojetunji Aboyade came. She found Professor Aboyade agreeable and got married to him..."

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## The Legal Challenge of Insurgency [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

November 17, 2014

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Length: 1689 words

### **Body**

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It is pertinent to recall that the Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha juntas were associated with terrorist attacks of political opponents through state-sponsored bombing, assassination and arson. The late Chief Gani Fawehinmi (SAN) was almost killed in 1987 for demanding the prosecution of the terrorists who killed a prominent **journalist, Dele Giwa**, by a parcel bomb. The era equally witnessed the mock trial and execution of military officers who were implicated in phantom coups. Cultist groups were funded on the campuses to deal with radical lecturers and students. Upon the restoration of civil rule in 1999 the official terrorists were neither prosecuted nor disarmed!

The official manipulation of religion, which commenced under the Babangida junta, has continued unabated. Indeed, it is the root cause of terrorism in the country. Whereas it is stipulated in section 10 of the Constitution that the State shall not adopt any official religion the federal, state and local governments have adopted the Islamic and Christian religions. In 1986, Babangida surreptitiously registered Nigeria as a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). As if that was not enough, he built a mosque in the Presidential Villa and appointed an Imam to man it. Similarly, President Olusegun Obasanjo erected a chapel in the villa and appointed a chaplain to manage it.

On January 27, 2000, the Sharia Law was introduced in Zamfara State by Governor Sani Yerima. Not less than 15 other governors in the North followed suit. Although the action constituted a clear violation of section 10 of the Constitution, it was a political move designed to win votes in a Muslim-dominated region. The Obasanjo administration decided not to approach the court to test the constitutional validity of the policy so as not to lose the votes in the North in the 2003 general election. Believing that Nigeria had become an Islamic state, many misguided persons set up private militias to promote the policy of the state governments. In 2011, the Goodluck Jonathan administration set up a Panel of Inquiry headed by Ambassador Usman Galtimari to investigate the insurgency in the North-east region. In a painstaking investigation, the panel traced the genesis of Boko Haram and other private militias to politicians who set them up in the run-up to the 2003 general election. According to the Committee:

"The militias were allegedly armed and used extensively as political thugs. After the elections and having achieved their primary purpose, the politicians left the militias to their fate since they could no longer continue funding and keeping them employed. With no visible means of sustenance, some of the militias gravitated toward religious extremism, the type by Mohammed Yussuf." In line with its terms of reference, the committee recommended that the politicians who "sponsored, funded and used the militia groups that later metamorphosed into Boko Haram" be brought to justice. Although the recommendation was accepted in May 2012 by the federal government, the suspects have been treated like sacred cows as they are said to be highly connected to the powers that be. Recently, a former Borno State Governor, Alhaji Modu Ali Sheriff, was named as one of the sponsors of the Boko

### The Legal Challenge of Insurgency [analysis]

Haram sect by a Reverend Stephen Davies, the negotiator recruited by the federal government to dialogue with the terrorists. In his reaction to the disclosure, the ex-governor threatened to sue Davies for defamation in Australia.

Unlike the negotiator whose indictment was not substantiated, I issued a press statement wherein I provided detailed evidence of Sheriff's links with the dreaded Boko Haram sect. In particular, I stated that the ex-governor appointed Alhaji Buji Foi, a leading Boko Haram member, as the Borno State Commissioner for Religious Affairs to compensate the sect for supporting his re-election in 2003. My press statement was supported by the Maiduguri branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) which threatened to drag the ex-governor to the Special Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. As the federal government was disturbed by the revelations of Davies, the State Security Service (SSS) announced that the ex-governor was under investigation for his alleged links with the Boko Haram sect. But a few days later, the suspect was a member of the delegation of the federal government to Chad when President Jonathan met with his Chadian counterpart, Mr. Idriss Derby, to review the war on terror in the North-east region.

Insurgency and the threat to National Security Notwithstanding the sacrifice of the ill-equipped members of the armed forces, the Boko Haram sect appears to have gained the upper hand in the war on terror. Large towns like Bama, Gwoza, Mubi and Michika and hundreds of villages have been captured by the terrorists. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced while not less than 13,000 have been killed by the criminal gang. Not less than 16 local governments in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States have been annexed while the combined land mass of the occupied areas is said to be 21,545 square kilometres of territory. The terrorists have hoisted their flags in the occupied territory which has been named the "Caliphate Republic". Out of the 276 girls abducted from the Government College in Chibok, Borno State, six months ago, 57 escaped while 219 remain captive. More women and school girls have been kidnapped by the sect. For instance, 60 women were abducted when the sect members invaded Waga Mangoro and Garba villages in Adamawa State last month. (See Punch, October 22, 2014). When Mubi in Adamawa State was attacked, about 350 children were declared missing. (Leadership, November 2, 2014). Bomb attacks launched by the sect have killed hundreds of people in Niger, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Plateau States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

But despite the increasing deadly attacks of the sect, the National Assembly has not deemed it fit to hold a special joint sitting on the threat to the corporate existence of the nation. On its own part, the Council of State which met in Abuja on November 4, 2014 commended President Jonathan's handling of the war on terror. According to Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State, "Council was satisfied that the Defence Ministry and all the other agencies have taken the right steps and the president is on course and we are very hopeful that sooner or later Nigerians will hear good news." (Premium Times November 5, 2014).

**The Legal Challenge** The arrogance of the ruling class enshrined in section 2 of the Constitution to the effect that Nigeria is "one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state" has been exposed to ridicule by the terrorists. However, in exercise of his powers under section 305 of the Constitution, President Jonathan imposed a state of emergency on Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States to restore law and order in the North-east region. The implication of emergency rule is that some of the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution may be justifiably encroached upon in the interest of defence, public safety and public order. In Babankura Fugu v. President, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009 -2010) CHR 1 at 10 the Borno State High Court awarded N100 million damages to the applicant to atone for the extra judicial murder of his father, an alleged terrorist suspect . In the same vein, in Hadiza Bala Usman & Ors. v. Inspector-General of Police (unreported) the FCT High Court declared illegal and unconstitutional the decision of the controversial police officer, AIG Joseph Mbu, to ban the rally staged daily by the #bringbackourgirls campaigners. Since the neo-colonial state has failed to provide for the "security and welfare of the people" as required by section 14(2) of the constitution, the terrorists have overrun the North-east region. No doubt, the military authorities are embarrassed that soldiers vamoose at the sight of the terrorists. But instead of charging those soldiers with mutiny, the defence chiefs ought to have asked the government to comply with Section 217(2) of the Constitution which stipulates that the federation shall "equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective" for the defence of Nigeria from external aggression and the maintenance of its territorial integrity.

### The Legal Challenge of Insurgency [analysis]

Towards the defeat of Terrorism Last month, the federal government announced a ceasefire with the Boko Haram sect and assured the nation that arrangements had been concluded for the release of the Chibok girls. The Boko Haram sect denounced the so-called agreement and has continued to unleash mayhem on innocent people. Since it is crystal clear that the ceasefire was a ruse, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Air Marshal Barde, who announced it should be directed to resign his appointment. To fight the scourge of insurgency, the Nigerian people should demand a wholesale re-organisation of the armed forces and a probe of the huge funds earmarked for the nation's defence in the last five years. The National Assembly should ensure that the \$1 billion loan recently approved for the purchase of military hardware is judiciously utilised by the federal government. The members of the Joint Task Force should be motivated through training as well as prompt payment of their salaries and allowances. Those who lose their lives in the battlefield should not be buried in unmarked graves.

In view of the patriotic role of the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) in liberating and securing some towns in the occupied territory, the youths in the North-east region should be mobilised to flush out the terrorists from their communities. While we advocate that the armed forces be adequately funded, we suggest that the federal and state governments should religiously implement the policy on the provision of compulsory and free universal basic education for every Nigerian child. The government should also embark on genuine empowerment programmes and job creation for our army of unemployed youths. - Mr. Falana (SAN) is a member of THISDAY Editorial Board

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2014

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## **Dele Momodu Visits His Father's Rented House In Ile-Ife (Video, Pics)**

Naija 247 News

September 28, 2021 Tuesday

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**Length:** 158 words

### **Body**

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Renowned Publisher of Ovation Magazine, Chief **Dele** Momodu visited his father's rented house at Oke - Ijan Street in the ancient town of Ile-Ife, Osun State, where he lived when he was 9yrs old showcasing his humble background. Though from Edo State, **Dele** Momodu never stopped associating himself with Ile-Ife, as he had all his Education in that Yorùbá town; including his University Education at Obafemi Awolowo University with a B.A in Yorùbá Language and M.A English, as well as his NYSC.

Sometimes we grow up in a town away from our hometown and it feels like a second too. Ile-Ife is also the town where late Tell Magazine **Journalist, Dele-Giwa** also had his childhood life.

I GREW UP HERE IN THE 1960S AND EARLY 70S... MEMORIES FLOODED BACK AS I RECOLLECTED THOSE BEAUTIFUL DAYS DESPITE OUR RELATIVE POVERTY. I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THE PIPE BORNE MACHINE FROM WHICH WE FETCHED WATER OVER 50 YEARS AGO STILL STANDING PROUDLY BUT WITHOUT WATER... GOD.

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2021

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## **Buhari and transforming Nigeria's military**

Pambazuka News (Kenya)

March 15, 2018 Thursday

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Length: 2379 words

### **Body**

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Although the Nigerian military repeatedly overthrew civilian governments to combat corruption, its reign of terror was wasteful and institutionalised corruption in Nigeria left the country more divided than ever. To build a world-class military that Nigerians deserve, President Buhari, a former military officer, must first purge the military of corruption.

'In the aftermath of the civil war, the much-expanded size of the military, around 250,000 in 1977, consumed a large part of Nigeria's resources under military rule for little productive return.'

President Buhari's recent decision to inject US \$1billion into the Nigerian military to fight the Boko Haram insurgency is a good one. Currently among the 25 largest economies in the world, and identified among 11 countries to be 'global growth generators'-sources of growth potential and of profitable investment opportunities-Nigeria, is yet to boast the congenial environment to lure foreign investments and positively transform the lives of its citizenry. The menace of the terrorist sect, among many other perils, almost checkmates Nigeria's prospects and fortunes. Besides, having a modern, world-class military among the top 15 fighting forces in the world should have been a natural concomitant with being among the biggest oil producers in the world. Of course, Africa's most populous nation has a lot more going for it than oil-a lot more, still domiciled in the verdant fields of potential.

A strong military may not only serve as a deterrent to wars, but also serve as a protector of human rights. The former leaders of the Nigerian military squandered its opportunities on profligacy and corruption, and therefore, it is pertinent, to caution that this billion-dollar investment is not akin to gathering water in the proverbial basket that leaks. It is time for President Buhari to purge corruption in the military, to capitalise on needed investments in the country's fighting men and women, who safeguard Nigeria's territorial integrity.

The woes of an average Nigerian have never been more daunting, as they risk being enslaved in their journey to economic freedom in the voyage up north in the atavistic trans-Saharan slave trade in Libya. I cannot imagine an American, no matter his or her hue or creed, being held as a slave in North Africa. A potent military in Nigeria, would check that anathema. So, at least, North Africa is one place where President Buhari will not find Nigeria's looters, as slavery indiscriminately awaits the Nigerian in Libya; while Nigeria's lethal prayer warriors will find their enslavement as just remedy for their treachery. (It is claimed that the fervent prayers of religious Nigerians, which rained imprecations on former dictator, General Sani Abacha, led to his sudden death in the arms of foreign courtesans. I suppose it takes time, for them to be pushed to the wall-especially after the corrupt military dictator's tastes strayed overseas.)

## Buhari and transforming Nigeria's military

I love Nigeria, my country of origin. I have studied its history and the variegated cultures of many of its diverse people: all vibrant, gregarious, hospitable and optimistic folks, remarkable for their soul, and their mouthwatering dishes. Additionally, I have studied the history of many of its institutions intricately, including the Nigerian military. I took a course on the history of the Nigerian military, taught by distinguished Professor Ibrahim James, who was part of the faculty at the Nigerian Defense Academy, while a student in Jos. What I learned about the history of Nigeria's military wasn't pretty. Its antecedents were in the colonial forces of Nigeria's former British colonial ruler. The Nigerian Armed Forces is the progeny of the British Empire's Royal West African Frontier Force. It was a band of natives organised by the British to further the subjugation of fellow West African 'natives' or the less pejorative indigenes of the territories that came to be known as Nigeria. It is no wonder that following Britain's departure, the leadership of the forces that evolved to be the Nigerian Armed Forces, appeared to have their loyalty more committed to an extra-territorial entity that was clearly not Nigerian, if not exclusively to their self-aggrandizement.

The vaunting of the high point of the Nigerian military is hackneyed: together with other Africans, I applaud the Nigerian military's role in sending peacekeeping forces abroad, as a contingent in the United Nations, and in serving as the backbone of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in stemming the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

My second country is the United States of America, and here the military sprung up out of revolutionary fervour, contradistinctively, committed to breaking all extra-territorial shackles and forms of subjugation of the white Americans. Rather than the self-aggrandizement and exclusivity manifested by the archetypal Nigerian small band of warriors and soon to be Nigerian Armed Forces, the prototype of the United States military embodied and committed to an ideal of egalitarianism (for all white men initially). And when you talk about the military defending its country and citizens, the United States military is the epitome of this noble standard and is second to none.

Considering the backdrop of its accidental origins, the Nigerian military has hardly defended Nigerians from significant foreign aggressors. It once bullied a weak neighbour in the Bakassi peninsula and still capitulated in that conflict without protecting Nigeria's territorial integrity (although the capitulation was in consideration of the International Court of Justice's judgment). The leadership of the Nigerian military orchestrated the institutionalisation of corruption in Nigeria, and under its watch during its numerous misadventures into politics; Nigeria became 'fantastically corrupt.' The Nigerian military has a dishonourable history of allegedly raping, pillaging, abusing, exploiting, and dividing the Nigerian people. Victims of Biafra and the ongoing conflict in the Niger-Delta have cited these allegations. Because one wears a uniform that does not mean one deserves respect by default. Respect is earned from one's actions.

The history of the Nigerian military is replete with disgraceful and dishonourable actions unworthy of men and women in uniform. From treason via coups d'état and extra-judicial killings, to embezzlement on a grand scale, grand larceny, and tribalism. In other words, name any act of treachery and perfidy, and the old Nigerian military has been there. The history of the old-order Nigerian military does not bestow honour on its uniformed men, like that of the United States military does-and which it has earned from its people (its record around the world as the world's policeman is not at issue here. The objective is to assess the performance of military forces competently responsive to the needs of its citizens first). The Nigerian military is not even capable of defending Nigeria from an invasion from powers such as Russia or China, or any major foreign power that counts; but its members have bullied and denigrated its own people with impunity. What has been the return on the vast investments in the Nigerian Armed Forces? Things tenuous if not 'naught.' Clearly, for Nigerians to reap the rewards of their investments in the Nigerian military, its operations must be more transparent to Nigerians and cease to be the machinations of 'men' lurking in shadows.

### A model to follow

In its 240-year fabled history, the United States military has not once committed a coup d'état. A United States uniformed officer among civilians, is the perfect gentleman and the quintessence of meekness: He daily exemplifies his role of protecting and serving US citizens and has never lorded it over them. He is quiet, can never raise his hand to strike, much less use his weapon on an American civilian, he is sworn to protect. He honours the United States president as his Commander-in-Chief, whether black or white, and even if he never served in the military

## Buhari and transforming Nigeria's military

himself (the last four US presidents, including the first black US president, Barack Obama, never did). In contrast, in July 1966, a Nigerian soldier murdered the head of state of Nigeria, and then Commander-in-Chief, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi in cold blood, and with impunity.

The American soldier respects and submits to the laws of the United States. There is nothing like that diminutive insignificant cowardly husband, who beats up his wife, whom he is meant to protect and uses her as a punching bag, but is obsequious outside, because he is afraid of the boxer, martial artist, bodybuilders, real men that will kick his weak shameless derriere in the public arena, where he is not an autocrat. The rules of engagement dictate that similarly situated principals engage themselves. Trained practitioners of violence, should not oppress defenceless citizens, whose resources are utilised to train the very soldiers, who betray and abuse them. The Nigerian military should have been defending Nigerians from foreign attacks, and not terrorising its citizens like the coup plotters once did.

That is the history of a hitherto cowardly Nigerian military that deserves no respect. An instance of such cowardly acts by persons in uniform, was the deplorable use of a letter bomb to take the life of a family man, who was not only a Nigerian citizen, but was also a professional conducting his legitimate business, the prominent [journalist, Dele Giwa](#).

But this is not to generalise. Even during the era of military rule, there were honourable men serving in the Nigerian military but these were silent or had been silenced. I will borrow an analogy from the United States concerning the thorny issue of race. During the inception of the United States and its revolutionary wars of independence, there were some 'founding fathers' fervently opposed to slavery. But their voices weren't heard-one of them was Alexander Hamilton, the first US Treasury Secretary. During the Jim Crow era in the southern parts of the United States, some whites lost their lives fighting for equality with blacks. Honourable officers in the Nigerian military must never again allow reactionary forces that abuse a Nigerian institution made for honour and valour, to silence their voices, and scorch the conscience of the nation.

Today, the Nigerian military has an opportunity to repair its tarnished image-through a rebirth-in fighting the terrorist organisation, Boko Haram for one. It also has to fight corruption within its ranks (a precondition to the infusion of more capital investments). Other conditions for rebirth include saying 'NO' forever to military coups, and setting an example for de-tribalisation, enforcement of gentlemanly conduct, and in exemplary service and humility towards all Nigerian citizens, irrespective of tribe or socioeconomic status. Under the leadership of a former military man himself, who had the noble goal of purging Nigeria and the military of corruption, the Nigerian government has an opportunity to institute an authoritative body of experts to investigate the previous atrocities of actors in the military (present and retired) and to remedy abuses.

Of course, there is an opportunity for pardon for acts done in the interest of national security. However, acts committed in the furtherance of self-aggrandizement should be punished. The present time is an opportunity for the Nigerian military to extricate its uniformed persons from conflicts of interest, and from the influence of all foreign entities and powers seeking to make Nigeria an appendage of foreign sovereign interests. Again, honour and respect are earned from one's actions not for the attire one wears or simply because one arbitrarily demands them, given the authority he or she wields.

In his inaugural address in 1999, on his second coming as a democratically elected civilian president, military dictator, General Olusegun Obasanjo, is reported to have lamented, 'Professionalism has been lost [...] my heart bleeds to see the degradation in the proficiency of the military.' The dirge of the ex-general came a year after the sudden death of the Nigerian military's worst and most perfidious product, the tyrannical military dictator, General Sani Abacha. However, history suggests that General Obasanjo himself had been partly responsible for the rise of at least the man, who 'created' Abacha as his fix-it henchman in the military, General Ibrahim Babangida. This is the former military dictator alleged to have been involved in the use of the letter bomb that killed a Nigerian [journalist](#) referred to earlier.

General Abacha would go on to implicate decent former officers in a coup instigated and fabricated by him, in order to eliminate military affiliates he deemed inimical to his perpetual and singular reign of terror and corruption. The de

## Buhari and transforming Nigeria's military

facto vice-president, during General Obasanjo's military rule, was arguably that rare Nigerian military gentleman. And perhaps, he was that voice of reason and circumspection that could have played a not insignificant role in the discipline of the Nigerian Armed Forces, as that professional fighting force all Nigerians could be proud of. Following the conjuring of a smoking gun, meted out by a 'kangaroo court' established by the military dictator General Sani Abacha, General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and his former boss, General Obasanjo were both sentenced to death for an alleged failed coup to topple the tyrant. Although their sentences were commuted to life, the distinguished officer General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua would subsequently die in prison.

The Nigerian military monster created its own ogres that devoured its own products. It is time for one of its own, President Buhari, also a former military dictator-who tried to wage a noble war generally against corruption among the citizenry, before being ousted in a bloodless coup by General Babangida, whose reign as dictator institutionalised corruption-to clean up the Augean stables for good.

\* Olurotimi Osha is a Doctor of Law candidate at the George Washington University Law School, in Washington, DC. He also attended Columbia University in the City of New York.

**Load-Date:** August 13, 2018

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## **IPC boss Lanre Arogundade released after arrest by DSS at Airport**

PM News

February 10, 2022 Thursday

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**Length:** 184 words

### **Body**

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Veteran journalist and founder, International Press Centre (IPC), Lanre Arogundade has been released by the Department of State Services (DSS).

He was earlier in the day arrested by the DSS at the Murtala International Airport by the DSS and detained on returning from The Gambia.

Arogundade had taken to his Facebook page to announce that he had been arrested by the DSS.

'He wrote: 'This is me at the DSS office at International Airport Lagos where I'm being held or detained against my wish.'

DSS calls more synergy among security agencies

'Nnamdi Kanu has been without food for three days in DSS custody'

**Dele Giwa:** 35 years on

'I have just returned from Banjul where I went to train Gambian journalists on Conflict sensitive journalism. Ever since the days of military rule I get molested by DSS and Immigration at the airport. This nonsense has to stop!'

He later informed that he had been released and his passport returned to him.

According to Arogundade, 'To all...thanks. My passport has been returned by the DSS and I'm now just leaving the airport despite arriving since 3.30pm. I will update further.'

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2022



## **Media Tasked On Accountability, Good Governance**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

November 18, 2014

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**Length:** 1971 words

**Byline:** Sylvester Enoghase

### **Body**

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As the September, 2015 deadline for the realisation of the eight global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) looms, media practitioners' in the country have been urged to ensure high level of professionalism in their investigative reportage to demand accountability, job creation opportunities and good governance from leaders.

The call was made by labour leaders and civil society organization (CSOs) at a two-day capacity building programme for media practitioners tagged: 'Investigative Journalism, Risks and Opportunities for Media Practitioners in Nigeria' organised by Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) in collaboration with the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC) held in Ibadan, Oyo State Capital.

The flow and ebb of conversation and activities at the two-day capacity building centred on how media practitioners in the country should use Chapter two of the constitution containing the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, section 22 that enjoins the press to 'uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people'.

The two days capacity building had a mixture of various personalities and presentations with sub-themes on: Overcoming the threats and challenges of investigative journalism; Media independence, journalists' rights and press freedom; Legal framework for trade union movement in Nigeria; FOI: Civil Society, Media and Democracy; and the essential of Labour reporting; and the focus was to ensure that Nigeria media practitioners are doing enough to hold the nation's leaders accountable to good governance

Herculean task

In his opening address, Comrade Peters Adeyemi, the General Secretary of NASU stated that investigative journalism was central to socio-economic and political progress of any nation.

He emphasized that the media practitioners in the country should stop amplifying the risks associated with the profession to the detriment of their role of guarantee public good.

According to him, investigative journalism remains the only option capable of helping the suffering masses out of their predicaments in the country, especially in challenging Government on job creation opportunities.

## Media Tasked On Accountability, Good Governance

"As journalists, we cannot continue to amplify the risks associated with the profession at the detriment of our historical and traditional role of serving as society's compass directing and guiding it towards noble causes that guarantee maximum public good," he said

"The risks are huge, but in them lies our pride to serve our fatherland," he added

The labour leader, who argued that working for media has ever been dangerous in Nigeria, said "The conditions of engagement of ***journalist*** as media practitioners are tortuous, but they give us a glimpse of our collective possibilities to be a great nation attracting genuine recognition and respect in the comity of nations."

"The enterprise may not be rewarding, it nonetheless, ensures some measure of personal fulfillment of service legacy good enough for posterity," he added

Adeyemi, who condemned the spates of attacks and killing of journalists in the country, noted that politics, insurgency, militancy, tribal conflicts and other factors hinder press freedom and journalists' safety in the country.

The former Deputy President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) added that journalists must possess strong determination and convictions, heightened awareness, credible and sustainable networking to represent voice for the voiceless.

### The bitter truth

The Guest Speaker, Mr John Odah called on journalists to investigate happenings which individuals, governments, companies and organisations want to keep secret or hide from the public.

Odah urged both print and electronic media to create a functional investigative desk to expose wrong doings, corruption, lies, incompetence and broken promises by governments and organisations.

"A fundamental objective of the press is to bring wrongdoing into the light of public attention for the wrongdoers to be brought to book," he said.

"It is the role of the press to try to do everything permitted by law to expose abuse of power, corruption, law breaking and all sorts of things which harm other people".

" And such information serves as checking function by ensuring that those in authority not only uphold their oaths of office, but are obliged to carry out their duties for the good of all," he said.

Odah, however, said that investigative reporting was globally recognised as a risky venture as it is a nightmare due to lack of the necessary safety nets for journalists.

"No fewer than seven journalists had been murdered since the killing of ***Dele Giwa***, the Editor-in-Chief of News watch magazine on Oct. 19, 1986," he said.

The former NLC scribe added that without any protection from states with laws, doing investigative reporting in Nigeria is tantamount to walking a minefield at midnight.

He ,however, noted that the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria to be abysmally low, insisting that there are huge opportunities for media practitioners through it.

### Tool to curtail the activities of terrorists in Nigeria

While calling on media practitioners to embark on investigative journalism, the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani noted that investigative reportage has been identified as a potent tool for intelligence gathering that can curtail the activities of terrorists in Nigeria.

"Investigative journalism could save the country from drifting into a state of anarchy by holding our democratic leaders accountable," he stated.

## Media Tasked On Accountability, Good Governance

Accountability in governance, he noted, could be achieved by journalists if they are independent, vibrant and exercise high level of professionalism in their work.

He appealed to journalists in the country not to allow themselves to be influenced by the various governments and other influential persons.

"We cannot assert our independence if we are not economically sustainable,"

According to Rafsanjani, with the enthronement of democracy as the best form of government which guarantees freedom of expression and the right of access to information, investigative journalists still face serious repression, expensive law suits, torture and intimidation, prison terms and closure of their papers.

"Even with the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, governments systematically continue to withhold information from journalists under excuse of either classified information, or official secret," he said.

He noted that investigative journalism has had a social impact in Nigeria, even though there is a blurring line between leaks, whistle blowing, and real investigative reporting

"Investigative journalism involves exposing corruption in high places and peering into neglected corners of society," he further said.

"It epitomizes the popular ideal of the news media as the fourth estate of the realm playing a role as a watchdog on society and its institutions, whether in Government, business or the judiciary," he added.

### Overcoming challenges and neglect of the profession

Speaking on ways to overcome challenges of investigative journalism, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Director, International Press Centre called on media proprietors, managers, editors and government to create enabling environment for investigative reporters.

Arogundade, who was represented by Dr. Jide Jimoh of Department of Communication, Lagos State University, Ojo urged media managers to provide necessary resources, working equipment, insurance, editorial independence, adequate remunerations, also called for enough time given to reporters conducting investigations, as a longer gestation period was required than in routine stories.

According to him, state governments ought to domesticate Freedom of Information Act to removed impediments journalists face in accessing information from records kept by government officials, departments and agencies.

He also noted that the economic situation of individual journalists makes them amenable to manipulation by sources

"For a ***journalist*** who has not been paid for some months, a little economic incentive from sources may keep him off track except he is a professional to the core," he said.

"In Nigeria's statute books several laws are in place under which the powerful can hide. Here we recall the travails of Gbenga Aruleba of AIT and Rotimi Durojaiye of Daily Independent that were both reined in for sedition, a law that has been described as not reasonably justified in a democratic polity", he however said.

### Organized labour and it's crucial role in politics

Speaking on the essentials of labour reporting, the Assistant Editor, Vanguard Newspapers, Mrs. Funmi Komolafe, stated that the perspective of the labour reporter must be different from that of the business reporter.

"Komolafe, who was represented by Rosemary Wilkey of AIT, noted that whereas the attitude of the Business Reporter to minimum wage is that it is an unnecessary cost to business, the Labour Reporter understands that minimum wage is a necessity for the worker.

## Media Tasked On Accountability, Good Governance

"The Labour Reporter understands that minimum wage is necessary to raise the standard of living of the worker especially the lowest paid", she said.

On Labour Laws, Komolafe said: " A Labour Reporter must familiarize himself with the Conventions of the International Labour Organizations (ILO) especially the Core Conventions on ; the Right to Organize and Freedom of Association (Convention 87,) Right to Collective Bargaining and Tripartism (Convention 98) for the Reporter to be able to draw the attention of the public, employers and union members to violations of these Conventions and Labour Laws whenever there is a breach".

Press not under the thumb of government

Speaking on the right of association as well as the intertwined issues of freedom of assembly and protest, the right to strike, Barrister Femi Aborisade explained that the moves toward democracy in many countries, along with the Arab Spring have also unshackled the global press in a variety of ways.

He said: "compared to five, 10, or 20 years ago, Myanmar, Ghana and Tunisia to take just few examples from many, have far freer sometimes remarkably freewheeling media atmospheres".

On Freedom of association and under International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1976), he said "Article 22 states that everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

He emphasized on the need for Nigerian journalists to build their capacities to equip them with the requisite knowledge to hold leaders accountable.

"And no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others," he said.

An investigative reporter is an angry man

Speaking on, 'Media independence, journalists' rights and Press freedom' Barrister Osa Director stated that media practitioners are the only professional group assigned a specific role by the Nigerian Constitution to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people.

He said: "What makes an investigative journalist to be an angry man lies on the facts that Section 22 of CFRN (as amended) states: 'The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter (two) and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people."

"The typical investigative reporter is an angry person. He is angry when he sees injustice and his anger does not abate until the injustice is redressed", he added.

**Load-Date:** November 18, 2014



## **Walking Through a Minefield At Midnight (2) [analysis]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 14, 2010 Wednesday

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Length: 1879 words

### **Body**

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, Editor, Daily Independent And Judge of the CNN Multichoice African ***Journalist*** Awards 2010, X-Rays the Challenges of Investigative Reporting in Africa, At a Recent Presentation in Kampala, Uganda...

As Priscilla Nyokabi, programme officer for the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists, once noted: "There are many reasons for having freedom of information legislation: to make government more accountable, increase public participation, promote the involvement of all in public life, including those currently marginalized, like women; to make private companies more accountable, monitor and expose corruption, lead to better decision making, protect privacy, expose human rights violations, and promote workers' rights; and to make the country more secure. Access to information is instrumental to parliament's oversight role."

It is the basic tool that any investigative ***journalist*** needs to work. It is in realization of its importance that over 90 countries around the world have one form of Freedom of Information Act or the other, with Sweden's Freedom of the Press Act setting the pace in 1766.

Sweden's Fol Act known as Offenlighetsprincipen (The principle of Public Access) means that the general public are to be guaranteed an unimpeded view of the activities pursued by the government and local authorities; all documents handled by the authorities are public unless legislation explicitly and specially states otherwise, and even then each request for potential sensitive information must be handled individually, and a refusal is subject to appeal. Further, the constitution grants the right to inform, meaning that even some (most) types of secret information may be passed on to the press or other media without risk of criminal charges. Instead, investigation of the informer's identity is a criminal offence.

Almost two and half centuries after Sweden blazed the trail, only five African countries - South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Angola - have Fol laws. The Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPPA) was signed into law in Zimbabwe by President Robert Mugabe in February 2007. In Uganda, the Access to Information Act was approved in 2005 and went into effect in 2006. South Africa passed the Promotion of Access to Information Act on February 2, 2000.

But of the five countries, it is only in South Africa that the basic tenet of Fol regime - maximum disclosures, minimum exemptions - is observed. In other countries, the reverse is the case. It is minimum disclosure, if any at all, and maximum exemptions. Take the case of Zimbabwe for instance, not only are there numerous and very broad exemptions on the exercise of the right to information, there are several draconian provisions aimed at controlling the exercise of journalism in the country. The Act has been used more to censor the press. Two Ugandan

## Walking Through a Minefield At Midnight (2) [analysis]

journalists, Angelo Izama and Charles Mwanguhya of the independent Monitor newspaper, went to court recently to compel their government's disclosure of multinationals oil deals. The case was filed to appeal the refusal of Uganda's Attorney General to provide them with certified copies of oil exploitation agreements because of alleged confidentiality clauses in the documents. While the journalists argued that the information was of public interest, the Chief Magistrate, Deo Ssejjemba, ruled against them on the ground that they had not proved the public benefit of disclosing the information.

In many African countries, progress in the enactment of the legislation remains sluggish, even stalled. In my country, Nigeria, for instance, the FOI Bill now has the unenviable tag of the oldest bill in the National Assembly. Introduced in 1999, at the inception of the present democratic dispensation, both houses of parliament passed it in 2007 but the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, refused to sign. Since then, all attempts to re-introduce it have been thwarted. As at 2008, Morocco was the only country with a draft bill of Freedom of Information legislation in North Africa.

Yet, freedom to information is enshrined as a fundamental human right by the United Nations, and upheld by the African Charter on Human and People's Right. The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa explicitly states: "Public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good and everyone has a right to access this information, subject only to clearly defined rules established by law."

Many have blamed this anomaly on colonial heritage and the long period of military rule, which they insist entrenched in the conduct of government business in most African governments, a culture of secrecy, which insulates governments and their actions from public scrutiny. "Ours (Africa) is a continent of silences" was the way Activist Elinor Sisulu, who worked to document the post-independence Gukurahundi massacre in Zimbabwe, put it.

Whatever might be responsible, one fact is glaring: It is still early days in the enactment of Freedom of Information laws on the African continent. As Mukelani Dimba, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Open Democracy Advice Centre, South Africa, observed in 2008, "Freedom of Information advocates have a formidable task ahead of them, which is nothing short of changing the culture from that of secrecy to that of openness"

Shredding these blankets of secrecy by ensuring that retrogressive privacy laws are consigned to the dustbin of history is one of the biggest challenges of investigative reporting in Africa.

### Walking through a minefield at midnight?

If investigative reporting reveals scandals, and shames the individuals involved, as indeed it does, it goes without saying, therefore, that those caught out in wrong doing will never like it and in fighting back, they are always brutal. In Africa, investigative reporters are increasingly censored, kidnapped, tortured, imprisoned and in the worst cases, killed.

Even with the increasing number of countries that profess democracy on the continent, most investigative journalists are still facing serious repression. Radio stations are closed frequently, journalists are afraid to publish freely anything that is critical of their governments. They face expensive law suits, torture and intimidation, prison and closure of their papers. Many African governments are known for their systematic denial of information to journalists. In some countries, like Rwanda, public information has become "classified information." Most journalists face trumped-up and fabricated charges, aimed at silencing them.

In its 2007 report on the state of the global media, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) rated Asia the most repressive and unaccommodating region for journalists, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, where independent journalists and media outlets battle with "obnoxious laws."

According to the report, "More and more journalists in sub-Saharan Africa are prosecuted and jailed on charges of 'endangering state security,' whereas harsh repression through 'insult laws' and criminal defamation continues. Threats, attacks and violence target those who report the inconvenient truth, whether it is linked to the handling of conflict situation, abuse of power or personal misconduct."

## Walking Through a Minefield At Midnight (2) [analysis]

For instance, in 2006, the Obasanjo government bought an aircraft, a Boeing Business Jet (BBJ), which it claimed was bought new from Boeing at a cost of N9 billion. My Aviation Correspondent, Rotimi Durojaiye, investigated the story and found out that the aircraft was neither new nor bought from Boeing. In fact, Boeing was emphatic in saying that Nigeria never placed an order for any aircraft. The investigation also revealed that the aircraft was actually bought from Lufthansa and refurbished at the cost of N3 billion. So, pertinent questions were raised in the report. A week after the story was published, Durojaiye was arrested in Lagos by security operatives and taken to Abuja where he was kept in solitary confinement in an underground cell for five days. When he was eventually charged to court, it was for sedition.

Across Africa, many journalists have been forced into exile and some others are languishing in jail for "embarrassing the government." But those are the luckier ones. Some others have been killed in cold blood. While a country like Gambia that does not have constitutional protection either of the right of access to information specifically or the right to freedom of expression generally, remains, according to Dimba, "One of the most dangerous places for the practice of journalism on the continent," Somalia, where a total of 14 journalists have been killed since 2007, nine of them last year, indubitably leads the pack.

In Nigeria, the story is not different. Since the killing, through a letter bomb, of **Dele Giwa**, the Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch magazine, on October 19, 1986, about seven other journalists have been murdered. On December 22, 2006, the chairman of the Editorial Board of Thisday newspapers, Godwin Agbroko, was shot dead in Lagos, on his way home from the office. Nothing was taken away from the car by his assailants. Abayomi Ogundehi, another member of the Thisday Editorial Board was also killed by unknown gunmen on his way from office on August 17, 2008. On September 20, 2009, Bayo Ohu, an Assistant Editor with The Guardian, was killed in his home. His murderers only took away his laptop and cell phone. Just last month, precisely April 24, Edo Sule Ugbagwu, Judiciary reporter with The Nation newspapers, was killed in his home.

It may well be that these journalists were killed for reasons that had nothing to do with their work. But the fact remains that till date, the Nigerian police have not been able to solve any of these assassination riddles.

Without any protection from the state, with laws that hound rather than protect enterprising journalists, doing investigative reporting in Africa, literally speaking, is tantamount to walking a minefield at midnight.

### Why Investigative Journalism?

Investigative reporting benefits the **journalist**, his media organization and the society. As has been noted, it is journalism's own instrument to restrain the abuse of political and economic power. It is the ultimate pride of the profession which best serves the public service character of journalism.

As Gavin Macfadyen, Director of the UK-based Centre for Investigative Journalism, noted in his address to the 2007 Taco Kuiper Awards ceremony for investigative journalists in Johannesburg, "When serious investigations appear, people talk about it. Many know, driven by word of mouth. Sales rise, viewing figures climb, programmes acquire real credibility and more importantly still they achieve a loyal following. When news really affects people, they talk about it and they will follow it. It also affects the culture of the press. Editors and producers become more sophisticated practitioners, or more combative, knowing how to use media law to enable rather than put the brakes on exposure, building viewers and readers by more aggressive reporting."

But, most importantly, for every **journalist**, investigative reporting is the right thing to do because it is responsible journalism and it is the key to becoming respected in the industry.

Concluded

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2010



## **Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels Ghanaian lady who became Nigeria's first female sports reporter**

The Sun (Nigeria)

June 21, 2014 Saturday

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*Voice of the Nation*

**Length:** 2190 words

**Byline:** ENYERIBE EJIOGU , [enyeribee@yahoo.com](mailto:enyeribee@yahoo.com)

### **Body**

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Nigeria and Ghana go back a very long way, with hundreds of thousands of strands making up the strong cord that binds the two nations. If it is not about the number of pre- Independence generation of Nigerians that attended the elite Achimota College, Ghana, then you could enumerate some notable Nigerians like Mike Awoyinfa, pioneer Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of The Sun Publishing Limited, who was born and raised in the land of the famous Osei Tutu and Osei Bonso, renowned ancient kings of Ashanti, from whom leadership ultimately passed through several generations to Kwame Nkrumah, Jerry Rawlings and John Kuffour. Mention can also be made of Frank Nneji, whose company, ABC Transport Plc, daily ferries Nigerians to Accra, Ghana by road.

Pentecostal gospel minister, Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels, who is based in the United States of America is one of the strands in the strong Nigeria-Ghana cord. With a Ph.D in pulpit communications she was born and raised in Ghana of a Ghanaian father and Nigerian mother from Yoruba land. Then at the height of Ghana's economic crisis, the family relocated to Nigeria. While here she cut her journalism teeth at the Concord media group where she learnt the tradecraft, and in the process became the first female sports reporter in Nigeria and probably in Africa.

Today, she is an evangelist with a strong bias for writing books, though she also writes gospel songs for soul-winning purposes and therefore not commercially available. Recently, she came to Nigeria for the funeral of her late mother. During the trip she ministered at The Foursquare Gospel Church and at an event held by the William Badejo Foundation, and had a chat with Sunday Sun.

Excerpts...

Give us a snapshot of your background.

Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels Ghanaian lady who became Nigeria's first female sports reporter

Well. I'm an evangelist and I run a Christian ministry in the United States. I have a Ph.D in Pulpit Communications and Expository Preaching. I am married to a very handsome man. I have written a lot of books, and still writing. I publish

at least two books a year, because writing was my original calling. When God called me into writing, He said I should go through journalism. So I was a journalist for a decade.

Where did you practice?

I practiced journalism here in Lagos in Concord Newspapers from 1982 to 1991 before I went to

London and continued there. In London, I went to University of East London for one year. I was there for about six months. I studied journalism but then I was a visiting student, because I started in the middle of the semester. Then I got a recommendation, based on my performance, and transferred to University of Wales, Cardiff. So I was there for a year for the Masters' degree programme. After I completed it, I began writing songs.

You wrote songs but you never recorded?

Actually I did record my songs; I have three CDs. They are basically gospel songs. I concentrated on writing both songs and writing books as well as holding training seminars. To utilize my journalism background I started publishing a magazine, though it was not for sale. It was only used to project and promote the work of my Pentecostal ministry.

So you were in full time ministry at the time?

Yes, I was in full time ministry, but concentrated on writing songs, which I sang during ministrations. Beyond writing songs and singing, I was preaching and teaching the word. You could say I was doing everything together - what I call journalistic evangelism, which was not a popular thing.

Tell me more about your journalistic career which started here in Nigeria. Which beat did you cover?

Interestingly, I studied at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ) for two years. I started writing before I went to NIJ. I wrote poetry and drama.

When was that?

I started writing from the late 70s. Back then I had one major challenge - my scripts were always missing whenever I gave them out for editing. Sometimes the people I gave my works to edit stole them and claimed that they were lost. Then after some time they would publish my works under their name. But I could not prove ownership of the published works because I did not have the original manuscripts, which I had given out to them. It is unlike the present time, when you can only give out the copy. At that time in Africa we lacked the resources to protect intellectual property. But today

If I still had my early works in poetry and drama, certainly they could have elevated me. By the time I went to England, I wrote what could pass as my biography, which gave an account of how I got into writing and other aspects of my life and upbringing. I summoned courage and published it despite all the grammatical errors in it. My grammar was not good at the time. There were other laxities too. For instance, a more mature writer would have left out certain information that I published in the book. When I launched the book in London, 200 people attended the event held at Christ Chapel, Brixton in East London.

People read it and were very impressed by what I said in the book. They didn't know I revealed family secrets - as far as they were concerned I was telling the truth as it was. The book was entitled, Authority of the Overcomer. I have travelled around the world - Africa, the Caribbean, Indian sub-continent, parts of Europe, the Americas, etc. As I toured and people read the book they became more enlightened. But several of these people told me some of the information were too personal to be in the book and advised that I re-edit the book and remove a lot of the personal

Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels Ghanaian lady who became Nigeria 's first female sports reporter

information because some day, when I would have become globally known and in the news, some people could use such information to attack me.

You see, I have a Nigerian mother and a Ghanaian father, but I was raised as a Ghanaian in Ghana before my parents came to Nigeria to reside during the period of Ghana's economic downturn. So I took the advice of the people who read the book, re-edited the book and also refined the language. I engaged a professional editor, who explained the modalities of writing to me. This helped me greatly to improve my skills and I was able to write much better.

You said earlier that you are of Ghanaian and Nigerian parentage. Please explain that.

I don't want to go deep into that, but I have a broad immigration background within my extended family. We have people from different parts of the world, who settled in different places at different times; so you find people who have chosen to say, this is where I want to be identified with. So some choose to be Ghanaians while some say they are Nigerians and we are still one big loving family not minding the passports we carry. Now looking at my parents, both of them were born in Ghana.

I am a third-generation Ghanaian, which is where I was born and raised. I came to Nigeria at a point in my life, and stayed in Nigeria for one decade and practiced journalism here. But I still wouldn't say that I am a Nigerian because I am a third generation Ghanaian. On this issue I prefer to talk about myself only, because I don't want to offend anybody in my larger family. I am married to an American. I see myself as an international citizen, but I don't want to lose

my origins. To be able to adapt to members of my extended family from different parts of the world, I would say that I'm an international person, but I wouldn't reject anybody because I love Nigerians, because part of my family are Nigerians.

Are your parents still alive?

My mother died recently and my dad went back to Ghana.

Prior to coming for the burial of your mother, when was your last trip to Nigeria?

It was in September, 2013.

Let's go back to your journalism experience. How did it start off?

I started practicing journalism here in Nigeria in 1982 when I wrote my first poetry piece for Daily Times. I met a man who is a professor now at University of Lagos. He was in NIJ at the time and one of the first people I related to. I told him that I liked writing and he asked me to show him what I had written. I showed him my works and he got two of them published. He took me to Daily Times and that was how I began publishing my works.

What did you write about then?

I just liked writing poetry that expressed the things of God. I wrote about creation and he liked it and took me to Daily Times and introduced me to the Features Editor. Later he took me to Concord newspapers, to meet the late Dele Giwa. He welcomed me warmly. Another nice person I met at Concord was Dele Omotunde. I started writing as a student, and they were publishing my works almost every week. Omotunde really encouraged me and I decided not to go back to Daily Times. I continued publishing my works in Concord. By the time I was up and running with Concord, Giwa left to set up Newswatch magazine.

Dele Omotunde went with him. After I completed my training at NIJ, I did freelance work for Concord for about a year or two. About that time, Reverend (Dr) Wilson Badejo, who later became the General Overseer of Foursquare Gospel Church introduced me to Stanley Egbochukwu, who also received me warmly. I recall that Lewis Obi used to ask me to do interviews for him. Actually I was not a good writer then, but Obi was a fantastic teacher, editor and motivator. My stories were regularly published in Concord. However, when I sought to be employed as a fulltime

Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels Ghanaian lady who became Nigeria's first female sports reporter

staff, I hit a brick wall because Doyin Abiola did not quite like me. I think she wasn't interested in me because I was a foreigner. I will say that

anywhere.

Was it that she didn't think you could perform well on the job?

I don't know; she wasn't interested in me. She just didn't like me and so, she didn't encourage me. But the Sports Editor, an Ijaw man born in Ghana became my friend. One day he said, 'why don't you come and report sports for me?' He asked if I knew anything about sports. I told him I had been an athlete and did well in high jump and long jump in school. That was how I started covering sports. At that time, in 1984, there was no lady covering sports in the whole of Nigeria. News quickly got to Doyin Abiola that there was a lady on the Concord Sports Desk. That was how I became the first lady sports journalist in the whole of Africa.

Are you sure about that?

Yes, I am very sure. Because that was how Doyin Abiola recognized that I would make a mark for Concord and I got to travel around the country and Africa. I remember when the Nigeria Tobacco Company NTC organized a golf tournament in Niger State and General Babangida attended with his wife, Maryam. I interviewed them. Maryam Babangida was so happy that a woman was covering sports and so she formed a female soccer team.

Princess Bola Jegede also set up her own female soccer club. My success encouraged NTA to appoint a female sports correspondent. As the first female sports reporter, I was considered a trailblazer. Quality magazine, which was under the Newswatch stable, interviewed me. Even Daily Mirror used to feature my sports column on the back-page and that gave me a lot of exposure.

However, working at Concord was not smooth sailing though - there was an attempt to terminate my appointment because of a malicious report about me. Before then I had been supplying stories to the Business Desk when Nsikak Essien was the Business Editor. When he left, Rose Umoren took over. So when the malicious report was made about me, she defended me and requested that I should be re-assigned to her desk.

So while I was in Business Concord, I was still reporting sports for National Concord, writing features for the Features Desk, and also writing about the business side of sports. I was the first reporter that started writing about the business side of sports. I recall interviewing Segun Odegbami and reported on what companies like Coca-Cola and Seven-Up were doing to support sports. The companies were very impressed that I was writing on the business angle of sports.

Did they ever sponsor you to cover international competitions?

Yes. I was in China for the first women soccer competition. I went to Egypt and some other places. Some other companies that sponsored me were Cadbury and Food Specialties (which is now known as Nestle), but Seven-Up was my biggest and strongest sponsor. They were good to me.

At what point during your Concord days did you meet Mike Awoyinfa?

Because of my strong Christian background I interacted with Stanley Egbo-chukwu, who was a Christian. I desperately wanted to be employed, so I used to move from desk-to-desk, requesting to be allowed to write for the desk. At a point I went to Weekend Concord; that was when I met Dimba and realized we were both Christians and became close.

That's how I met Mike Awoyinfa. Whenever I travelled they asked me to send them interesting stories. One thing I loved about Awoyinfa is that he preferred you telling him the story; he would look for the most interesting angle and then write the story himself, and share the byline with me. Lewis Obi also liked me to just record the whole interview, transcribe or tell him the story, which he then wrote in his preferred style.

They both had a way of making the story project the nature of their publications, which were magazines.

Dr. Paulyn Walley-Daniels Ghanaian lady who became Nigeria 's first female sports reporter

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2014

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## Something Happened!

This Day (Lagos)

August 09, 2018

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Length: 2149 words

### **Body**

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"Use a picture. It's worth a thousand words." I remembered that timeless injunction by 20th century Australian journalist, Arthur Brisbane, last weekend the moment I saw the photograph of Senator Godswill Akpabio grovelling before President Muhammadu Buhari in London. Anybody who knows the former Akwa Ibom State Governor very well knows that humility is not one of his virtues; so it must be an act of desperation for him to stoop in the manner he did to accept President Buhari's handshake.

That Akpabio, for whom the senate session rule was broken so he could become the minority leader, would abandon his party to cross the aisle is also a suspicious decision that makes many to link it with his case before the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)--an institution that has been turned into an instrument of blackmail and coercion against the opposition by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). That explains why only the accounts of some states controlled by the PDP are being blocked.

On 27th March this year, in seconding a motion moved by the senate majority leader, Ahmed Lawan, seeking an adjournment of the senate to enable APC lawmakers attend the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting holding that day, Akpabio said, "even though we have a quorum of the senate which is about 37 and we in the PDP can continue proceedings, I give them the opportunity to attend the NEC meeting." He then turned to Lawan and added: "I hereby second the motion to allow you continue the confusion in your NEC meeting today."

That is the "confusion" Akpabio has elected to join though it is very well within his right. He becomes an issue only because his name is being frequently mentioned as one of the principal actors in the National Assembly sordid drama. Even though I have already spoken to some principal actors, I am yet to get a complete picture of what exactly happened on Tuesday and the allegation against Akpabio remains unproven. But I can perceive a vicious power struggle not only within the National Assembly but also at the presidency that I am not sure bode well for the country. While the pieces of the puzzle will eventually fall together, what I find interesting is the collective amnesia by many Nigerians.

I deliberately chose the title of Joseph Heller's 1974 novel to headline this piece because there is still a lack of clarity on why the National Assembly was invaded. There are two accounts. If you believe one faction, the invasion was to clear the way for some APC Senators to enter the chambers and remove the Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki. The other account is that the whole fiasco was orchestrated by Saraki himself. Since we are in a season of full scale propaganda with both sides having foot soldiers in the social media, especially WhatsApp, truth has become the first casualty. The only constant is that the interest of Nigerians is the last thing on the minds of the gladiators on both sides, despite all the posturing.

## Something Happened!

However, for those who still argue that what happened on Tuesday was unprecedented, I enjoin them to Google Professor Wole Soyinka's 3rd December 2014 press statement titled 'King Nebuchadnezzar--The reign of impunity', following the invasion of the National Assembly by the police at that period.

Let me refresh the memory of readers with a few lines: "The latest action of the supposed guardians of the law against the nation's lawgivers is an unambiguous declaration of war against the people. Legislators are not elected for their athletic prowess, and such endeavours should not be demanded of them. Our legislators however have been made to perform over and beyond the call of the Olympics. I don't understand why some media have described their action as a show of shame -- this is a very careless, easily misapplied designation. The act of scaling gates and walls to fulfill their duty by the people must be set down as their finest hour. They must be applauded, not derided. If shame belongs anywhere, it belongs to the Inspector-General of Police and his slavish adherence to conspiratorial, illegal, and unconstitutional instructions -- to undermine a democratic structure... For this latest outrage, one in an escalating series of impunity, the buck stops yet again at the presidency, and that incumbent, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, continues to surprise us in ways that very few could have conjectured."

The import of that recollection is to remind Nigerians of the level to which regime protection has always been substituted for national security by those who head these agencies. It is particularly interesting that the IGP in question, who at that period was the enforcer for President Jonathan and the PDP, practically turned himself to Buhari's ADC the moment Jonathan conceded defeat. Yet, I am almost certain that if the former president had rejected the result, the same IGP (who was sacked in anger apparently for his post-election disloyalty) would have led the assault against Buhari and his supporters!

Therefore, if there is any take-away from what is going on in Nigeria today, it is that the power struggle is not about the people, it is about the protection of personal privileges. So, nobody should be carried away by the politics of 'my crowd is bigger than yours' going on across the country that ignited Tuesday's show of shame as politicians decamp from one party to the other. In any case, I followed the drama on television and except for the female legislator who stood up to the hooded security agents, most of her colleagues who became "heroes of democracy" were actually drinking Whiskey right within the premises of the National Assembly. And their leader, Senator Ben Bruce had to cheapen our country while addressing the media.

Here is what he said which I have transcribed unedited for readers: "... We will ask them to revoke the business, the business of their wives and the business of their children. They will not be allowed to leave Nigeria to travel to any nation in Western Europe and North America. And let me say this, let me say this very clearly, let nobody test me or let nobody test this institution. When you begin anti-democratic situations like this, including the DSS officials - I want to get the photograph (of) all those breaking the law; get me their pictures, get me their names, we will submit the names of the DSS officials, the names of Senator Akpabio and the gangs to the embassies - I've been in touch with them already, they are waiting for the list. As soon as they have it... the quest to go to Washington, to go to London, to go to EU, and to go to Canada and we will make sure their visas are revoked. And I hope these anti-democratic forces love Nigeria because they will not be travelling (for) very, very long time. I also want to tell them that Bayelsa has a very good medical facility, Cross River has very good tourist facilities... Godswill Akpabio, go and sell your [air]plane because you will not need it for a very long time. In fact, after this, my colleagues and I would buy a donkey so he could use because he has nowhere to go."

With that revelation, we now know that Senator Akpabio has a Private Jet but it says so much about those who preside over our affairs that Bruce would equate staying in Nigeria for a public official with being punished. Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande was Governor of Lagos State for four years and three months during the Second Republic and he never for one day ventured outside Nigeria, either for medical or on holiday. Now, none of our public officials can spend two weeks at a stretch in Nigeria, they must gallivant across the globe at our expense. And the cynical manner the senator talked about the medical facility in his home state shows he considers it beneath himself and that of his colleagues to go there.

While we will deal with all these issues and the National Assembly fiasco another day, let me say quickly that the person who should be held responsible for what happened on Tuesday is President Buhari. In fact, the growing insinuation is that were he to be in the country, nothing would have happened to the Director General of the State

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Security Service, Mr Lawal Daura; after all, nothing has happened to all the certificate forgers in his government, including those appointed to 'fight corruption'. The question is, if a president could admit publicly that he gave a directive to his IGP and was ignored without any consequence, why would the heads of other security agencies not go rogue?

In my 19th April column on this page, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/04/19/a-national-security-endangered-2/>, I highlighted how President Buhari has failed to provide leadership by allowing those manning security agencies to practically engage in street brawl without anybody calling them to order and the implications for the polity. I enjoin readers to go through that piece again because it contains a mild rebuke of the president by his own National Security Adviser before I drew my conclusions: "The most elementary doctrinal pillar that undergirds national security is the recognition of the primacy of national interest. In that regard, it is the need to preserve the integrity of security agencies as state institutions that equips every president to contain the excesses of security chiefs, especially when their private agenda begin to muddy the national interest or vitiate the integrity of the institutions they head. In a situation where the personal interests and tendencies of these security chiefs are allowed to blossom uncontrolled, the agencies quickly grow into private armies that clash openly at the slightest opportunity.

"It is this red line that was crossed by operatives of the DSS, NIA and EFCC on the streets of Abuja in November 2017 which necessitated the intervention of the Senate. When added to inter-agency squabbles between the military and the police--whose men have become easy targets for extermination by armed robbers and sundry hoodlums--we are face to face with the precise reasons why our national security is today in tatters.

"What is baffling to most observers is how President Buhari has allowed the institutions of national security to be freely carved up into clashing and competing private fiefdoms of ambitious and lawless chieftains who have carried their fights into the public arena. Tragically, it is this dysfunction between the security agencies and the unhealthy rivalry among their heads that has led to the current state of general insecurity in the country."

I wrote the foregoing less than four months ago. But the decisive step taken by Acting President Yemi Osinbajo on Daura should serve the rogue heads of our security services who act as though above the law oblivious to the fact that one of the primary objectives of security in a democracy is the protection of critical institutions of State. While loyalty to the Number One office in the country is required of security chiefs, it also behooves on them to understand that fidelity to national institutions and the constitution is a higher calling.

Unfortunately, it would appear that the current disarray among security chiefs reflects a scramble for vantage position in the politics of access to the president. In the process, the architecture of national security is in ruins. When he returns to the country from his holiday, President Buhari must redefine the structure of national security by replacing those who have outlived their usefulness. He also must take charge of his government by doing what is necessary to discourage further personalization of vital institutions. That is the irreducible minimum if his administration is to regain any modicum of credibility after the recent shame.

Ray Ekpu @ 70

Oduduwa Hall, that citadel of entertainment at the Obafemi Awolowo University, was filled to the brim the day, early in 1986, Mr **Dele Giwa** (now of blessed memory) and Mr Ray Ekpu came to Ife. In those days, as Reuben Abati wrote on Tuesday, men of ideas like Ekpu were what the society celebrated, not those who have thousands of followers on Instagram yet going nowhere! As Ekpu therefore clocks 70, he deserves all the accolades he has been getting from members of my generation of journalists. He remains for us a worthy role model. Happy birthday Sir!

2018 Teens Conference

Online registration for the 2018 edition of the Abuja Teens Career Conference, which holds on Saturday 18th August, will close within the next few days. And only those who register will receive the accreditation mail that will enable them to attend. While other relevant information about the conference can be accessed on the web portal, [www.rccgteapteens.org](http://www.rccgteapteens.org), those who still have questions about personal or group participation can contact me ([verdict2000@hotmail.com](mailto:verdict2000@hotmail.com)) directly.

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- You can follow me on my Twitter handle, @Olusegunverdict and on [www.olusegunadeniyi.com](http://www.olusegunadeniyi.com)

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## **Dimgba Igwe: A life formed by the written word**

The Sun (Nigeria)

May 16, 2016 Monday

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**Length:** 1789 words

**Byline:** Uche Atuma

### **Body**

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By Enyeribe Ejiogu DIMGBA Igwe's life was shaped by two major influences: The revealed word

By Enyeribe Ejiogu

DIMGBA Igwe's life was shaped by two major influences: The revealed word of God, the Bible, and the written word in books and other news-related publications. He loved the bible and the printed word with unbridled passion.

It was a lifelong romance that started in childhood. And the love affair never waned until it was gruesomely cut short on that despicable and horrible day when a hit-and-run driver killed him on Saturday morning, September 6, 2014, as he jogged in his Okota, Lagos, neighbourhood. Imagine a person jogging regularly to improve health and sustain life, and then having the same life taken away by a veritable "scampy rascal" as Igwe would say in a jocular way, unique to him.

Talk about diligence. Talk about focus. And you could just be talking about the late Pastor Dimgba Igwe, a widely acclaimed successful **journalist** and bible scholar. Like Apostle Paul, Igwe loved to teach the word of God, freely sharing the insights and revelations that the Spirit gave him. You could not spend 10 minutes with him and not learn something new, either in the bible or about secular issues of life.

Talking about learning from Igwe, one person, among the many thousands that Igwe impacted on in his lifetime is Pastor Iheanyi Ejiogu, a motivational speaker and peak performance coach, who is also the senior pastor of Liberty House, the Lekki branch of Evangel Pentecostal Church, Lagos, where Igwe was the Deputy General Overseer.

Recalling how Igwe helped to set him on the path that has led him to success, Ejiogu said: "I remember when I was 19 years and I wrote him to be my mentor. Surprisingly, he replied favourably and that was how it all began for me.

### Dimgba Igwe: A life formed by the written word

He taught me to know that the only way to improve mentally was by the quality of the materials one feeds his or her mind with. One of the last things he taught me was in his statement to me was: "Study, study, study, then practise, practise, practise! I will always be grateful."

That in essence is a reflection of how Igwe himself was forged. From childhood, Igwe decided to build his life around the written word: To seek it, know it, consume it, live by it and give it back. All the while giving the glory to God.

In the book, *The Alchemist*, the author, Paulo Coelho, said that if a person believed very strongly in a goal, the universe would conspire to help him achieve it. The seed of Igwe's rise to national prominence through the written word was actually sown after the death of his father, and paying school fees became a stifling challenge for his mother. Probably seeing into the future, his mother had assured him that he would be able to read all the books he could ever read in this life despite the great setback of having to withdraw temporarily from school. Through his own efforts, Igwe literally pulled himself up by the straps of his own boots, using every opportunity he got to read the printed word.

He focused on becoming a writer and diligently pursued this goal by going into journalism. It was a long, drawn out process that eventually led him to the Nigerian Institute of Journalism. With determination, tenacity and singleness of purpose, he made his mark at the Concord newspaper after passing through the tutelage of notable and renowned journalists like the late **Dele Giwa**. Then providence provided him with the opportunity to team up with Mike Awoyinfa, who later became the pioneer Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of and now a Director of The Sun Publishing Limited, chose him as his deputy, and together they worked, with a stellar group of energetic journalists, hungry for success, to birth the super-successful and award-winning Weekend Concord, which 'baptised' Nigerian newspaper readers into tabloid journalism.

of the Concord family and was somewhat instrumental to the forging of the unique bond between Awoyinfa and Igwe, in the sense that she provided the platform by initiating the creation of the Weekend Concord that brought the duo together, recalled those days in a tribute she wrote when Igwe was killed in 2014. She said: "Mike, as the designate editor for the new title was given the chance to pick his own deputy. Mike chose Dimgba, as his deputy and they made history with Weekend Concord in style, content and circulation. In short, Weekend Concord became the largest circulating Nigerian newspaper, with a million copies sold on Saturday nationwide."

Similarly, Mrs. Wale Sokunbi, the current and first female chairman of the Editorial Board of The Sun, who is also a 'daughter' of the Concord family, captured the relationship forged between Awoyinfa and Igwe in the effort to birth and build Weekend Concord as a successful newspaper brand: "I, alongside many of the old Concord newspaper tribe, met and worked closely together with Mr. Igwe in the 1980s and 90s. The Weekend Concord newspaper, where we worked directly together, was a lovely and interesting place to be. The visionary Mike Awoyinfa, was the 'heart' of Weekend Concord, while Dimgba Igwe was the 'head.' As a visionary and creative thinker, Awoyinfa almost permanently had his head in the clouds, bubbling with outstanding story ideas and headlines, which he usually first sounded out on his deputy, Dimgba, before bursting into the newsroom to tell us about it. While Awoyinfa daily wined and dined with the mysterious journalism spirits, who gave him uncommon insights that produced blockbuster stories, Dimgba was the one who had his feet firmly planted on the ground. He was the one who always faithfully guided the editorial process, which brought their joint dreams to reality in the form of outstanding and unforgettable stories. It was that shared thinking and responsibility that gave birth to the Weekend Concord in the first place. It was also the magical formula that informed the birth of The Sun newspaper, and made it the roaring success that it is today."

It was from those days of Concord that Igwe developed a deep, strong bond never before seen in Nigeria between two people from different ethnic groups and somewhat contrasting personalities. Back in those days, while Awoyinfa was the unabashedly fun-loving fellow, Igwe came across as the taciturn one with a deep Pentecostal hue. Notwithstanding their different spiritual attitudes to life, they became so bonded that professional colleagues began to describe them as the journalism twins from different mothers. Not even their respective wives could come between them!

### Dimgba Igwe: A life formed by the written word

While still piloting the Weekend Concord, Awoyinfa and Igwe published their first book, The Art of Feature Writing, which has been highly acclaimed by journalism scholars.

On the wall of a church building not very far from Jakande Estate Gate, Ejigbo, is this inscription: "God uses setbacks to move us forward." Again, the bible says "all things work together for good to them that trust the Lord, and who are called according to his purpose." For Igwe, the setback came when the Sani Abacha military regime proscribed Concord Newspapers Group in the wake of the agitation against the annulment of the June 12 election, won by the late Moshood K.O. Abiola, who was the publisher.

Suddenly cast adrift in the sea of unemployment, Igwe and his twin brother took their journalistic art to the higher realm by becoming biographers. This gave birth to 50 Nigeria's Corporate Strategists. CEOs Share Experience In Managing Companies in Nigeria – a well crafted incisive, rich 816-page book that became a bestseller and garnered rave reviews across Nigeria. Even this reporter for one year, between 2001 and 2002 lived in Abuja, where he engaged in selling the book to keep body and soul together after also suffering a setback. That book was like the Rolls Royce of Nigerian business biographies. It was followed by some other successful books, namely: Orji Kalu: Leadership Lessons From A Master Strategist; 50 Nigeria's Marketing Memoirs, Mike Adenuga, Africa's Business Guru, Segun Osoba, The Newspaper Years and the more recent 50 World Editors. Several other books are in advanced stages of compilation, including the biography of the former governor of Lagos State and current Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola, which is undergoing editorial finishing touches.

Ask Igwe, when he was alive, the key to the success he achieved, his prompt answer always was: "Jesus, of course, who else? The best thing that ever happened to me is not journalism or writing books. The best thing that happened to me is deciding to give my life to Jesus in 1982 and deciding to serve Him with all my heart. It is often easy to lose sight of the source of all skills and blessing and focus on individuals. But for me, whatever I am doing right happened because of Jesus, my source."

After featuring in 50 Nigeria's Corporate Strategists and the subsequent book, Igwe and his twin brother wrote about him, Orji Kalu tapped on them to make his desire to own a newspaper materialise. This resulted in the establishment of The Sun, through which Awoyinfa and Igwe re-enacted the magical success of Weekend Concord. The Sun is still blazing in Nigeria's newspaper firmament and has even given birth to other newspapers.

When their active management of The Sun came to an end, they moved on to set up Entertainment Express though Igwe also moved up to become the Vice Chairman of The Sun Publishing Limited, a position he held until he was killed by the driver from hell.

Igwe did not look at people through the prism of ethnicity. It didn't matter to him if you came from the moon, as long as he was convinced that you were competent to deliver on goals. This reflected in the appointments he and Awoyinfa made in the formative days of The Sun, as they followed in the footsteps of the Publisher, Orji Kalu, who has people from all ethnic groups and races, working in his global conglomerate. More than 70% of the pioneer editorial, printing and pre-press staff of The Sun came from the old Concord family, as editors, line editors and correspondents. The majority of the other 30% also passed through Concord before working in other newspapers, from where they joined The Sun. Today, the staff profile remains the same. Clearly, Igwe didn't manifest tribal tendencies. He lived out the meaning of the scripture in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "He who is in Christ is a new creature; old things have passed away; and all things have become new."

This newness of life was abundantly displayed at Evangel Pentecostal Church, where he was a founding member, church secretary, pastor and later the first Deputy General Overseer. Held that position until the Black Saturday morning of September 6, 2014, the day he died.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2016



## The Transfiguration of General Buhari [column]

This Day (Lagos)

February 28, 2015

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**Length:** 1971 words

**Byline:** Dele Momodu

### **Body**

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Fellow Nigerians, miracles shall never end. That is the only way to describe the incredible story of Major General Muhammadu Buhari at this auspicious moment. No one could have envisaged or foretold the huge drama being enacted before our very eyes. It was not as if his popularity and cult-followership was ever in doubt but the general belief and assumption was that it was dominantly limited and restricted to a particular section or region of Nigeria. What was never expected was a cross-over appeal to all areas and segments of our nation.

Buhari's fate as a perennial contestant was supposed to have been sealed by many debilitating factors. The first and most crucial till this day is on account of his odiferous reputation as a coup plotter and rabidly draconian dictator who appeared mercilessly vengeful. Depending on whom you talked to in the past, Buhari conjured different images to varied people. Some saw him as an Angel who represented a sword of Damocles to the wicked and reckless politicians who wreaked havoc on Nigeria's economy and wrecked the collective future of our citizens. But to others, he was a Luciferous character who must have escaped from the pit of hell to haunt God's creatures on planet earth. I will not attempt to bore you with well-rehashed tales of his cardinal sins, both real and imagined. They are in the realm of fables and mythology and already in public domain courtesy of his opponents and unrelenting attackers. But one can never gloss over the allegations of religious bias and intolerance. If possible, many would want us to see and hold Buhari as Nigeria's version of Osama bin Laden who was regarded as the world's most notorious terrorist. Buhari would forever bear the cross of ever defending his personal faith and the interests of his Northern people like most of us would normally do. Many quotable quotes have been ascribed to him but most have never been properly validated by his accusers thus casting doubts on the veracity of those vituperations. The last but not the least albatross against Buhari is the matter of old age. I must confess that I belong in the category of the vociferous proponents of sacking most of our ancient leaders and replacing them with young and vibrant whizzkids. I must sincerely thank the media and publicity committee of the People's Democratic Party for finding my past comments and stance on Buhari so important and worthy of sponsored countervailing advertorials in several newspapers and social media platforms. They were generous enough to put me in good company by attaching me to accomplished Nigerians such as Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Mallam Nasir El Rufai. On a serious note, it was such a great honour seeing all manner of caricatures about me including the one stuffing my brains with noodles. The truth is that I, like many other Nigerians, was a veritable victim of the almost unprecedented propaganda against Buhari. In my purview, the definition of propaganda is not about telling lies but an attempt to magnify non-fiction until it becomes what the famous author Kole Omotoso called "faction", when you mix facts with fiction. The demonization of Buhari was therefore a fait accompli emanating from the many years of ferocious regurgitation of his supposed misdemeanours. But, still, I would never have imagined that a day would

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come when I, and so many former antagonists of Buhari, would not only change my mind about this walking firebrand but actually plunge myself fully into his presidential campaign while not being a member of his political party. Strange are the ways of God indeed.

In my nearly 55 years on earth, this is the second time I would witness a complete transfiguration of a Nigerian from being most hated to most loved. My first recollection was in 1988 as I searched frantically for a job. My dream then had been to get a teaching appointment after concluding a Master's degree in Literature-in-English at the great Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. I was already contributing articles on the opinion pages of The Guardian which was edited by Odia Ofeimun and The Sunday Tribune, edited by Folu Olamiti. I was then subsequently invited by my friend, Onukaba Adinoyi-Ojo, a prodigiously gifted journalist, to try my luck in Lagos. He tried to get me a job at the African Guardian, edited by Nduka Irabor, but wasn't successful. Onukaba then suggested that I should try the African Concord magazine, owned by Chief Moshood Abiola and edited by Lewis Obi but I was most reluctant. Just imagine that though I was desperately in need of a job, but I was not very keen about working in the Concord Group. You, like me, will laugh at my reasons now. I was discouraged by so many things I had read or heard about the fabulously wealthy 'Money Kudi Owo' Abiola, who was supposed to have been the biggest thief in Africa, courtesy of Fela's album, ITT, International Thief Thief. That song had done incalculable damage to Chief Abiola as many self-righteous people, including myself, completely tuned off the man. I remember very vividly how there was a war of words between the Awoists (who believed the support of Chief Abiola, a Yoruba, for the National Party of Nigeria was partly responsible for robbing Chief Obafemi Awolowo of victory against Alhaji Shehu Shagari who won the Presidential election in 1979) and the Abiola supporters who felt there was nothing wrong in Yorubas belonging to opposing parties. The Nigerian Tribune had fiery writers led by Chief Olabisi Onabanjo, Ebenezer Babatope (aka Ebino Topsy) while The Concord Group assembled some of Nigeria's finest journalists including Doyin Abiola, Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Yakubu Muhammed, Duro Onabule, Sina Adedipe and so many others. The columnists of both rival papers tackled themselves endless and joined issues on various national and personal matters. Of particular interest to me was a columnist popularly known as Abiodun Aloba (also known as Ebenezer Williams) who wrote so brilliantly that I asked God for his kind of diction.

In the middle of all this confusion, I would have preferred to work in the less controversial and highly cerebral environment of The Guardian but here I was being asked to try my luck at the African Concord. I had imagined all sorts about having to work in a religious conclave, all the restrictions, prejudices, and so on, but the real fear of hunger was the beginning of wisdom for me. I approached Mr Lewis Obi as suggested by Onukaba who introduced us and was shocked that I got a job on the spot. I had to plead with him to let me resume in another two weeks as I needed to return to Ile-Ife for proper preparation for this journey of a lifetime. The rest is history! The meat of this story is that I resumed work on May 2, 1988, about fourteen days to my 28th birthday. But contrary to my mortal fears, The Concord Group was one of the most relaxed and pleasant companies I would ever work. It was by far the biggest media conglomerate in Nigeria. Chief Abiola rarely came around but he breezed in every now and then and everyone felt the tremor of his presence as well as the aftershocks after he's been long gone. The Concord titles did not discriminate against any tribe or religion. I won't be surprised if most of us were Christians. The most senior employees paraded a galaxy of more Christians than Moslems. We had a bush Canteen within the premises where we were allowed to eat or drink even alcohol as journalists love to do. Our Chairman avoided the News Room as much as possible because he was certain to be welcomed by some whiff of cigarette smoke. Based on the much vaunted alleged prejudices of the owner, Chief MKO Abiola, I tried very hard to find out any shade of religious intolerance but never found one. He was not a saint but he towered above many of his peers. His love for the poor marked him apart from others. He lived for the needy and touched too many lives. He had attended a Christian school, Baptist Boys High School, Abeokuta, and could recite Biblical passages by rote. He attended church services when required to do so and even sang Christian hymns from memory at my wedding in 1992. It was a great lesson for me that we can all misconstrue many things based on rumours and gossip without seeking to ascertain the factual reality.

Chief Abiola worked assiduously at turning around the wrong impressions about him. Not everyone ever gets that lucky. It takes a lot to change human misperceptions. Many are often too rigid and too set in their ways. As Abiola himself used to say, the deaf always repeats the last songs he heard before he lost his hearing. It was one of those miraculous occurrences that Abiola was eventually able to endear himself to Nigerians from all works of lives. The

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secret of his larger-than-life image was quite simple. He never disconnected himself totally from the poor even as he wined and dined with the rich and famous. It is a lesson I hold very dear. Abiola was ready to fight the cause of the common man despite belonging to the oppressor class himself. The ability to relate to both with equal competence was uncommon. The truth is he never forgot his humble beginnings and made sure that this reflected in the way he related with all manner of people. I wasn't surprised when he returned from his self-imposed political sabbatical and jumped into the fray in 1993. He had bided his time and knew when to make the right move. Ordinary Nigerians responded in kind and in sincere appreciation of his genuinely generous gestures. Even the elites who initially viewed him with suspicion and likely disdain finally embraced him warts and all as the most unlikely man became so radicalised that he became a symbol of our struggle for democracy and good governance. Ironically, Fela's Brother, Beekololari Ransome-Kuti joined in that epic battle, and likewise many who were never fans of Abiola. As I watch events unfold around Major General Buhari today, I just can't help but draw some comparison and highlight the similarities between the People's General and Abiola, the only difference being that Buhari cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a wealthy man. Both men had powerful enemies. They were assumed to be religious bigots. Although, Abiola was a Yoruba man it was felt that he was too partial to the North as is the wrong perception of General Buhari's parochial feelings for his home region. They derived their power from the poor. Their passion for Nigeria could never be in doubt. Abiola was rejected by the political class resoundingly just like Buhari has not been able to win the presidential election a record third time. However, like Abiola, Buhari seems to have gotten his groove finally and disabused the Nigerian public of these erroneous views and opinions.

This deal was finally saved and delivered at The Chatham House, London on February 26, 2015. At a public lecture which he delivered at that world renowned venue, Buhari mesmerised the world with his presence, carriage, and childlike innocence. He did not pretend to be who he wasn't. It was such a glorious moment as he introduced himself as a former dictator turned reformed democrat. He spoke calmly and firmly in front of a distinguished audience. He answered the questions fired at him with candour, sincerity and common-sense. Many were shocked to see a Buhari they thought they knew but didn't know. Standing before the world was a man whose image was falsely that of a Muslim fundamentalist, stark illiterate, aged and tired soldier, wicked and miserable soul, hypnotising everyone with his carefully chosen but intelligent words coupled with great wit and humour. This was a truly transfigured Buhari, who certainly has a date with history and it is certainly only a matter of time before he gets his well-deserved apotheosis.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2015

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I cannot guarantee that I would remain single for the rest of my life Florence Ita-Giwa @ 70



## I cannot guarantee that I would remain single for the rest of my life Florence Ita-Giwa @ 70

The Nation (Nigeria)

February 19, 2016 Friday

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**Length:** 3083 words

### **Body**

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Senator Princess Florence Ita-Giwa, former Presidential Adviser on National Assembly Matters to former ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo joined the league of septuagenarians yesterday with her look belying her age. For friends, relations, and well wishers, it was a time to pomp champagne and celebrate Mama Bakassi, as she is fondly called. From Cross Rivers State, her state of origin, Abuja, Lagos State and outside the country, individuals and various groups, before the day of the celebration, organised series of activities to mark her birthday. When one would expect that she would be worn out by the enormity of the stress, the elated senator looked as fit as a fiddle. She said: "I am looking for the age called 70 but I just can't find it. I look even stronger than I was when I celebrated 60 years. I feel very fulfilled and I give glory to God that I am celebrating 70 and by the grace of God in good health, both physically and mentally and I feel very settled in my mind. The most interesting thing is that I am very certain that I am in the right place that I should be. I feel very fulfilled with my family, with my work, with my charity and the position I rose to in my career as a politician is very fulfilling."

With the benefit of hind sight, she recalled that her birth was eventful, adding: "I was born in Calabar Maternity Hospital. From what I was told, my mother was actually in an evening dress at some annual ballroom dance when she went into labour and was rushed to a hospital at Ikot Ekpene and from there to Calabar Maternity Hospital as a result of complications arising from blood loss during delivery where she had me. So my arrival into the world was very eventful. When I grew up and started my medical equipment business, the first thing I did was to visit that hospital and donated blood. I am from a very hard working family. My mother was a journalist, trader, and dress maker in order to make both ends meet. "My father was a civil servant. He used to be a police man before becoming a traditional ruler. My younger brother is Yoruba, so even in the family we have Yoruba grandchildren. The family is very Nigerian as we have Calabar, Rivers, Igbo, Yoruba in fact, every race is in this family. We are very different people. For instance, my brother is an extremely quiet person. I am trying my best to see to it that my brother's children do not grow up to be as quiet as he is.

"My daughter Koko is very hard working, very aggressive and self-driven. Though quiet by nature, she is trying to succeed in business of her own. She is Efik but her husband is Igbo. He too is also a very serious young man, very well brought up. We have very good people and I always look at my family as a very pretty family, because there is similarity in so many ways. I grew up in Igbo land, grew up in Yoruba land and sometimes, I was in England. So that is my whole background."

Even though she looks younger than her age, Ita-Giwa said her idea is not to look young but to age gracefully. "Naturally in my family, we age well and from where I come from as an Efik woman, from the time you come into

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this world as a female, you are made to appreciate the fact that it is beautiful to be a female, so whatever your aspirations are, whether you aspire to be the president of a country, a doctor, whatever you want to be, the number one thing is that you must not lose your femininity. That is why I always tell people that I am a Calabar woman and I am not scared of age because from the time you are born, you are taught how to look after yourself, so we age gracefully.

"The idea is not to look young, I don't want to be young but the idea is to age gracefully. So for that reason, knowing that my body is very receptive to food, I have a tendency to be fat, all my life, I have battled the possibility of weight, so I have always watched what I eat and it has turned out to be very healthy for me, and as I grew up, I took a career that is very stressful. I made it a ritual at the end of every day to find at least one hour to relax my mind, relax my body and then settle back and pamper myself from a rough day because politics is very rough both mentally and physically. I relax myself and take a very good dinner at the end of the day. I listen to news, watch television, play music and then before I go to bed, I prepare myself by giving myself like 30 minutes of pampering."

As a woman of many parts, Ita-giwa is one person that is not given to trumpeting her achievements. "It is immodest to start outlining my achievements," she said, adding: "But to be very modest, I think my greatest achievement is bringing up the children of Bakassi and turning them to normal human beings and seeing the children grow, putting them in the best schools and giving them as much exposure as possible, nationally, internationally and seeing them develop confidence in themselves, seeing them speak well and seeing them excel in school. that is my number one achievement.

"Besides that, my children have done well, my family is tremendously successful by the grace of God and in the field of politics that I choose as a career, I have done politics to where I managed to rise to the pinnacle of my career which in a country as big as Nigeria not many women can get there. I was a member of the House of Representatives, I have done two conferences, constitutional and national. I have won elections to the Senate twice and I have been advisers to two presidents, two very successful presidents for that matter. So I feel that I have done well in my chosen field. Even before I went into politics, I did well in my medical profession."

Asked why she remained unmarried after the death of her husband, Dele Giwa, she said: "I remained single because number one, I live by example. I have brought up children that as soon as they graduated from school, they got married and have their own children. If your environment is rough, when you change partners, then your children are likely to grow up rough and to change partners and as such I didn't want to take a risk of changing partners. However, I am a human being, there is need for me to have a relationship but I decided that at one point I have to be sure, I don't want to say that I didn't see anybody that was worth it but I am still sifting through so that I don't ever change partners. At this stage of my life, if ever there will be a partner, that partner would be my partner for life.

"Secondly, I live a very busy life and for most parts of my life in the last 10 years, I have done some very serious things that I didn't need that distraction, I have to take care of my business, I have to take part in the growth of my business, my work, my service to humanity. I did a lot of things that I was not sure that I could have found a man that will buy into that vision and again, there is the issue of men feeling intimidated by successful career women and there is no way i would have negotiated my career because I have children. Though, I do not intend to ever change my name which has become a brand but I am however not guaranteeing that i would remain single. I have amazing friends, and I am socially very busy as well but I have friends that respect me and do not take advantage of that friendship. I have very civilised male friends who do not want to take advantage. so if I want to go for dinner I have friends both Nigerian and non-Nigerians that will take me out, I have friends that will travel with me, we have very excellent and decent relationship. I am celebrating my 70 th birthday because they helped me succeed as a single mother. They were there for me. However, I cannot guarantee that I would remain single for the rest of my life."

She, however, said she has no regret in her seven decades of existence. "I have absolutely no regrets. I thank God for every good thing and every bad thing that has happened to me but I am very grateful because God has compensated me with good things for the bad things that happened to me. If I come back, I will still do it the same way. I have enjoyed everything that came along with what I choose to be in life. From my career as a nurse, as a medical professional, I have enjoyed it, from venturing into politics, I have enjoyed it, I have enjoyed the liberation I

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got from being in politics, it has allowed me the opportunity to speak freely, speak my mind, everything that comes with politics, I have enjoyed it up to the point of still dancing in the street at age 70. It is all part of it because politics is liberating and so I can dance in front of a crowd of one million people because it is my work, so I am totally liberated."

As one who believes that age is not a hindrance to getting a good life and the desire to look good, Ita- Giwa said: "I always tell people that I am a Calabar woman and we are very civilised people from the beginning. There is nothing you can do about age except to manage it and not to allow it control your life. I don't do youthful things because I don't want to be young. I can't remember the last time I did youthful things because my life has been full of very profound responsibilities and I was brought up by my mother to think like an adult, to always take responsibility. I do not dress young because I have grown up children but I do not negotiate and will never negotiate aging beautifully and gracefully.

"I will not negotiate aging with my waist line in place so that I can get into my pants, my jeans and my nice dresses. That is non-negotiable. I have always looked up to women like Jane Fonda, like Meryl Streep, like Tina Turner. Those are the women that inspire me because they have always looked very good despite their age. After looking at them, I don't want to be young I just need to appreciate myself."

She added: "I grew up knowing how to come out looking good and so I don't have need for a wardrobe manager. I know all the thousands of clothes I have because I know the time I take in buying each of them. I don't just shop off the shelf, I take my time to pick what I want. No matter how many dresses I have, they all have their various sentimental values attached. I manage myself and most importantly, I manage my body. It is natural. I do them myself. I grew up in an environment where from birth apart from being a journalist, my mother was also a dress maker and she was naturally gifted. I was fortunate to be her only daughter and so she used to dress me up. I grew up dressing well and also knowing how to take care of my clothes and my things."

She told The Nation that she enjoys every bit of her life as a woman, stressing that she would like to come back to life as one if it is possible.

If there is anything as reincarnation, I want to come back a woman because there is nothing as amazing and as sweet as being a woman. So whether you have to be a tough woman to survive is what I don't know, but I do know that I am a good strategist, because I spend too much time on my own, so I strategise a lot on how to survive in a country like Nigeria, if that is called being tough, so be it.

"I look at myself as a human being and I don't allow myself to be intimidated and I don't go out of my way to intimidate people, I just know that all of us are in the business of nation building, so for me, it is not an issue. It is for you to show your political strength. what I always tell people is that let's meet in the field as human beings, if you are good and nice to the people, it does not matter what gender you are, so I don't see politics as a gender thing that is why I don't play gender politics and then again, the terrain I come from is difficult for you to play gender politics, so we address each other as human beings."

For her, inspiration comes from first of all "the environment in which I grew up. I grew up in an environment of very strong women. Also my terms of responsibility helped me. I grew up knowing that I don't have a choice than to do what I have to do just like the Americans would always say. That alone gives me a lot of strength and courage. Also looking at a lot of people that look up to me really inspires me. There a lot of people that next to God looks up to me. That again is indeed inspiring. That again is very energising.

"The rise of women can be very meteoric because it has been so. You know women were seen as the weaker sex, as people that came into the world to have children but that has changed tremendously and it can change a lot more if women conquer fear and develop more confidence in themselves because it is for you to develop the confidence and say yes I can do it. It is very rough, especially in the terrain of politics and as long as a woman is in the terrain of politics, there is a lot of antagonism and so a woman will have to put in a hundred times more than her male counterpart to be able to succeed in politics and so it is just for a woman to develop that inner strength. Try to get rid of fear and move with that confidence that yes, she can do it."

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Advising women as they equally age, she said: "First of all, try and imbibe the culture of looking after yourself and eating properly. When I say properly I mean eating very healthy foods. Living a very healthy lifestyle and living in a healthy and nice environment. One does not have to be very rich to live in a healthy environment and most importantly, it is necessary to always have a clear mind. Do not keep malice. If anybody offends you, you take the person on. Have your arguments and get things sorted out and maybe at the end of the day, a superior argument will win."

"Also know that in life as long as one believes in God, there is no problem without a solution. Whatever problems one might face, always know that there is a solution to that problem.

"Don't just live your life worrying about what you shouldn't worry about because I don't. I try to simplify life. I am a politician and I've been in the field of politics for 25 years doing nothing and I must say that it has been a very difficult period of my life growing into politics, so I had to try and build up all kinds of defence mechanisms and self-preservation because horrible things do happen in politics. It is not for people with feeble heart. however, you have to work out extra means of surviving it. So, in my estimation, it will be very easy for Nigerian women who are not into politics. One major thing they must also know is that they must not be scared of age. Whatever you aspire to be, just plan it, put it in prayers and get rid of fear. Go out and get it done."

She said: "I went into politics because I needed a platform to address the issue of my Bakassi people and to also use that same platform to help the underprivileged, to speak for those who have been trampled upon, to be the voice of the people. I think I did not go to politics for the purpose of contesting and winning election, I went to use the platform and today I am celebrating my 10 years of service to humanity. That is why sometime, I ask Nigerian politicians what they do outside contesting for elections.

"Some people come out to contest election, if they lose, they disappear, if they win, they sit. in fact, once, they finish their term in office, they disappear. But I am not in office. I am a politician, I am not holding party office, I am not holding government office, yet I am very busy as you can see.

"I work round the clock, which means that it is a wonderful platform for me to address issues for the down-trodden and also take part in the development of my country. So it is a fantastic platform for me.

"I am not done with politics. Politics remains my number one platform to continue in doing my service to humanity. To speak on behalf of the down-trodden and to be able to participate in the development of my country. You don't need to have a political appointment, you don't have to be in government or contest elections but there are other aspects that can keep you busy and I am very busy though not in government. I presently do not hold any position in my party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and yet I am politically very busy and also I am a leader of my people.

"Sometimes you ask people what do you do when you are not contesting elections? and 90 percent of them don't have a means of surviving when they are not in government but I can survive when I am not in government and I can tell you that currently, I am very busy."

She has this to say about her working relationship with ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo: "I think with Obasanjo, initially, we didn't take off well. While I was at the Senate and he was the president, I think in the course of my struggle for separation of powers, because we were the guinea pigs of this democracy because I joined the Okadigbo group to fight for separation of powers. To be candid, Obasanjo was a straight forward military man and his desire to get things done as and when due is not negotiable. Eventually, we became very good friends with due respect, because today, he is my friend, he is my father he is actually my mentor and I like him tremendously.

"I still do not know any human being who is more committed to the success of this democracy, development of this country and feelings for the masses like former President Obasanjo. For four years that I worked with him, he refused to go to sleep and I saw that. It was a pleasant and exciting tiring, because he worked round the clock, and from those four years, I got to know my country, so that is what he did to my life, I got to know my country and got to know Nigerians and I know them. I know how Nigerians are, I got that opportunity to know my country, having worked with Obasanjo for four years."

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Much as she was caught up in the joy of her birthday celebration, Mama Bakasi bemoaned the plight of Bakassi people, saying: "It is unfortunate that up till now, the Bakassi people are still refugees in their country. It is unfortunate that up till now, this country has still not settled the Bakassi people and they have become refugees out of no fault of theirs but basically out of a wrong decision, but what is giving me hope today is that the new government is very passionate about the issue of Bakassi. The new governor is vehemently against the trampling of the common man and I have seen a lot of passion in him and I believe that with such passion and enthusiasm, the Bakassi people will be resettled and all the issues will be solved. I believe so and I intend to work closely with him."

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## Odukomaiya @ 80 - 'Why Abiola Fought Everything Awolowo Stood For' [interview]

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### **Body**

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#### PRINCE

, a former Editor of Daily Times and pioneer Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of Concord and Champion Newspapers, in this interview, reflects on the good, the bad and the ugly moments of his life, concluding that attaining 80 years makes him feel special in the sight of God.

It feels great for me. I feel like a special child of God in many ways. My mother had ten children. It will surprise you to hear that I am the only one alive out of those ten children. I grew up with only two out of those ten children. Others died. Those two who grew up with me were girls and one died in her last year in secondary school. The other one died immediately after leaving secondary school in 1963. I was 29 nine then. My father then became worried,. He said that I should get married. I did not want that because I was enjoying my bachelorhood. My father sent his younger brother, who was the paramount ruler of my town, to pursue me to marry. I was intimidated when he came with his chiefs on that mission. They wanted to give me a wife but I told them I already had someone I was getting married to. Being the only one who survived out of my mother's children made me feel special. Having attained 80, maybe I might survive till 90 and above but I don't want to survive more than 95 because I don't want to be a burden to anybody and to myself.

Then I will become a liability. And one needs to be careful not to live and see his children dying before his eyes. There are many dangers in getting too old. Those who live to the age of 100 and above, I am sure must have buried some of their children. So, I don't want that in my old age.

My father was a primary school teacher. My mother was born in Odogbolu where she met my father. I am not from Odogbolu. I was born in 1934 in Odogbolu and started schooling there at the age of four. When my father was transferred to my home town, Ibefun in Ijebu Division, he took me along. At that time, the highest class in Ibefun was standard four. My father sent me to his younger brother in Lagos. From there I enrolled at Saint John's. It was in Lagos that I entered secondary school. At that time, there were about five or six secondary schools in Lagos.

Yes. My father could not afford to send me for higher school certificate in any of the schools. And at that time, Higher School Certificate was available only in a few schools in Lagos. So, he spoke to his old friend, the late Chief Stephen Olowole Awokoya, who was the founding Principal of Mdusi College in Ijebu-Igbo. He was running private HSC classes. Chief Awokoya, who later became a professor, admitted me. It was there that I took four papers

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which qualified me for admission into the university. I later got a scholarship from the CMS(Church Missionary Society) to University of Legon, Ghana, where I studied classics.

It was in 1967 when I was teaching in Ahmadiya Secondary School, Lagos that I decided to be a journalist. I was on vacation then from Ghana. I saw an advertisement by Daily Times, calling on people to apply for the position of Leader Writer. The requirement was a first degree and minimum of five years experience in journalism. I did not belong to any of the categories, but I applied. Before then, I had developed a pastime for writing what I thought were articles, but they ended up being published as letters to the editor. I applied for the job, but, in my application, I indicated that I did not have the requirement but I introduced myself and what I was studying. I told them that I had one year left to conclude my studies. The decision to jettison my university studies and take up a job in a profession which I knew nothing about was my real defining moment. When I got the offer, I could not believe my eyes because the salary that was offered to me was higher than what my lecturers in Ghana were earning. The Leader Writer then is what is now referred to as the Chairman of the Editorial Board. Having taken the job, I felt that I had not taken a bad decision. I succeeded Mr. Aig Imokhude, who left to become the Director of Information. Few months after my employment, Alhaji Babatunde Jose was appointed the Editor. Before then he was the Regional Editor of the paper in the West, East and North. He was groomed for that position by the directors of the paper.

It was while he was going round to familiarize with the desk editors then, that he asked why I jettisoned my studies. It took me time to give him an answer. I told him that it was because of the salary I was given which was higher than that of my lecturers in Ghana. He said I was a foolish, stupid and a myopic young man. He said that a university certificate will guarantee my future. He said he was giving me a short time to go back to conclude my university studies. I was later called to his office, where he said I did not have a future under him if I did not have basic training in journalism. He said he was encouraged by what he saw in my file. That made him to invite me to his house, where he asked me to send my credentials to the London owners of Daily Times. I was told he was sending me to a university where I will study journalism. He later invited me to tell me that what he wanted for me was not possible because the universities were not offering journalism. He was the one who suggested a polytechnic.

That was how I found myself at Glasgow Royal Polytechnic where I was accepted for a two-year National Certificate. I got there in 1959. Journalism was not part of my earlier aspiration; my aspiration then was to become a lawyer or a lecturer. I liked the choice of London because I was free from distractions even though Glasgow was very cold. I was there for two years and thought I was coming home at the end of two years. But I was subsequently attached to a British tabloid where I spent six months. When I came back to Nigeria in 1963, I was appointed the Chief-Sub Editor. At that time, Jose was already the Managing Director. I also went for another course called, Teachers in Journalism. There was also a seminar in 1969 and I was selected for the seminar which was for three months in London. I had barely spent three months at the seminar when I got a call from Babatunde Jose, informing me that I had been made the Editor of Daily Times. I lost my voice and became speechless. He called on a Wednesday and said I was expected to return home on Sunday and resume work. When I reported for work on May 4, 1969, I was welcomed by the staff as the Editor. My only sadness being made the Editor was that the person, who was Acting Editor for about 14 months was a good friend of mine. But in the opinion of the management, he did not meet their expectations. I did not allow that to swell my head. On the other hand, I decided to do my job not minding that some were there years before me. From day one I knew I was going to establish my authority. And I thank God that the judgments I made did not annoy my directors. I was referred to as the last Editor of Daily Times, because the management gave the power to hire and fire. The management had confidence in my ability.

Let me not hide it from you. I did something which I have prayed to God for forgiveness, and I believe he has forgiven me. I gave in to a group of journalists, who I found as favorites. They came to ask me to lead an insurrection against the management. Of course I was part of the management but I yielded to their request. What led to it was the Murtala coup. When the coup happened, the Editor of the paper was not in the office. Alhaji Jose was the one who mounted the type writer to write the story. When the Editor was removed for that offense, the person who was supposed to succeed him, according to the hierarchy, was not made the Editor. The expectation, according to hierarchy, was that the Sunday Editor will step in. But Osoba, who was the Deputy Editor, was made the Editor. That infuriated the staff, because they felt the natural line of succession was not followed. So, I naively led that insurrection which I still regret. I thank God that Alhaji Jose forgave me later in life, because he felt I betrayed him. I deeply regret my role in that incident. It was not that I offended the military government at that time.

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They thought that if we could be the thorns in the flesh of the newspaper leadership , then we would be greater thorns to them. They found that as ready excuse. Those who participated in the first insurrection were the first casualties. Later Alhaji Jose had to go on retirement.

Yes. I became Editor in 1969. Barely two years after I became Editor, the military came to arrest me and Segun Osoba, who was the News Editor then. They came and searched many offices after which we were taken to Number 15, Awolowolo Road, Ikoyi. They did not tell us to make any statement. I did not know what they asked my bosses who were also arrested. Myself and Osoba were asked what we were doing for the paper. Segun and I were put in the same cell while Alhaji Jose and his deputy were put together in a cell or a room. At about 8 pm, we learnt that our bosses had been released. We were released later. Till this moment we did not know the reason for the arrest, but Alhaji Jose later told me that the then Federal Commissioner for Information, Anthony Enahoro, intervened on our behalf. I was afraid then thinking that it could be as a result of the stories I published as an Editor. Alhaji Jose said he did not even know why we were arrested. After then, I became scared but Alhaji Jose said I should not be scared as I did nothing.

I even gave the papers their names. When MKO's newspaper was to be named, our opinions were sought at the meeting by Abiola. As the Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief, I was supposed to be the first to speak, but I allowed others to speak. I did that because I learnt so many lessons from my early fall at Daily Times. At an earlier meeting we had with MKO Abiola which Dele Giwa, Doyin Aboaba, Labanji Bolaji and his lawyer friend from Ibadan attended Abiola said we should suggest possible names for the paper. At that point I remembered that Abiola had told me earlier that he wanted a newspaper that will reflect conviviality, congeniality and cordiality; so, I reminded him about these attributes. On that note I suggested Concord. Abiola immediately said, 'God bless you'. I told him I did nothing magical, that I only got one word out of the three words that he used. That was how the paper came to be named Concord after which we added national to the name.

No. Abiola made up his mind to do that. Then NPN was in government and he wanted a newspaper that will oppose the Tribune. One of the major plans of Abiola was to be in opposition to whatever Awolowo stood for. I did not accept the offer because of what Abiola wanted to do with the paper. I accepted the offer because it gave me an opportunity of going back to the profession that I love. Abiola said a lot of people gave my name to him. Alhaji Fola Ashiru mentioned my name to Abiola. At that time I was into haulage. I was offered various jobs which I rejected, because I had a feeling that the opportunity for me to go back to journalism will come. MKO asked for feasibility studies which I did but he said it was an essay. Abiola called and said, 'Egbon this is an essay'. I told him I am a writer and not an accountant. It was at that point that he knew I also studied at Glasgow. That increased the affinity between us. When we had our subsequent meeting, Abiola had come up with a feasibility study. He informed me that we were going to London to buy the latest machines in newspaper printing. Before that, he had already taken me to a huge warehouse in Mafolouku owned by him and asked what I thought about the place being the corporate office. I said the place was okay. After spending one week to inspect the machines in London, we came back. It was after then that he started talking about employment. Abiola is one man who, in spite of his wealth which was opulent in stature, was very humble. He was always calling me Egbon even if I was few years older than him. I found Abiola's humility quite surprising. Abiola suggested to me the noble idea of getting a woman as a title Editor. I thought about one Lara and Dr. Doyinsola Aboaba, who was the Features Editor of Daily Times. Abiola expressed mixed feelings about Doyin's academic qualification which was more than any other person. Abiola also suggested Dele Giwa, who was then a columnist with Daily Times. After discussing with them, they were disposed to the idea of leaving Daily Times, for a one-man newspaper.

Yes, to an extent. Early in the life of Concord, Abiola told us that the governor of Ogun State, Olabisi Onabanjo, was going to London with a battalion of his lieutenants, including his wife. He said that they were about 30 people. He said we should do a story on that by sensationalizing it. I told him that it was too early for us to start that kind of journalism. I told him to allow us to investigate. He said we should have our way. When we investigated, we found that he was going but that his wife was not going with him. We also found out that only two commissioners were going with him. But Abiola was not interested in that, he wanted something more sensational. He said we should include that his wife was part of the entourage, saying that he was ready to pay in the event that we were sued for libel. Onabanjo sued us for libel eventually after we published it and Abiola paid for the libel. That was the only occasion when the ownership interfered. But the first wife, Simbiat, imposed herself as Project Director and took an

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office at Concord House and wanted to siphon her husband's money through National Concord. The newspaper had a Financial Controller who was Sule Abiola. She got Sule to sign some papers. There were two sets of signatories to Concord account. The A Category was MKO Abiola alone. The B signatories were the Managing Director and any Executive Director. When it got to cheque level, the cheque was passed to me, I questioned it, but was told that it was meant for goods that had not been supplied. I refused doing so. I questioned Sule for doing that but he said he had no option because the claimant was his elder brother's wife. The money involved was millions of Naira. I refused to sign the cheque because I knew the company was in the process of being defrauded. That was me standing up against the deputy ownership of the enterprise. During the third year of my leadership, the woman decided that I could not continue to be a stumbling block to her. She brought a 10-man group. For me not to be in doubt about who brought the men, she led them to my office to beat me up. She knew that MKO had traveled out of the country. While her men were dealing with me in my office, she was asking me if the money I prevented her from getting was my money. People in other offices did not know, only my secretary knew but she could not enter the office she could not come in because Simbiat Abiola was in my office. It was after they left that my secretary came. I packed my books from the office and told the nearest person to me, Doyin Abiola. Simbiat Abiola even accused me of deliberately bringing in Doyin Abiola to be a rival to her in Abiola's home. Doyin saw the injuries on my head, arm and was shocked to see my dress torn. Less than four hours after the beating up at the instance of Alhaja Simbiat Abiola, MKO called me from abroad and said, Egbon I just heard the gory story of what happened to you through the hands of my senior wife'. He apologised and said he was away on an ITT business but would cut the trip short because of the incident. When he got back, he came to me and prostrated begging me to forgive. You can imagine an Abiola doing that with his wealth and opulence. I was humbled by that act. I was humiliated by his wife but I felt humbled by Abiola's response.

I considered the situation because it was obvious that the man wanted me while the wife did not want me. I concluded that if I remained I will constitute a continuing source of discord between husband and wife who had been together for ages. I also remembered that Abiola told me that his wife's father contributed to his education. I prayed to God and observed a period of fast about it. I concluded that I should resign my appointment. That was why I went to see MKO at ITT. I went with my uncle who was the traditional ruler of my town to give him reasons why I should not continue as the Managing Director of Concord. After seeking his forgiveness and compliance for me to leave, he gave my uncle N50,000. Abiola was a good man. He gave me two years pay as I was leaving.

It was not. Those who argued like that had wrong impressions. From the beginning to the end, Concord was not the way these people described it. There were times Concord was even used to oppose some NPN policies. I can tell you authoritatively that during my years in Concord, NPN never used it for anything. I told you that Abiola used it to fight Awolowo and all he stood for. He also used it as the mouthpiece of the NPN whenever it was convenient for him. It is unfortunate that Abiola was poisoned. Abiola was deliberately killed through the poisoned tea.

June 12 story also led to my exit from Daily Champion. At the peak of the June 12 crisis, I sent my Political Editor, Labaran Maku, who is now the Minister of Information, to cover the issues relating to the election and its annulment in Abuja. I purposely sent him there because I had confidence in him. About four weeks after the election, he was sending stories. But there was a particular story which I found credible. The story was about the sanctioning of all the members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council, AFRC. Their investments located in EU and America were threatened as a result of the annulment decision they took. When the story came, I published it against the background of Maku's credibility. I published the story because I knew it was true. Unknown to me my employer and publisher was close to government. The AFRC members summoned him and asked him to fire those behind the story. The publisher asked that I sack Maku but I refused doing so. I told him that Maku wrote the story and never published it. I took the responsibility for publishing the story. I said I was the person that should be sacked and not the reporter. He then said that failure to do that would mean that I am disobeying him. He insisted that I do that or he will fire me. I reluctantly did. So, that was why I said that Abiola's fate also affected. I was placed on suspension until the end of my tenure.

Nigeria's crisis will end through the grace of God. Looking at the body language of the President, it is loud and clear that he is contesting for second term and he is entitled to that. We are in a quagmire. We have inherited a Constitution which was imposed on us by the Abdulsalami Abubakar regime. That Constitution was drafted by Prof. Yadudu. And he started by saying, 'We people of Nigeria'. When did we Nigerians have the chance of drafting or

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voting on the Constitution. That Constitution ought to have been thrown away by former President Obasanjo. But he did not do that. Until we draft a new and acceptable Constitution, we shall live with the tyranny of the Constitution. When we live under the tyranny of that Constitution, we have to accept whichever that comes from it. President Jonathan knows all these but he lacks the courage to face those who put him in power.

**Load-Date:** July 7, 2014

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## **How to Make Our Constitution a People's Constitution - Editors, Others [analysis]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 02, 2012

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**Length:** 1795 words

**Byline:** Clifford Ndijihe

### **Body**

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THEY manage and mentor men and women, who are knowledgeable in all fields of human endeavour. They are usually the force behind the earth-shaking stories that help to re-shape society. But editors are rarely seen.

And their contributions to policy formulation are hardly sought, a neglect that has contributed immensely to getting the nation stuck in the cesspool of socio-economic and political underdevelopment.

Perhaps, the story would have been different if the three arms of government - the executive, legislature and judiciary seek the input of the media, often dubbed as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, in policy formulation, decision making and implementation.

Determined to change the tide, beginning with the on-going constitution amendment exercise of the National Assembly, the Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) Project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the office of the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Dr Reuben Abati, last Tuesday held a parley with editors in Lagos.

The leading media lights in Nigeria and other stakeholders did not disappoint. Speaking at the five-hour programme themed: "Media Dialogue with Editors on the Constitution Amendment Process," held at Sheraton Hotel, they offered thought-provoking suggestions on how to improve the 1999 Constitution and make it a vehicle for the delivery of democracy dividends to the citizenry and enthronement of an egalitarian society.

The editors said the country might continue to wallow in poverty and want, political instability and tension if meaningful adjustments were not made in the provisions of the constitution.

The areas they sought amendment include constitutional guarantee for right to access to information, making media's governance monitoring function legally enforceable, affirmative action and gender issues, youth empowerment and fiscal federalism among others. Media icons at the parley included Editor-in-chief/General Manager of Vanguard Newspapers and President Nigeria Guild of Editors, Mr. Gbenga Adefaye; former Director General of the Nigeria Television Authority, Dr Tonnie Iredia; Attorney General of the Federation and Justice Minister, Mr. Mohammed Adeoke (who was represented by his Special Assistant, Mrs. Stella Aborime); and UNDP Country Director, Mrs. Ade Letkoetje. Also present were Vanguard Daily Editor, Mr. Mideno Bayagbon; The Guardian Acting Editor, Mr. Martins Oloja; Chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council, IPAC, Dr Mohammed

## How to Make Our Constitution a People's Constitution - Editors, Others [analysis]

Shittu; IPAC Secretary, Mr. Emmanuel Mok; Mr. Lanre Arogundade, Mr. Festus Okoye, Daily and Weekend editors of major newspapers in the country as well as representatives of civil society organizations. Speaking at the event, Adefaye urged editors to buy into the constitution amendment process because a good constitution would yield a good press, which in turn would lead to a better society.

Thanking the National Assembly and the President for the Freedom of Information Law, he said the next task now was making the FOI law work. And the surest way of doing this is to put press freedom expressly in the constitution, he said. Adefaye deplored the worsening state of affairs in the country and sought urgent action. He lamented that 52 years after independence, many Nigerians are still squatters in their country.

In like manner, Mrs. Letkoetje assured that the UNDP was committed to assisting in making the constitution amendment process a success by partnering with all stakeholders. She urged the media to keep the issue on the front burner, help the citizenry to make robust participation so that in the end the people would take ownership of their constitution.

Also speaking, Mrs. Aborime, who said the Justice Minister was working on a template that would make the FOI law effective, decried the frequent need to amend the constitution and hoped that the outcome of the current exercise would enrich Nigeria's governance project.

She urged the media to help the government to be accountable to the people in line with provisions of Chapter two of the Constitution. Aborime said the Federal Government was ready to help the media achieve its constitutional responsibilities by making the FOI law effective and ensuring that there was no abuse of power.

On his part, Abati urged the media and the citizenry to take active part in the constitution amendment efforts. "Government is out to ensure that Nigerian citizens determine the amendment. Let's draw attention to what the constitution amendment is all about."

Recalling the controversies that greeted President Goodluck Jonathan's recent suggestion of a single tenure for president and governors and allegations that the ongoing amendment was part of the president's plan to get re-nomination, Abati said the President harboured no such plans.

He urged the media to boost the constitution amendment process and partner with the government to provide leadership and show direction for the citizenry.

Noting that the media was in the forefront of independence struggle and making the Nigerian nation, he said the crucial tasks before the media now include setting positive development agenda that would promote the cause of enlightenment and growth instead of instability.

Relatedly, Iredia, who said he did not really believe in constitution amendment because the country had been amending constitutions since 1922 with little or no results, stressed the need for effective implementation of the Constitution.

Not necessarily dismissing the need to amend the constitution, he said Nigerians need not only constitution amendment but also following the spirit of the amendment by amending their orientation.

Media can't function effectively with shackled hands

Although, the country now has the FOI law, the editors said some specific and crucial amendments in the grand norm were needed to enable the media carry out its watchdog role robustly to the betterment of the country.

Some of the amendments include: constitutional recognition for media/press freedom, relocation of the media's governance monitoring function to make it enforceable, constitutional guarantee of the right of access to information, exclusion of presidential participation in the broadcast media licencing, constitutional recognition for broadcast regulatory body and repositioning the responsibility for licence fee collection and management among others.

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On right of access to information, the media urged "that a constitutional backing for the right of access to information should be included in the proposed new Constitution as a sub-section of the current Section 39. The section should be a comprehensive section containing guarantees for a range of free expression, media freedom and access to information rights."

The media lords lamented that the rights conferred on the media by section 22 of the Constitution were not enforceable.

Section 22 of chapter II (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy) obligates the media as follows: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people."

However, the editors said this right could not be enforced because the whole chapter II of the 1999 Constitution where section 22 is located is non-justiciable.

In a memo prepared by Media Network on the review of the 1999 constitution, which has been sent to the National Assembly, they lamented that given the culture of secrecy and impunity that prevails in the country, journalists have been attacked and press freedom violated in the course of making government accountable to the people. "Recently, six journalists attempting to cover a police visit by a former state governor were barred from their legitimate duty by being locked up in an office in the station.

From Dele Giwa in 1986 to many others in recent times, many journalists have been killed with no clue yet on the assassins. Yet investigative journalism remains a major tool through which journalists could monitor governance and make government accountable to the people as envisaged by the constitution. Indeed, it allows them to work in accordance with the definition of their profession as a public trust with citizens to expose wrongs and promote human rights.

"State media on the other hand are often incapacitated from professionally performing their oversight functions through the mode of appointment of the managers and editors, which leaves little to desire about editorial independence, critical journalism, tenure security and compliance with code of ethics. To the extent that their deserved security is not in place, an attitude of self censorship prevails.

"Against this background, it is worrisome that the obligation by the media to freely monitor governance and make government accountable to the people as provided for in section 22 cannot be legally enforced; a journalist whose right has been violated in the course of ensuring governance accounta-bility cannot seek the protection of the court.

"Also, Section 22 does not impose an obligation on the state or public institutions not to initiate policies and actions that can jeopardize the ability of the media to carry out the responsibility of monitoring governance; it does not declare illegal any state action that prevents the media from acting in accordance with the provision of Section 22 and it does not provide strong protection for state media."

Noting that the foregoing makes a constitutional mechanism to strengthen the watchdog role of the media a key imperative, they canvassed that section 22 be removed from chapter II and be made a section or subsection of Section 39 under chapter IV (Fundamental human rights) to make it possible for the right conferred on the media therein to be legally enforceable.

Identification of issues for the presentation round of amendment - Apr 2012

Request for submission of memoranda - May/June 2012

Retreat to consider memoranda - July 2012

- Public hearing on issues highlighted in memoranda - Oct 2012

Retreat to aggregate pubic views and inputs - Jan 2013

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Drafting of Amendment bill - February 2013

Introduction of the bill to the Senate - Mar 2013

Passage of the bill - June 2013

Passage of the Bill in the state Houses of Assembly - July 2013

Devolution of powers

Creation of more states

Recognition of the six geo-political zones in the constitution

Role of traditional rulers

Local Government

Removing Land Use Act, NYSC Act and code of conduct from the constitution

Fiscal federalism

Immunity clause

Nigerian Police

Judiciary

Executive

Rotation of executive offices

Gender and special groups

Mayoral status for the FCT

Residency and indigene provisions

Electoral reform

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2012

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## Soyinka At 76 - The Making of Kongi [analysis]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

July 11, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 1670 words

**Byline:** Yemi Adebisi

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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He is four years younger than his great contemporary, Chinua Achebe and one year older than John Pepper Clark. It would be recalled that Soyinka received the celebrated Nobel Laurel award in Stockholm, Sweden, 1986, incidentally, the year an equally famous Nigerian journalist, Dele Giwa, first Editor-In-Chief of Newswatch Magazine who was blasted off through the infamous letter bomb.

In the words of his elderly wife, Chief (Mrs.) Laide Soyinka on his (Soyinka's) emergence as the first African Nobel prize winner, she said, "That was the international stamp of authority that he is the King of Literature in Africa, indeed, in the Black World."

Born on July 13, 1934 at Abeokuta, Kongi as he is fondly called by his close colleagues and associates is a great treasure to the generation of world writers and political critics. His natural endowment especially with the fluffy and whitish hair on his head since his days at his early 60s makes a unique representation of the sage.

Though till date, he is like a symbolic representation of global literati, based on the books he has churned out and his rare wealth of knowledge, his prominence in the global political stadia is a standard. He has become a lone voice that can hardly be overruled by any standard in global context. The making of a 'Soyinka' started when he registered as a pupil in Saint Peter Primary School, Ake, Abeokuta, where his father was the headmaster, though got admission to a nearby grammar school in Abeokuta, where late

Rev. Ransome Kuti was the principal but later moved to Government College, Apata, Ibadan. Though raised in a colonial, English-speaking environment, Soyinka's ethnic legacy was Yoruba, and his parents' apparently balanced Christian training with regular visits to the father's ancestral home in 'Isarà, a small Yoruba community secure in its traditions.

He later attended University College, Ibadan, in 1954 for his preparatory university studies where he met his elderly wife, Laide, who was also reading Arts.

He proceeded to University of Leeds where he became an accomplished doctoral degree holder. The United Kingdom began to celebrate Soyinka when he became a dramaturgist at the Royal Court Theatre, London. His love for African culture from birth could not allow him to forget his origin. His dream came through when he was awarded

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a Rockefeller bursary in 1960 for his exceptional brilliance, an opportunity that gingered him to return to Nigeria to study African drama. It was same year he formed a theatre group, The 1960 Mask.

As dramatist, Soyinka has been influenced by several authorities and experts such as, the Irish writer, J.M. Synge, but links up with the traditional popular African theatre with its combination of dance, music, and action. He bases his writing on the mythology of his own tribe-the Yoruba-with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the centre. He wrote his first plays during his time in London, The Swamp Dwellers and The Lion and the Jewel, a light comedy, which were performed at Ibadan in 1958 and 1959 and were published in 1963. Later, satirical comedies are The Trial of Brother Jero with its sequel, Jero's Metamorphosis, A Dance of the Forests, Kongi's Harvest and Madmen and Specialists. Among Soyinka's serious philosophic plays are, apart from The Swamp Dwellers, The Strong Breed, The Road (1965) and Death and the King's Horseman. In The Bacchae of Euripides (1973), he has rewritten the Bacchae for the African stage and in Opera Wonyosi, bases himself on John Gay's Beggar's Opera and Brecht's The Threepenny Opera. Soyinka's latest dramatic works are A Play of Giants (1984) and Requiem for a Futurologist (1985).

Soyinka has written two novels, The Interpreters (1965), a complicated narrative work which has been compared to Joyce's and Faulkner's, in which six Nigerian intellectuals discuss and interpret their African experiences, and Season of Anomy (1973) based on the writer's thoughts during his imprisonment and confronts the Orpheus and Euridice myth with the mythology of the Yoruba. Purely autobiographical works are The Man Died: Prison Notes (1972) and the account of his childhood, Aké (1981), in which the parents' warmth and interest in their son are prominent. Literary essays are collected in, among others, Myth, Literature and the African World (1975).

In a nutshell, Soyinka has published about 20 works: drama, novels and poetry. He writes in English and his literary language is marked by great scope and richness of words which most people have grossly criticised. Most critics have oftentimes said that his use of words is too complex to understand especially for a novice.

Soyinka's poems, which show a close connection to his plays, are collected in Idanre, and Other Poems (1967), Poems from Prison (1969), A Shuttle in the Crypt (1972) the long poem Ogun Abibiman (1976) and Mandela's Earth and Other Poems (1988).

Since 1975 before he returned overseas, Soyinka taught drama in various Nigeria's universities like University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), University of Lagos and University of Ibadan as Professor of Comparative Literature.

In 1964, he formed another theatre group called "Orisun Theatre Company," in which he has produced his own plays and taken part as actor.

His quest for political tranquility began during the Nigeria's civil war when Soyinka appealed in an article for cease-fire. For this he was arrested in 1967, accused of conspiring with the Biafra rebels, and was held as a political prisoner for 22 months until 1969.

Friends and associates of Soyinka have concluded all arrangements to celebrate him for his worth to the world. Hoping that he will not be marooned on an island of the Save Nigeria Group or any other pro-democracy group on the day, Soyinka will again reap symbolic tributes on his birthday, Tuesday July 13, 2010. Apart from other programmes that may hold in his honour, Preemptive, a play written by Niyi Coker and directed by Segun Ojewuyi, both U.S.A-based Nigerian professors, will be premiered at the MUSON Centre. According to information gathered on the internet, an initiative of Lagos-based Zmirage Multi-Media Ltd, the staging of the play has been designed in a way that will invoke many of Soyinka's major plays.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Zmirage, Alhaji Teju Kazeem, the best of the country's drama/film industry, each of which will represent the hero/heroine of Soyinka's works, will glide on the red carpet at The MUSON, to make Preemptive comprehensively dramatise the essence of the great writer and activist.

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"Preemptive is one part of a project that includes an international cultural exchange tour of three countries and an essay competition," Kareem explains. "Project Preemptive focuses on how terrorism and a world polarised along racial, religious and cultural divides are redefining views about the Black Man."

"But the premier is an opportunity to honour our own Nobel laureate. We will provide a galaxy of 76 celebrities on the red carpet, portraying characters from Soyinka's works, as a celebration of the icon's 76 creative years on mother earth."

While celebrated actor and Delta State Commissioner for Culture, Richard Mofe Damijo, is expected to, on the red carpet, play Commander Hyacinth in Soyinka's *From Zia with Love*, uniquely talented actress, Ayo Mogaji, finds a mate in Sidi of *The Lion and the Jewel* fame. Going by the potential in such a match, many theatre lovers would, indeed, want to see Mogaji really play such a role on the stage.

Similarly, Joke Silva, Olu Jacobs, Jimi Solanke and Kola Oyewo have been scheduled to respectively symbolise Sister Rebecca (*Jero's Metamorphosis*), Brother Jero (*The Trial of Brother Jero*) Chief Erinjobi (*Camwood on Leaves*) and Eleshin Oba (*Death and the King's Horseman*).

Others include Bimbo Akintola (*Iyaloja* in *Death and the King's Horseman*), Duro Oni (*Brother Jero*), Ben Tomoloju (*Chume*), Segun Ojewuyi/Don Pedro Obaseki (*Olohunde*), Olumide Bakare (*Baroka*), Tade Ogidan (*Chief Erinjobi*), Segun Arinze (*Salubi* in *The Road*), Victor Olaotan, (*Kongi* in *Kongi's Harvest*) and Norbert Young (*Eman*, in *Strong Breed*).

While the 'mock casting' will bring to memory the plays that made Soyinka one of the greatest writers the world has ever produced, friends of the sage said "although he (Soyinka) has remained indefatigable, still fighting at 76, he has not published any new literary book in recent years. It will be risky to say he has not been writing, really, since creative works are not done in the market place. But apart from his memoirs captured in *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, published some five years ago, and his essays in the *Interventions* series, he has not published a play, a novel or collection of poems in the past seven years or so."

Apart from the fact that his latest published play, *The Beatification of an Area Boy*, was released over 10 years ago, what appears to be his latest celebrated dramatic work, *King Babu*, a morbid satirisation of the late maximum ruler, General Sanni Abacha, which was on stage at the National Theatre till about 10 years ago, has not been published. In poetry, Soyinka's latest published work, *Samarkand and Other Markets I have Known*, is also about eight years old on the shelf.

Like his friend, Achebe, whom he celebrates lavishly in a poem in which he dialogues with the author of *Things Fall Apart* in *Samarkand*, the Nobel laureate has, indeed, been very cold this past decade when it comes to novel making.

Critics observed that essays and regular articles in newspapers and magazines appear to have marginalised the spirit that produced a crack literary flower such as *The Interpreters*.

It is therefore assumed that the move for human freedom appears to top the priorities of Soyinka even as he is growing older. In this Soyinka Season, it is ironical to note that virtually all the living fighters of Nigeria's independence 50 years ago still have to be in the trenches today, fighting for true democracy, good governance and other indices of development.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2010



## 2011 Presidency - IBB and His Presidential Burden [column]

This Day (Lagos)

May 11, 2010 Tuesday

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**Length:** 1763 words

**Byline:** Charles Ajunwa

**Dateline:** Lagos

### **Body**

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The recent declaration by former Military President, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (rtd), that he would contest the 2011 presidential election has generated a wide range of controversies. writes Charles Ajunwa

Seventeen years after stepping aside as a military president, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (rtd), recently declared his interest to contest the 2011 presidential election on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Babangida's declaration has been trailed by criticisms mainly from persons who were aggrieved by his annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election. Babangida ruled Nigeria from August 27, 1985 to August 27, 1993.

Besides the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election won by the late Bashorun MKO Abiola, the killing of a foremost journalist, Mr. Dele Giwa in October 1986 as well as the alleged squandering of \$12.4 billion oil windfall during his eight-year regime, were some of the burdens that IBB has had to grapple with.

While being questioned recently on what he forgot in Aso Rock, 17 years ago that prompted his return move, Babangida said: "Seventeen years ago, when I left Aso Rock, I left so many things that I think I should go and bring back. I left for example, the value of naira. I left again for example, stable price of fuel. I also left a whole lot of reforms and I need to go back and get them back. So, there are lots of things that I left behind that I want to go and pick up for the benefit of ordinary Nigerians."

Before his formal declaration, Babangida had on April 1, 2010, visited former President Olusegun Obasanjo in his Ota Farm in Ogun State. The maverick ex-general told inquisitive newsmen after his meeting with Obasanjo that he was consulting widely adding that at the right time, he would brief Nigerians on his intention to run for the presidency come 2011.

Hear him: "I am still doing some consultations and honestly, I'll will hint you on that when I have finished. I will give you a feedback very soon. But if Nigerians are convinced that I have a contribution to make, surely this is the only country I have and I will do it," Babangida declared.

True to his promise, Babangida on April 10, 2010 at the Benin Airport en route Asaba, Delta State where he was going to commission the Maryam Babangida dual carriage way, the Women Development Center and attend

## 2011 Presidency - IBB and His Presidential Burden [column]

simultaneously attend a lecture organized in honour of his late wife, Maryam, declared his intention to contest the presidential election come 2011 affirming that "the speculation is correct."

However, immediately Babangida declared his interest to contest the 2011 presidential election, 10 civil society groups quickly launched attacks against the former military president by petitioning the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Bello Adeoke (SAN), urging him to implement the recommendations of the late Pius Okigbo Panel Report, which they claimed had indicted Babangida of corruption as well as the mismanagement of the \$12.4 billion Gulf oil windfall.

The civil groups included Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Access to Justice (AJ), Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Center (CISLAC), Nigeria Liberty Forum (NLF), Women Advocates and Documentation Center (WARDC).

Others were Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA), Committee for Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Partnership for Justice (PFJ), Nigeria Voters Assembly (VOTAS) and Center for the Rule of Law (CFR). In a joint petition dated April 7, 2010 the groups implored Adeoke to execute justice on the late Okigbo report.

"We are seriously concerned that since the report was submitted to the then Sani Abacha administration on August 29, 1994, successive governments have failed and/or neglected to act on the report and the former (Olusegun) Obasanjo government reportedly claimed that the report could not be found. To date, the report has not been released to the public and no government White Paper has been adopted on the report. However, we are now in possession of the report, which we are enclosing with this letter," the groups said.

Besides, Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, former Lagos State Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu and some Action Congress (AC) leaders registered their rejection of IBB's presidential bid recently when they made a -U-turn in Benin on their way to 'One Man, One Vote Rally' in Edo State organized by the state governor, Adams Oshiomhole, upon their knowledge of the presence of Babangida at the rally. Analysts have interpreted the dramatic U-turn to mean that they were opposed to Babangida's presidential ambition. Speaking on the historic boycott, Soyinka said he took that decision because he would be uncomfortable in the company of some people present at the event.

"I had received no inclination beforehand about the company; I thought it was entirely an Edo State affair and I had a special relationship with the state. When I found out that the umbrella had been spread to include these people; sometimes if you don't have an umbrella and the rain is beating you hard, you will rather be beaten by the rain than share the umbrella with certain people. I would rather be soaked. So, it became a problem for me quite frankly," Soyinka said.

But Oshiomhole had risen in defence of his decision to invite the former military president to the 'One Man One Vote Rally,' arguing that Nigerians should eschew politics of exclusion to that of inclusion. Oshiomhole said he had no regret over the presence of Babangida at the Edo rally, insisting that participation at the event was open and non-partisan.

The governor said the objective of the forum was to bring people from different political persuasions across the country together with a view to engaging them on how to solve the nation's electoral problems.

"Now, the boycott by those whom you call my friends was for me just unfortunate. It is just a reflection that friends and associates may differ on their evaluation of styles and strategies. I think the position of those who went back was that 'you don't sit with a man who is not convinced about your mission.' I think that was the position taken by those who boycotted the event; that if you are sitting with a man, who in your opinion is not convinced, that it rubishes your presence.

"My own position is that you have invited people precisely because you suspect that all of us are not yet in agreement that the electoral system needs reform. And you must continue to persuade these people. For example, if someone says the Senate President watered down Justice Uwais' report, my argument is, so you will not persuade him to re-look at it. You have resigned your fate. Whether you like it or not, he is the Senate President and you will never make laws without the support of the Senate.

## 2011 Presidency - IBB and His Presidential Burden [column]

"Anyone of us who believes that what the National Assembly is doing is not good enough, the option opens to us that I consider productive is that, that is designed to continue to put pressure on the leadership by the Senate to reflect, to ensure that the amendment reflects the core items of Justice Uwais Report.

"I personally do not believe in politics of exclusion. I believe in politics of inclusion. And when you throw an invitation open, you are not selecting. When people say this person doesn't believe,' I will say okay. It is like going to church and the reverend father says he is walking out because some of the people that have attended the church are not believers. But you go to church precisely because the world is full of sinners. And the duty of the church is to continue to preach sermons, the word of God, to persuade us - sinners, to abstain from sin."

Continuing Oshiomhole said: "The objective was clear: To assemble people across the various political parties, leaders and politicians to renew campaigns for electoral reform, which we called one man, one vote. I don't believe in the politics of exclusion and that was why we threw open the invitation.

"Politics of exclusion is not helpful. Democracy is also politics of tolerance. My trade union training allows me to engage my opponents and not to avoid him and that is the kind of constructive engagement that this political environment deserves. The ultimate is to bring in those who are not yet on board and I restated that it was not a partisan gathering. I respect the judgment of those who boycotted it, but I do not agree with it," he said.

But while the number of opponents of Babangida's ambition has continued to grow, some other individuals and groups have thrown their weight behind his ambition. Among them is the South-west Caucus of the Campaign Network for IBB (CNI). At a meeting in Lagos recently, the group rallied support for Babangida presidential aspiration.

The group, through its National Secretary, Alhaji Jubril Balarabe, said it was now evident that things were working in Babangida favour. "He seems too be the only candidate that is loved and admired by Nigerians for the position of the next president of Nigeria come 2011," CNI said.

Also, following the myriad of criticisms that has trailed Babangida's declaration, the Renaissance Group has also thrown its weight behind Babangida, saying he has the constitutional right to vie for the office. According to the group, issues concerning Babangida should be seen in the right perspective rather than with any parochial interest.

The group's Convener, Bayo Adefila, said the group was worried about the subtle attempt by some entrenched interests in certain quarters to reduce the entire debate about Babangida's candidacy to personality rumble. "While it may not be wrong to look at the personal character of aspiring leaders, the issues must of course be generally appraised, with past contributions to national development as key consideration," Adefila stated.

In the same vein, Babangida's spokesman, Prince Kassim Afegbua, has argued that the negative media reports in recent times to discredit the personal character of his principal, will not prevent or discourage him from testing his popularity during the 2011 presidential election.

Afegbua wondered why those behind the orchestrated media reports against IBB always go into action anytime IBB signifies his intention to run for elective position in the country.

In a statement entitled: "2011: Who Is Afraid of General Ibrahim Babangida?" Afegbua said those attacking the person of IBB are using the Okigbo Report to launch their attacks believing that it indicted him over the 12.4 billion dollars oil windfall between 1991/1992, which he said was not true.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2010



## Why I wrote a book on former President Jonathan - Bolaji Abdullahi

Sunday Trust

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### **Body**

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Bolaji Abdullahi, a former Minister of Youths and Sports Development under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, last year launched a book, On a Platter of Gold: How Jonathan Won and Lost Nigeria. The book has been criticised by some political opponents. In this interview, Abdullahi explained his views about the former president.

Why did you write a book on former President Jonathan?

I wrote the book because I believed that what happened in 2015 was pivotal in the history of Nigeria. It was the first time the opposition party came to power in our history and the first time an incumbent president lost election. It was such a defining moment that I felt it was too important to be allowed to evaporate.

Of course I was more positioned to write the book because I served in the Jonathan government. I was in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) before I joined the All Progressives Congress (APC), so I straddled both worlds. I also have a significant access to many of the key players of both sides at that time, so I felt it was a huge opportunity that shouldn't be wasted.

Since the book launch, you have come under attack by the PDP, especially the Jonathan guys, claiming that you fabricated stories in the book. In their words, the book is a 'tissue of lies.' What's your take on this?

I wouldn't say I came under attack by the PDP, but rather, some of the Jonathan guys. These guys were also not really Jonathan guys because I know them. The individual that had been the most vocal about this was Reno Omokri, who was an SA to the late Oronto Douglas. So he was not even close to the vicinity of all that happened. Secondly, at the point he was dismissing the book the way he did, it had not even come out of the print. He hadn't read it. What I released in form of snippets was what he lagged onto. Where he said I misplaced the sequence of events, I said I did not claim that my book was a Bible or Qur'an. It was a human endeavour after all. But to take the slip in the sequence of events to dismiss a whole book the way he did was not right. As I said, none of the individuals mentioned to have played those roles at the period has come out to deny those roles mentioned in the book. They are all here or in Lagos, they are all alive and I know many of them have read the book because they have spoken to me. Not a single one of them has come out to say he did not attend that meeting. The only person that decided to say he did not play the role I said he played in the book and had threatened to go to court was the former governor of Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko. But the individual I said he pressured to prosecute Buhari at the time of the certificate forgery had come out to say he actually pressured him.

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It is normal and understandable that many of these people did not expect the stories to come out. As far as they were concerned, it has happened and it's gone. But that's why it is important for us to keep history alive. Maybe I shouldn't have done that.

Would you say your action was justified?

The only reason the former governor of Ondo State would want to deny his role is probably because he wasn't proud of the action he took. If he was proud of it, he wouldn't come out to try and deny it. What I'm saying is that it was a role he played in the context of history and an evolving event. It's just like how people talk about Jonathan sacking me as his minister. That was the right thing for Jonathan to do at that time because he needed a politician to help him fight Saraki in Kwara and I was not in a position to do that. That was nothing to regret. I don't think we should try to do a wholesale disclaimer of ourselves. If we played certain roles, we should own up to it. We should ask if our actions were justified in that context. An action justified in a particular context could be unjustified in a totally different context. Context is important, so we shouldn't be ashamed of our actions.

You were involved in a lot of political campaigns in the Jonathan administration. Many say if you had been retained as minister you wouldn't have written the book. Is this true?

I don't know about that. But I think I would still have written the book even if I was retained as minister. People saying this have not read the book. The reason they are saying that is because they are under the assumption that this book was written to attack Jonathan. If they had read the book, they would see that there was no attack on Jonathan whatsoever. The reason they are saying I wouldn't have written the book if Jonathan had retained me as minister is because they think it is from a wrong narrative.

Many people who have actually read the book were pleasantly surprised that rather than attack Jonathan, I actually tried to explain some things that happened at the time to portray him better. For example, one of the major narratives of the opposition's campaign was that Jonathan was very tolerant of corruption. In my book, I tried to explain that he was not tolerant of corruption, but there were factors that wired him in a particular way, and he himself said it. He tried to remain loyal to friendship. If you were Jonathan's friend, he would try not to hurt you. He is a good man. That is one problem, and sometimes in politics, we don't need a good man. He didn't want to hurt people he considered to be friends.

Secondly, Jonathan was vice president at a point and he saw things. For example, a former minister of health was arraigned for corruption under Yar'adua. She was humiliated and sacked, but eventually, the court did not find her guilty; but she had already been disgraced. She was one of the finest minds in this country. That's why Jonathan would always say that those who shout loudest about corruption are actually the most corrupt. Maybe he took it too far, and that again led to paralysis, such that when he ought to take certain actions, he could not.

Also, he had a personal experience of people writing that he did things when he knew he didn't do any of such. So when you told him that a person was corrupt, why wouldn't he think that it's the same treatment being meted out on him? This made him very reluctant and willing to stay on the side of the accused, and that was interpreted as him condoning corruption. So it wasn't a book about him sacking me, it had nothing to do with that.

After the book launch, has former President Jonathan gotten in touch with you? If he did, what was his take on it?

No, he didn't call me. But we spoke before I finished the book. I tried to interview him, but I think the experience of his earlier engagements with my friend, Olusegun Adeniyi deterred him. When Adeniyi's book came out, he didn't like the way it presented him (Jonathan) even though I don't see anything wrong in Olusegun's book. So I think that coloured his relationship with me in terms of whether he should grant me an interview or not. He was disposed to it, but eventually, maybe some people convinced him that he couldn't trust me and my intentions. Since the book was launched he has not talked to me, but he is still my boss.

Which people have reached out to you concerning the book?

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Many of them have called me to say if any person denies what is in the book, they will testify. But if you read the book carefully, you would see that where I could avoid anybody's name, I did. This is because it is still a very recent event and many people still want to keep their relationship in politics naturally. So a lot of the information I used, I did without identifying the sources although I have my sources and notes. I knew that this book was bound to generate controversy, but every single thing I claimed here, I can back it up.

Your book is seen as one of the most critical reviews of an administration in recent times. What did it take to write it?

More than anything else, when a ***journalist*** writes a book, it shows. One of the basic elements of our training is: don't be the story and don't make yourself a part of the story. And that's why you can't find a single line that references me or refers to me in this book, even though I was an active participant in many of the events. By taking yourself out of the story, it gives you a vintage point. It enables you to also see things in 360 degrees without implicating your personal sentiment and all that, and therefore, try to achieve a level of objectivity, which is relatively high.

I think my background in journalism has helped me in writing the book. It was a tough assignment that took me to many countries because many of the individuals are no longer in Nigeria, so I had to chase them down to get their stories. If you check my book shelf, you can see piles of notebooks. Most of them are interviews I had to do and transcribe, so it was a lot of work. It took me two years to write this book; but in the end, I think it's about the reception. It's not a money-making thing, but I'm still hoping and praying and fasting that I'll make money out of it (chuckles).

So far, I think the reception is good, and the kind of feedback I get from people reading the book gives me great satisfaction.

I spent quite a lot of money, apart from the travels. The printing wasn't done in the country, if you look at the quality of the print. So it cost a lot of money because I wanted to produce a world class book. I don't think any amount of money can compensate the grueling work of writing. Nothing terrifies like a blank screen staring back at you, waiting to be filled. Sometimes I sit here for almost 14 hours, trying to finish a chapter. It's very difficult.

What were the challenges you faced? Did backing out ever cross your mind?

Interestingly, it did. I'm surprised you asked this question. After writing the first two chapters, I just wanted to give up because the story was not coming together the way I had hoped it would. I realised I had a lot of field work to do that would take my time, money and all that. I would meet people and they would say let's meet tomorrow. Don't forget that I'm no longer a young reporter. I was a former minister so it was difficult for me going to somebody's house and waiting at the gate.

But in-between, I wrote another book when I abandoned that one. I wrote a book for young adults, called Sweet Sixteen. It's a fiction, so I didn't need to go looking for people. When I finished writing this book, I felt joy in my spirit when young people came to me and said they liked the book.

There was a day I visited my children in their school and some students came to me with their ragged copies of Sweet Sixteen and they said, 'Thank you Mr. Bolaji for this book.' After seeing all that, and of course, after the initial excitement, I began to say I could do that one and finish it. That's how I went back to writing On A Platter of Gold.

Your use of language in the book is quite elevated. Many didn't have an idea you write so well. Who are your role models in the literary world?

Many of them are dead now. I think people who say they are surprised by the kind of language in the book probably didn't know my background as a writer. Even in journalism, I'm more of a writer than a reporter. I believe that how you say things is more important than what you say. I'm one of those people who practise what is called poetic prose. I believe that language can approximate sound and images. With language, you can convey sounds and images and make people see what they are reading in their heads. Using language to paint pictures is something I

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enjoy doing tremendously. That's why you spend hours polishing only one sentence to make it sound right and communicate what you want it to communicate.

I have read great writers who have mastered the use of language in a particular way. Of course, Wole Soyinka is my hero in terms of how his language is used. When I encounter people who say Soyinka is difficult to read, I don't understand what they are saying because for me, that's someone who has mastered the use of language in creating images. Ben Okri is another amazing human being. And in journalism, my heroes while growing up were Dan Agbese, Dele Momodu, Yakubu Mohammed, Ray Ekpu, Dele Giwa. These were people ahead of us and I looked up to them.

I actually think I'm better than some of them now. I always believed that the best way to learn how to write is to read. I think I benefitted from that tremendously.

Till this day, there are some people you read and you ask yourself how they did it. There's a guy called Edmond Burke, a South African writer. I can't remember the title of the book. He said, 'Life is a sexually transmitted disease.' I threw away that book because of how incredible it was.

What message do you want people to take away from this book?

The most important message I would like people to take away from my book is that we have come a long way as a country. We have done some things we shouldn't have done and we have also made progress. That is one important message I would like people to take away. Also, I would like people to understand and have the opportunity to view new events in the light of previous events. It helps to provide a context. Some things are happening now, and I wonder why those things are happening. Where will it lead to? You are trying to make sense out of some things that apparently appear senseless.

I want people to treat this as a book of history that can be used to provide a greater insight into all the events that happened at that time and use it to interpret unfolding events.

As a journalist, do you think the media has done enough to preserve history, especially when it comes to politics?

I think the first thing to do when you want to have a sense of history in any country is to look at the media because they record history in real time. They capture events as they occur. Unfortunately, many of us have also lost the sense of significance of our role in history, forgetting that where a journalist distorts information, it goes down as one of the back cloths of history. Future generations will look at that and take them as facts. That's how important the work journalists do is. I think Nigerian journalism has done so much in the promotion of Nigerian democracy. I think the struggle for democracy was kept alive by the Nigerian media, no matter who else wants to take the credit. Even the activists need the media to project their ideologies and activities to make the world see what is going on. I think the Nigerian media has come a long way and we should be proud of ourselves and the roles we are playing.

What have you been up to since the book was released?

Things are happening, whether you are a part of it or you are observing it. A woman who just came out of the labour room will tell you never again, but after a few weeks, she will start painting her face again and getting ready for the next baby. We are like that too. Writing is also a kind reproduction. When you try to squeeze a story out of yourself, you know it can be a painful process but not as bad as labour, obviously. It is the same feeling you get. Once you are done you tell yourself never ever again, but after a while you start telling yourself, 'that's a good story,' and you'd want to write again. So it depends on what we are doing next and the challenges life will throw at us.

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## BOOKS OF Revelation

The Sun (Nigeria)

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### Body

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In Mike Awoyinfa's memorable tribute to Dimgba Igwe, a tribute that brought tears to the eyes of many readers, he, had written, among other emotional things

The post BOOKS OF Revelation appeared first on The Sun News.

In Mike Awoyinfa's memorable tribute to Dimgba Igwe, a tribute that brought tears to the eyes of many readers, he, had written, among other emotional things, about books he bought for him, while he was in Ipswich, London, to attend his son's Master degree graduation ceremony. It was there that the tragic news of Dimgba's death was broken to him.

At the moment, they have become books which, to all intents and purposes, to use a common English cliché, Dimgba will never get to read.

They include: Thurston Clarke's JFK's Last Hundred Days, Richard Branson's The Virgin Way and Desmond Tutu's God Is Not A Christian. "He was so excited," Awoyinfa noted in the tribute. "He was waiting for the books. He loved books. Now, the evil forces have brought him to book."

In an emotional chat with Education Review, last Tuesday, Awoyinfa made mention of the books while expressing his regrets that Dimgba, his twin-brother from a different mother, will never get to read those books.

"On the eve of his death, that is, a day before he died, I had told him the books I bought for him," Awoyinfa said, matter-of-factly. "He was so excited. He was looking forward to receiving them. I mean, the joy of our traveling is the books we buy. He was looking forward to getting these books. But it is very sad that he will never get to read them."

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His mention of the books he buys from big-time bookshops in the course of their travels, or, he buys for Dimgba, as in this case, makes you to ask how they find time to read, given their very busy schedules. You start with him first before zeroing in on Dimgba. "Well, it depends on how a book engages me," he says. "On the day before Dimgba died, I was reading a book on Mike Tyson, *The Undisputed Truth*. It is his autobiography. The book so engaged me so much that all the projects I aimed at doing and the chapters that I intended writing during the holiday, I didn't have time for them.

How Awoyinfa and Dimgba read and write

"I read and read and read. I am a Mike Tyson's fan, as bad as he is. He's my hero; I have written so much about him. The book gave me an opportunity to want to explore some things I didn't know about Mike Tyson. I was bent on finishing that book before this tragedy struck. So it all depends on how interesting the subject is. If the subject is very interesting, I start from the beginning. But if it is not, I select from relevant chapters because I don't have time. Time is very precious. I don't have time for fiction. I wished I have time for that. Since I am in the business of biography writing, I must see what others have written and if a story interests me then I begin to follow the style and know what it is that interests me so that I can also adapt. Usually, whatever I write is influenced by what I read."

"I can read from the back or middle of a book. But Dimgba hardly does that. If he is determined to read any book, he starts from the beginning to the end. He is very, very meticulous about reading. The subjects that interest him are the hard issues, memoirs of people like Hilary Clinton. Anything on Hilary Clinton, he would read. The same with any book by reputed investigative ***journalist*** writing on any subject they have investigated, behind-the-scenes, you know. Those are the things that interest him. He researches a lot. He is a very, very intelligent guy. Take Dimgba on any subject, he doesn't need to prepare. He will always have something to say."

As with their intellectual/literary "inputs" (reading) so is with their outputs (writings). There is no disputing the fact that voracious reading has made Dimgba and Awoyinfa prodigious and prolific writers. The evidence is there, right from their first book, *The Art of Feature Writing*, to their last one just published, on their interviews with a collection of world editors, fifty of them.

"That book is already at the wharf and we are clearing it," he tells you. "It was printed in India. Most companies in England print in China and India. They give you high quality and world-standard printing. It is a book that took us about ten years to write. In the course of our IPI (International Press Institute) trips, we made sure we looked for big names in journalism and big editors. Whenever any editor comes to the conference to give a lecture or to participate in a symposium, our duty is to pin the editor down after his lecture and ask journalism-oriented questions about his life and times in journalism."

"The bigger the newspaper the bigger our interest. We interviewed editors from New York Times, Chicago Times, Tribune, Washington Post, New York Post, New York Newsday, The Times of London, The Sun of London, Financial Times, virtually every newspaper in the world. All of them are represented in that book. That book should be the Bible of journalism to anyone who has interest because it talks about the experiences, the memoirs of the ***journalist***, from 50 journalists all over the world. It is one book that will really make us proud. Anyone who wants to reach great heights in journalism has to get that book because that book is full of experiences and nothing can beat experience. Experience is the best teacher. And here you have 50 celebrated journalists from all over the world, including Nigeria, sharing their experiences in journalism, telling you the adventures they embarked on in their search for news. I think it is a treasure trove for every ***journalist***.

"In Nigeria, we featured Alhaji Babatunde Jose and Segun Osoba who is the best investigative ***journalist*** ever in the history of Nigeria. Then the first Nigerian ***journalist*** to win a Pulitzer prize, ***Dele*** Olojede, is there. Bayo Onanuga, the MD of The News is also there. Nigeria is ably represented by the best. Of course, there is the publisher of ThisDay, Nduka Obaigbena. He also has a very inspiring story to tell. Some people are asking: why is Mike Awoyinfa and Dimgba Igwe, not featured in the book? I said how can we be featured in our own book? It is very, very unethical. But the crowning jewel of that book is Harold Matthew Evans (editor of the British The Sunday Times, 1967 to 1981).

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"He is the man who is the editors' editor. He is number one **journalist** of all times in England. He was sacked by Rupert Murdoch, the world-famous publisher and media mogul. Or, he rather resigned when he could no longer live with what he perceived as his constant interference in the running of the paper. Thereafter, he went over to USA to really rebuild his life. He wrote books. The American Century is one of the books he wrote – the book on the history of America from the perspective of inventors, people who made America. It is a great book. I have it in my library. Harold Evans is a man that every **journalist** should emulate. He is the Mandela of journalism, a professional editor. We met him and interviewed him. His interview is in that book.

### Fashola's Biography

"There is also the biography on Fashola, the governor of Lagos State. It is a book, I co-authored, as usual with Dimgba. That one is ready and is with Fashola. And, I am sure he will soon approve it. He's been very busy. He didn't have time to go through it. But I heard he is going through it and in the next couple of weeks or months the book should be out.

"That man is a case study in good leadership. He is a man that people should study his leadership style. His story is very, very inspiring. He is a man who was born and his father initially rejected him. But later he came back to accept the child. He met the mother in the United Kingdom. From that background he studied very hard and grew up to become a governor. Fashola's story is a very inspiring one. It wasn't that he was a genius from the beginning. There was a time he wasn't even doing well at school and his father threatened that he was going to withdraw him from school and make him go and learn mechanic job. But that was the turning point in the boy's life when he felt he was blowing it. He re-engineered his life and from there he became a better person.

"All our lives it's been book, book and Dimgba was my writing partner. He was my editor. We really complemented each other. We've come a long way from the days of **Dele Giwa**. I mean, our style synchronises with each other. He knows where I am coming from and I know where he is coming from. He complements my weakness and I complement his."

### Inside the books Awoyinfa bought for Dimgba

That brings us to a very important question: what is inside the books that Awoyinfa bought for Dimgba, the books he will never get to read? Let's start with JFK's Last Hundred Days, by Thurston Clarke. Like Awoyinfa and Igwe, Clarke, educated at Yale University, Columbia University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, is an American historian, author and **journalist**. But talking about his book, it is one that Dimgba who is said by Awoyinfa to love books on hard issues like politics and political figures would have loved to read, from cover to cover.

The book focuses, among other issues, anecdotal events and incidents, on President JF Kennedy's efforts and achievements towards ending the Cold War between the East, represented by Communist Russia and China and the West, represented by USA and its allies, passing the Civil Rights Act and withdrawing US troops from Vietnam. One of the fascinating accounts is his grief at the death of his infant son, Patrick, a grief which drew him closer to his wife, Jackie, and led to his renewed determination to be a good husband and father, and his battle with his ill health. The book provides us also with interesting narratives and encounters on the widespread and enduring grief following his assassination, a grief much like the one we are going through right now on the untimely death of Dimgba Igwe.

But believe it or not, that is The Virgin Way. So says Sir Richard Nicholas Branson, the English business magnate and investor, founder of Virgin Group, which comprises more than 400 companies, the man who dropped out of school at the age of sixteen and never cared to go back, the man, one out of four Britons, according to polls, is said to have chosen as their "dream boss."

The book he is said to have written without reading any business or motivational book, is filled, not only with his life-time experiences, but also with memorable statements like: «Turn off that laptop and iPhone and get your derrière out there»; «Delegate and spend more time with your family»; "if you hire the wrong person at the top of a company, they can destroy it in no time at all»; "Leadership is not about you. It's about inspiring and enabling others

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to do their absolute best together to realize a meaningful and rewarding shared purpose. Be BRAVE. Delegate. And spend more time with your family"; "You'll never have to think outside the box if you refuse to let anyone build one around you"; «A business is simply coming up with an idea to improve other people's lives and, hopefully, when you have done that, more money will come in than goes out."

He does not have what you can call an office, he tells you, where he can sit, like other bosses do, and workers would come to see him for one reason or the other, or at his invitation or summon. Rather he prefers going round his businesses to see them where they work as to know their problems, challenges and progress.

Strong leaders, Branson counsels in the book, "must have vision, creativity and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to influence others to follow and support them in the challenges of moving an organization into uncharted and often highly risky territory."

Now, here comes this one that would have made you throw a few glances at Dimgba, perhaps, if you saw the book with him: God Is Not A Christian. A collection, by John Allen, Archbishop Desmond Tutu's biographer, of his speeches, the one from where the title of book was chosen is from a speech he delivered in Britain, to leaders of different faiths during a mission to the city of Birmingham in 1989.

"My first point seems overwhelmingly simple: that the accidents of birth and geography determine to a very large extent to what faith we belong," he argues. "The chances are very great that if you were born in Pakistan you are a Muslim, or a Hindu if you happened to be born in India, or a Shintoist if it is Japan, and a Christian if you were born in Italy. I don't know what significant fact can be drawn from this - perhaps that we should not succumb too easily to the temptation to exclusiveness and dogmatic claims to a monopoly of the truth of our particular faith. You could so easily have been an adherent of the faith that you are now denigrating, but for the fact that you were born here rather than there.

"My second point is this: not to insult the adherents of other faiths. We must acknowledge them for who they are in all their integrity, with their conscientiously held beliefs; we must welcome them and respect them as who they are and walk reverently on what is their holy ground, taking off our shoes, metaphorically and literally. We must hold to our particular and peculiar beliefs tenaciously, not pretending that all religions are the same, for they are patently not the same. We must be ready to learn from one another, not claiming that we alone possess all truth and that somehow we have a corner on God.

"Surely it is good to know that God (in the Christian tradition) created us all (not just Christians) in his image, thus investing us all with infinite worth, and that it was with all humankind that God entered into a covenant relationship, depicted in the covenant with Noah when God promised he would not destroy his creation again with water. Surely we can rejoice that the eternal word, the Logos of God, enlightens everyone - not just Christians, but everyone who comes into the world; that what we call the Spirit of God is not a Christian preserve, for the Spirit of God existed long before there were Christians, inspiring and nurturing women and men in the ways of holiness, bringing them to fruition, bringing to fruition what was best in all. We do scant justice and honor to our God if we want, for instance, to deny that Mahatma Gandhi was a truly great soul, a holy man who walked closely with God. Our God would be too small if he was not also the God of Gandhi: if God is one, as we believe, then he is the only God of all his people, whether they acknowledge him as such or not. God does not need us to protect him. Many of us perhaps need to have our notion of God deepened and expanded. It is often said, half in jest, that God created man in his own image and man has returned the compliment, saddling God with his own narrow prejudices and exclusivity, foibles and temperamental quirks. God remains God, whether God has worshippers or not.

"This mission in Birmingham to which I have been invited is a Christian celebration, and we will make our claims for Christ as unique and as the Savior of the world, hoping that we will live out our beliefs in such a way that they help to commend our faith effectively. Our conduct far too often contradicts our profession, however. We are supposed to proclaim the God of love, but we have been guilty as Christians of sowing hatred and suspicion; we commend the one whom we call the Prince of Peace, and yet as Christians we have fought more wars than we care to remember. We have claimed to be a fellowship of compassion and caring and sharing, but as Christians we often

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sanctify sociopolitical systems that belie this, where the rich grow ever richer and the poor grow ever poorer, where we seem to sanctify a furious competitiveness, ruthless as can only be appropriate to the jungle."

The post BOOKS OF Revelation appeared first on The Sun News.

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2014

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## **Ex-police chief: Dele Giwa's murder probe marred by interferences from 'high places'**

The Nation (Nigeria)

October 26, 2015 Monday

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**Length:** 81 words

### **Body**

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Chris Omeben, a retired police chief, who investigated the murder of renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, said yesterday that the high profile investigation was marred by interferences from "high places". Giwa, the founding Editor-in-Chief of Newswatch, was killed by a parcel bomb at his Ikeja, Lagos, residence, on October 19, 1986, 29 years ago. Omeben, a []

The post Ex-police chief: Dele Giwa's murder probe marred by interferences from 'high places' appeared first on The Nation Nigeria.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2015

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## **Victory At Dawn - a Night of Horror Recalled [opinion]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

July 14, 2015

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**Length:** 2351 words

**Byline:** Ademola Adedoyin

### **Body**

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As another holy month of Ramadan made its spiritually majestic and overwhelming arrival weeks back, it became imperative to reflect on the event of July 14 last year; a most gory occurrence in a month when men and women of conscience seek reconciliation with their Maker; a most violent and bloody event perpetrated by some sons of Lucifer who had long lost their souls.

It was blood bath at dawn; a most horrendous and evil act by some sadistic servants of Satan. Early that morning, these servants of Satan on the loose made their way to my home.

It was the late Dele Giwa, that unforgettable journalism icon and engaging columnist, who described Lawrence Anini called The Law, who gave Benin City and environs one hell of a time in the mid 80s as 'Son of a Dog'. Those who visited my home at Mainland Park Estate (a.k.a. Pentagon Estate), Mowe, on this particular date last year when the Ramadan broke into half - the 15th and left in its wake tears, blood and sadness were, indeed, sons of wolves.

For, come to think of it, yes truly dogs can be nasty, murderous even; but they can also be reasonable, friendly, loyal and truly so. These sons of wolves that shattered the peace of my home at dawn a year ago were animals in human skin, as the inimitable Fela Anikulupo Kuti would have put it - they were blood thirsty, truly predatory carnivorous animals, irrational and without conscience or soul.

The event of that early morning left me wondering about the human persona. From all indications, these evil guests at dawn were Moslems or knew one or two things about Islam. My wife who speaks impeccable Hausa confirmed that these blood cuddling youngsters had their conversation in Fulfude (Fulani language) with a mix of Hausa words. Given such background, one is still left wondering about the depth of moral depravity that would make young men from such cultural milieu, to choose the Holy month when men and women of conscience were seeking reconciliation with their Maker and atoning for transgressions to perpetrate evil and visit mayhem on any creature at all.

The gang that ruptured the serenity of my abode one year ago was not just a robbery one, but a murderous group of young men who have no values for the sanctity of human lives and whose desire for material possession made no room for any modicum of compassion or guilt. They were a pack of wolves at their most sadistic and iniquitous rage. These professionals from hell brought their tools of nefarious trade with which they neatly cut the burglary proof iron bars on the windows of my kitchen.

## Victory At Dawn - a Night of Horror Recalled [opinion]

That done, they made their way into my sanctuary. With nobody in the guest room downstairs, they came upstairs without any qualm. Until two weeks before then, my intellectual sparring partner Yoruba philosopher and mother, the 92 year-old Yeye Oba, Alhaja Memunat Ahinke Adedoyin, our guest for almost two months, was the occupant of the guest room, passing the night there either alone or at times, with her granddaughter, Temilade. That this event occurred in her absence has left me grateful to the good Lord. One can still not imagine the old woman witnessing her son been shot in the chest at point blank range at dawn. Accessing the rooms upstairs was made easy by the fact that we rarely bolt the entrance leading to the living room and bedrooms upstairs. While one snored away, awaiting the clock to rouse one from slumber by 4.30am for the sahour (early morning meal and salat during Ramadan), the evil gang had made their inroad into the children's room upstairs. It must have been about a quarter to 4.00am. From the children's room, they seized our housemaid and led her at gun point to the master bedroom. What followed was a most horrendous and dastardly act straight from the heart of the most sadistic soul.

The five man team entered my room where my wife and our two little boys - Babawamide and Oloruntooni - and yours sincerely were deeply in slumber. It was the penetrating ray of light directed into my eyes from their torch light that roused me from sleep. Half awake and half asleep, I leapt out of bed and with a lame sleepy voice I muttered, "Who is this?" That was it. Within the split of a second, one of the gang members responded with a volley of gunshots straight into my chest.

The devastating impact of the hot lead in my right chest threw me up and landed me back on my bed. Sleep took a flight. And horror stepped in. Blood gushed out as you would have water gushing from a broken pipe. My body quivered and trembled in quick successions and involuntarily; the pace of my breathing raced faster. In all this, I heard a staccato of conversations by the marauding beasts and my wife's cry of agony saying repeatedly: Lahila ila lahu, you have shot my husband, lahila ila lahu, you have killed my husband.

As seconds rolled into minutes and my bed was turning into a river of blood, I had to feign death. I breathed heavily and held my breath. The evil guests, now convinced I had given up the ghost covered my face with our duvet and turned their satanic attention to my wife. Only two words were clear: gold, money. They said this repeatedly as they ransacked the house like professional robbers that they were. They emptied every pocket, raided every drawer, looted all watches, collected all monies... ten minutes, 20 minutes ... I was still bleeding, getting weaker, but through God's mercy, still conscious and mentally alert.

About twenty five or so minutes into their operation, they hit the gold mine literally and metaphorically; in one of the drawers of the wardrobes, they found madam's box of trinkets. Even without understanding the meaning of the words they were exchanging, it was obvious they were elated; happy that they have made a haul. They screamed at Madam and threatened to shoot her dead for not telling them early about the hidden treasure. Madam pleaded with them to show mercy. They led her out of the master bedroom, and as I guessed correctly, to her bedroom. There they ransacked the wardrobes and took her niece's laptop and other valuables. Meanwhile, my bleeding continued and I felt life draining out of me. But for reasons that defied human logic, I had become supremely confident that it was not going to be my last day; that I was going to survive the ordeal.

I kept telling myself: "Ademola, it is not your last day, you have not fulfilled your destiny." I remained conscious and mentally alert even though by now, I was sleeping on a bed soaked totally with my blood.

And I knew the bandits would soon vanish. Having made great fortunes, the next logical thing was to scram with their loot. I asked God to let them leave without wrecking further havoc. Suddenly, there was cold silence; it could be cut with a knife. I knew they were gone and was relieved that there were no other gun shots. But where are my wife and the children and other members of my household? Have they led them away or locked somewhere? Since He is a merciful God, He never fails to provide succour even at the most difficult times. The saving grace He provided at that critical point was through my mobile phone. Although they had collected all phones in the house, my two mobile phones were underneath my pillows and having shot me as soon they came in and with my bed drenched in blood, the idea of checking the underneath of my pillows for any items became far remote. They left without my phones.

### Victory At Dawn - a Night of Horror Recalled [opinion]

Convinced that they had gone and still conscious and alert, I reached for my phone and put a call across to my brother and friend, Yusuph Olaniyonu, the then Ogun State Commissioner for Information and Strategy and now Special Adviser on Media to the Senate President. Obviously still going through the sahour routine, Alhaji Olaniyonu picked my call at the first ring.

I told him the gory tale and that I needed policemen in the Estate immediately to lead me to the Hospital if I was to be saved from dying. Yusuph did exactly that. Bless him O Allah. My next move was to come out of my room to go in search of my family even though I was soaked in the pool of my blood. With Madam's room left scattered and the door left ajar, I made for the children's room where I found the door locked and the key left there for whoever may come to rescue the helpless souls. I opened the door. My wife screamed, she thought she had seen a ghost. She was so sure it was either I was dead or about to give up. She could not imagine that her husband could still have any energy left to walk out of the bed, not to talk of coming out of the room to rescue them. I calmed her down and assured her it was her husband in flesh and truly so, in blood.

Again, my timely act also manifested God's mercy upon my household. In the room before I came to open the door, my wife, convinced that the marauders had escaped, had made to scale the window and jump down from the first floor bedroom to call on neighbours to rescue her husband before he gives up.

Our then nine year old daughter, Temilade pleaded with mummy not to take such risk as she was going to hurt herself. Mummy insisted she was going to do just that. The little girl gave up and urged mummy to be careful in jumping down. She was about to do that when I flung the door open. A two minute delay could have proved fatal as no one could predict what would have been the consequence of such risky endeavour.

It was in this state of confusion, uncertainty, fear and multiple injuries in my chest and neck that my entire household accompanied me to the Redemption Health Centre at the Redeemed Camp. My wife drove like she was racing to escape from hell. She demonstrated courage that was rare for a lady. I urged her to take it easy as I was alright and would be well. By then it was well past 4.00am. May Allah's mercy continue to be upon her and her offspring. The management and staff of Redemption Health Centre deserve special praises for their humanness, professionalism, civility and devotion to duty. If health institutions in Nigeria are run like it is done at that centre, many souls would be saved from avoidable deaths. At that centre, Daddy, G. O., as Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye is affectionately called by all, practises what he preaches. Bless him and his Godly works even more O Lord.

For my extended family under the leadership of our Olori Ebi, Imam Adebayo Ibrahim Ali, and Mummy, your love, prayers and assurances made all the difference. At that low period of one's existence when some could cavalierly choose to hit a man that was already on the ground the more, they stood by me insisting whatever happened to a man was divine and destined and for a purpose. Daddy insisted armed robbers could strike and do strike even in the most secured of places. Bless my loving family and continue to deepen our love and togetherness O Allah. What about my friends, many of whom I am not sure if to describe as friends or brothers? What about colleagues who stood solidly by us throughout our ordeal like the rock of Gibraltar?

How does one thank a friend, a brother and now my boss, my Chairman - Dr Olatunde Ayeni sufficiently. On reading my text informing him of the unfortunate incident, the business icon put a call across to me immediately and requested to know the state of my health and the situation with my family.

In a demonstration of brotherly love and kindness that only the Good Lord can reward, Dr Ayeni directed that my family be relocated to another apartment immediately. May he and his generations continue to receive God's mercy. How can one remember this incident without mentioning Mr. Austin Avuru, the Managing Director of Seplat Petroleum and Chief Tunde Afolabi, the Executive Chairman of Amni Petroleum Development Company.

Not just that their generous donations helped in offsetting my huge medical expenses; particularly at Reddington Hospital and abroad, their assurances that they were ready to commit whatever it would take to keep me alive was a soothing balm and a psychological therapy at that most trying and uncertain times.

### Victory At Dawn - a Night of Horror Recalled [opinion]

Then my friends, my brothers, how do I start thanking you. Stand up for recognition, Olayinka Aroyehun and his wife, Arinola. This brother from our second mum from whose chest flows milk of human kindness demonstrated brotherly love.

For this kind hearted soul, no amount was too much to bring a victim of such attack to perfect health; particularly when that victim is Mola Ishola. God will continue to reward your kindness as He has always done, Abefe. Then my twin brother and my soul mate, Zik Zulu Okafor and his wife, our own adorable Adora. How can you thank enough a brother who is ready to go to the end of this world in search of whatever would be needed to restore me to perfect health. His writing on his Facebook wall was most touching and tears - inducing. Zulu coordinated efforts to get friends to rally round to ensure my survival and he discharged himself creditably. He practically suspended every other thing to ensure I accessed the best medical treatment available. May the Good Lord continue to deepen your joy and never fails to continually give you victory over adversaries.

My Good friend and brother, the sports entrepreneur, Taye Ige was wonderful. Up to now, he has not relented on how to ensure I recover fully and became fully fit again. May you continue to score critical goals in all aspects of your worthy life. Same prayer goes to my Ichie as I fondly call him, Chuddy Oduenyi, Nigerian's Public Relations lead player and remarkable friend. Chuddy's support and his many trips to Redemption Health Centre was the stuff good friendship is made of. God will preserve you in good health for many more decades in your service to our profession and to humanity.

Most important and deserving of the most profound gratitude and appreciation is the Almighty God. God assured me July 14, 2014 was not my last day and He kept His promise. He assured me it was a new dawn for me: The arrival of my Victory at Dawn; a rebirth. I claim it. I cannot thank you enough, God of Miracles.

Ademola Adedoyin, a **journalist**, writer and Public Relations Practitioner wrote in from, Ikeja, Lagos

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2015

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## **Insecurity in Nigeria - The Legal Challenge [document]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 18, 2014

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**Length:** 2467 words

**Byline:** Femi Falana

### **Body**

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Being the paper delivered by

at the seventh annual Emeritus Professor D.A. Ijalaie SAN Distinguished Personality Lecture at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

**INTRODUCTION:** A former American Ambassador, Mr. John Campbell, has predicted that the Nigeria would not survive the 2015 General Election on account of unprecedented political violence . Not a few other analysts have also foretold that the insurgency raging in the north east region would lead to the balkanization of the nation. I am however convinced that the predictions of disintegration of the Republic will not come to pass because of the resolve of imperialism and its local lackeys to keep Nigeria together to facilitate the reckless exploitation of her abundant resources.

The security challenges facing the nation include armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, terrorism etc. In spite of official assurances from the managers of the neo-colonial State to guarantee law and order it is indisputable that the territorial integrity of the nation has never faced a greater threat than now since 1914.

In examining the topic of our discourse we shall review the genesis of the menace of terrorism and its threat to the corporate existence of the nation. We shall conclude by submitting that insurgency cannot be defeated without separating religion from the State and without addressing the crises of poverty, illiteracy and youth unemployment in the country.

It is pertinent to recall that the Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha juntas were associated with terrorist attacks of political opponents through state-sponsored bombing, assassination and arson. The late Chief Gani Fawehinmi SAN was almost killed in 1987 for demanding for the prosecution of the terrorists who killed a prominent journalist, Dele Giwa by a parcel bomb.

The era equally witnessed the mock trial and execution of military officers who were implicated in phantom coups. Cultist groups were funded on the campuses to deal with radical lecturers and students. Upon the restoration of civil rule in 1999 the official terrorists were neither prosecuted nor disarmed!

The official manipulation of religion which commenced under the Babangida junta has continued unabated. Indeed, it is the root cause of terrorism in the country. Whereas it is stipulated in section 10 of the Constitution that the State

## Insecurity in Nigeria - The Legal Challenge [document]

shall not adopt any official religion the Federal, State and local governments have adopted the Islamic and Christian religions.

In 1986, General Ibrahim Babangida surreptitiously registered Nigeria as a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. As if that was not enough, he built a mosque in the Presidential villa and appointed an Imam to man it. Similarly, President Obasanjo erected a chapel in the villa and appointed a chaplain to manage it.

On January 27, 2000 the Sharia Law was introduced in Zamfara state by Governor Sani Yerima. Not less than 15 other governors in the North followed suit. Although the action constituted a clear violation of section 10 of the Constitution it was a political move designed to win votes in a Muslim dominated region.

The Olusegun Obasanjo Administration decided not to approach the court to test the constitutional validity of the policy so as not to lose the votes in the North in the 2003 general election. Believing that Nigeria had become an Islamic state many misguided persons set up private militias to promote the policy of the state governments. There were violent attacks on Christians while churches were destroyed in many states in the north. Thousands of people were massacred in ethno-religious clashes.

In 2011, the Goodluck Jonathan Administration set up a Panel of Inquiry headed by Ambassador Usman Galtimari to investigate the insurgency in the north east region. In a painstaking investigation the Panel traced the genesis of Boko Haram and other private militias to politicians who set them up in the run-up to the 2003 general elections. According to the Committee:

"The militias were allegedly armed and used extensively as political thugs. After the elections and having achieved their primary purpose, the politicians left the militias to their fate since they could no longer continue funding and keeping them employed.

With no visible means of sustenance, some of the militias gravitated toward religious extremism, the type by Mohammed Yussuf.

The roots of terrorism, especially in Borno, Gombe, Yobe and Bauchi States, could be traced to groups or associations such as 'ECOMOG', 'Yan Kalare' and 'Sara Suka' which have links to prominent politicians in these States. However, similar to the militant groups in the Niger Delta area, the groups usually grow out of control and become a threat to the politicians that supported and financed them."

In line with its terms of reference the Committee recommended that the politicians who "sponsored, funded and used the militia groups that later metamorphosed into Boko Haram" be brought to justice.

Although the recommendation was accepted in May 2012 by the Federal Government the suspects have been treated like sacred cows as they are said to be highly connected to the powers that be. Recently, a former Borno State governor, Alhaji Modu Ali Sheriff was named as one of the sponsors of the Boko Haram sect by a Reverend Stephen Davies, the negotiator recruited by the Federal Government to dialogue with the terrorists. In his reaction to the disclosure the ex-governor threatened to sue Rev. Davies for defamation in Australia .

Unlike the negotiator whose indictment was not substantiated I issued a press statement wherein I provided detailed evidence of Alhaji Sheriff's links with the dreaded Boko Haram sect. In particular, I stated that the ex-governor appointed Alhaji Buji Foi, a leading Boko Haram member, as the Borno State Commissioner for Religious Affairs to compensate the sect for supporting his re-election in 2003. My press statement was supported by the Maiduguri branch of the Nigerian Bar Association which threatened to drag the ex-governor to the Special Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

As the Federal Government was disturbed by the revelations of Rev. Davies the State Security Service announced that the ex-governor was under investigation for his alleged links with the Boko Haram sect . But a few days later, the suspect was a member of the delegation of the Federal Government to Chad when President Jonathan met with his Chadian counterpart, Mr. Idriss Derby to review the war on terror in the north east region.

## Insecurity in Nigeria - The Legal Challenge [document]

Notwithstanding the sacrifice of the ill-equipped members of the armed forces the Boko Haram sect appears to have gained upper hand in the war on terror. Large towns like Bama, Gwoza, Mubi and Michika and hundreds of villages have been captured by the terrorists. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced while not less than 13,000 have been killed by the criminal gang. Not less than 16 local governments in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States have been annexed while the combined land mass of the occupied areas is said to be 21,545 square kilometers of territory. The terrorists have hoisted their flags in the occupied territory which has been named the "Caliphate Republic".

Out of the 276 girls abducted from the Government College in Chibok, Borno State, six months ago, 57 escaped while 219 remain captive. More women and school girls have been kidnapped by the sect. For instance, 60 women were abducted when the sect members invaded Waga Mangoro and Garba villages in Adamawa State last month. (See Punch, October 22, 2014). When Mubi in Adamawa State was attacked about 350 children were declared missing. (Leadership, November 2, 2014). Bomb attacks launched by the sect have killed hundreds of people in Niger, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Plateau States and the Federal Capital Territory.

But despite the increasing deadly attacks of the sect the National Assembly has not deemed it fit to hold a special joint sitting on the threat to the corporate existence of the nation. On its own part, the Council of State which met in Abuja on November 4, 2014 commended President Jonathan's handling of the war on terror. According to Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State "Council was satisfied that the Defence Ministry and all the other agencies have taken the right steps and the President is on course and we are very hopeful that sooner or later Nigerians will hear good news." (Premium Times November 5, 2014).

Meanwhile, the genuine demand of the members of the armed forces for equipment and payment of salaries and operational allowances is considered treasonable by the military authorities. Twelve out of the soldiers who took part in the protest against the General Officer Commanding have been tried for mutiny and sentenced to death. Scores of others are currently undergoing trial for mutiny before courts-martial. The concerned wives of soldiers who decried the deployment of their husbands on suicidal missions have been threatened with ejection from military barracks by the Chief of Army Staff.

The arrogance of the ruling class enshrined in section 2 of the Constitution to the effect that Nigeria is "one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state" has been exposed to ridicule by the terrorists. However, in exercise of his powers under section 305 of the Constitution President Goodluck Jonathan imposed a state of emergency on Adamawa, Borno and Yobe State to restore law and order in the north east region. The implication of emergency rule is that the fundamental rights of privacy of homes and correspondence, religion, thought and conscience, freedom of expression, assembly and movement enshrined in sections 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 of the Constitution may be justifiably encroached upon in the interest of defence, public safety and public order. (Section 45 of the Constitution). Notwithstanding the war on terror Nigerian judges have continued to uphold the fundamental rights of Nigerians.

In Babankura Fugu v. President, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009 -2010) CHR 1 at 10 the Borno State High Court awarded N100 million damages to the applicant to atone for the extra judicial murder of his father, an alleged terrorist suspect . In the same vein, in Hadiza Bala Usman & Ors. v. Inspector-General of Police (unreported) the Federal Capital Territory High Court declared illegal and unconstitutional the decision of the controversial police officer, AIG Joseph Mbu to ban the rally staged daily by the bringbackourgirls campaigners.

Since the neo-colonial State has failed to provide for the "security and welfare of the people" as required by section 14(2) of the Constitution the terrorists have overrun the north east region. No doubt, the military authorities are embarrassed that soldiers vamoose at the sight of the terrorists. But instead of charging those soldiers with mutiny the defence chiefs ought to have asked the Government to comply with Section 217(2) of the Constitution which stipulates that the Federation shall "equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective" for the defence of Nigeria from external aggression and the maintenance of its territorial integrity.

It is submitted that there is no legal justification for prosecuting soldiers who demand for adequate equipment to fight terrorism. Since the soldiers are entitled to their fundamental right to life guaranteed by section 33 of the

## Insecurity in Nigeria - The Legal Challenge [document]

Constitution they have a duty not to commit suicide by fighting the well equipped terrorists with obsolete weapons. Therefore, it is illegal and unconstitutional on the part of any court-martial to convict and sentence soldiers to death for demanding for weapons to fight the terrorists.

Last month, the Federal Government announced a ceasefire with the boko haram sect and assured the nation that arrangements had been concluded for the release of the Chibok girls. The Boko Haram sect denounced the so called agreement and has continued to unleash mayhem on innocent people. Since it is crystal clear that the ceasefire was a ruse the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Barde who announced it should be directed to resign his appointment. More so, that the same officer had announced, about six months ago, that the Chibok girls were going to be rescued in a matter of days since the army had located them.

To fight the scourge of insurgency the Nigerian people should demand a wholesale re-organization of the armed forces and a probe of the huge funds earmarked for the nation's defence in the last 5 years. The National Assembly should ensure that the \$1 billion loan recently approved for the purchase of military hardware is judiciously utilized by the Federal Government. The members of the Joint Task Force should be motivated through training as well as prompt payment of their salaries and allowances. Those who lose their lives in the battlefield should not be buried in unmarked graves. They deserve to be accorded decent burials in a cemetery reserved for heroes while their family members are promptly paid their entitlements.

The Federal Government should, without any further delay, dislodge the terrorists from the 16 local government illegally occupied by them. In view of the patriotic role of the civilian Joint Task Force in liberating and securing some towns in the occupied territory the youths in the north east region should be mobilized to flush out the terrorists from their communities. While we advocate that the armed forces be adequately funded we suggest that the federal and state governments should religiously implement the policy on the provision of compulsory and free universal basic education for every Nigerian child. The government should also embark on genuine empowerment programs and job creation for our army of unemployed youths.

The genesis of the Boko Haram sect has been traced to members of the ruling class who sponsor violent groups and private militias in the rat race for political power. Now that the crisis of insurgency has gone out of control no faction of the ruling class has any moral right to point accusing fingers. They should be held collectively liable for the promotion of violent politics and the manipulation of religion. Henceforth, the security agencies should be directed by the Government to arrest and prosecute the sponsors and agents of violence in the country.

Finally, while defending and protecting the fundamental right of the Nigerian people to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion in line with the provisions of section 38 of the Constitution the Government should withdraw completely from religious affairs. Without any further delay, the Government should stop the adoption of official religions and ensure that religion is made a private affair by all public officers.

**Load-Date:** November 19, 2014

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## Judiciary Should Point Out Proactively the Debris Called Laws to Interpret And Enforce - Eyo [interview]

Daily Independent (Lagos)

February 23, 2011 Wednesday

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**Length:** 1928 words

**Byline:** Nsikak Ekanem

### **Body**

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obtained his LLB from the University of Calabar in 1985, and was called to the Nigerian bar in 1986. He was before then enrolled as one of the pioneer students of the Nigerian Institutes of Journalism and bagged a Diploma in 1978. A former Police Superintendent, Eyo set up the Legal Department of the Police in Akwa Ibom and was a member of 1994/95 Constitutional Conference. In this concluding part of the interview granted our Special Correspondent

in Uyo, Eyo, a legal practitioner for over 24 years now condemned unilateral declaration of public holidays without adherence to the provisions of the Constitution. He also identified what he termed as "inherent weak laws" as being responsible for Nigeria's ebbing profile on electoral matters. Excerpts.

Yes! Yes! One of the loopholes I have seen in the judiciary's functioning is delayed determination of matters. A good number of times, a matter is adjourned because either a lawyer on the other side had sent in a letter to request for an adjournment or another lawyer had not prepared. Most pertinently, you go to court on days you expect the court to sit; but most unfortunately, the court is not sitting. Like the other day, I had a matter in Eket and the matter was regularly adjourned to a particular date. Meanwhile, I did not adjourn the matter alone - it involved me and the court officials, including the judge. In helping to fix that case on a particular date, I did not know that the court would not sit on that date. So, you could appreciate lawyers or litigants going to the court to see that the court is not sitting! What I am advocating is that we should do well to lessen the number of days on which courts do not sit for one reason or the other, because it delays justice. Or, I would advocate a situation at the beginning of each legal year, if the courts are to be involved in one thing or the other, those issues should be foreseeable so that one can know which days would be public holidays like Christmas Day, New Year Day. If each jurisdiction lists out the days that the court would not sit because this-and-that thing would happen, then issues of determination of cases in court should not be hung on uncertainties.

One should be sure that a particular case is coming up on a certain date and it should be certain that on that day, the court would hear the matter. It is embarrassing that you go to court on a day fixed for your matter and the court does not sit. It is very, very embarrassing! We should lessen such number of days for whatever reason. We should be able to frame up a judiciary calendar so that you do not make the mistake of fixing your case on the dates which courts will ordinarily not sit. I am also looking at a situation where some states go out of their way to declare work-free days! The issues of public holidays are supposed to be certain in a developing economy such as Nigeria. Public holidays are on the Exclusive Legislative List: item Number 51 on the Exclusive Legislative List. If public

## Judiciary Should Point Out Proactively the Debris Called Laws to Interpret And Enforce - Eyo [interview]

holidays are to be declared, it should be done by the National Assembly and there should be good reason to declare public holidays. Public holidays should not just come up by the whims and caprices of whoever is in power at any stage, whether it is at the national, state or local levels. That has ceased to be government by the rule of law - a unilateral declaration of work-free day and grounding of all socio-economic processes without passing proper legislative process. It is wrong in a democracy! It can be tolerable in a dictatorial government such as a military regime, but it is very inconsistent with the rights of individuals in a democracy.

I can't say whether you are talking about the judiciary or the legal profession and how much it has contributed to the development of Nigeria. But it still goes back to the nature of our laws - the impotent nature of our laws. Take, for example, the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Constitution which has to do with Economic, Cultural and Social Rights. They say the state has the obligation to give you education, house, job... and yet when the state fails to meet these obligations which it has imposed on itself by the provisions of the Constitution, if you go to court, you would be told that such rights are non-justiciable. Then of what essence, therefore, are these rights enshrined in the Constitution if they are non-justiciable? We should be able to raise such rights to Chapter 4, where the rights can be made justiciable. So that when the state imposes it on itself that it would offer jobs and yet you do not have a job, you can go to court to challenge it by saying, "I have these qualifications and experience and the state has not met its obligations in giving me jobs." So the roles of the legal profession, the role of the court are all hindered by these weak provisions of our laws.

For the Akwa Ibom State Government to declare free and compulsory education, the government is doing the obvious. The state government has moved one step forward by making such educational right - which are in Chapter 2 of the Constitution but are not justiciable - move to the level of justiciability. But then, the enforcement aspect remains. You talk of compulsory education. Yet, I have not seen one person being prosecuted in spite of the fact that we still see our children on the streets: which is to say, the enforcement mechanism is weak and, for that reason, that aspect of compulsion is not there. Again, because of the inherent nature of our freedom, which is consistent with democracy, not minding how free education may be, you still see private schools increasing in number everyday. Even the numbers of students are dwindling in public schools because the private schools are still preferred. I don't know why? If the government wants to make the free and compulsory education policy or law effective, it should be concerned with the enforcement aspect. Otherwise, the government can declare free education consistent with the provisions of the Constitution but then, forget about the compulsory aspect because the government certainly is not enforcing it and cannot enforce the compulsion of people going to school.

In contemporary times, let me not go too far back, at least I have seen the late Rotimi Williams' practice. Up to a point, the late Chief was going to the Supreme Court in armchair. He would be sitting down to address their Lordships at the Supreme Court. I have also seen and benefited from the services of the late Gani Fawehinmi when I had a problem while I was a Student Union President in the University of Calabar; because I led the students to agitate for their right, the university authorities purportedly dissolved the students' union executives. I went to court to challenge it, that it was wrong. Gani Fawehinmi attended a Law Students' function at University of Calabar and I whispered to him that I had a problem. He gladly came to our rescue; at least, he appeared for us in that matter when we challenged the university for dissolving the SUG executive. I am singling this out because I was a beneficiary: Gani Fawehinmi was a crusader. He went into areas which did not even concern or involve him, like the one I am talking about; how did it concern him? It did not.

But because he saw the injustice and saw himself as an apostle of redress for such injustice, he selflessly decided to come to our rescue. He did that in many cases. The late Gani Fawehinmi tried to even prosecute those people whom he (alleged) killed the late **Dele Giwa**. He tried to investigate the killing. Beyond that, he said the people are not hidden and he wanted to prosecute them. But of course he could not prosecute them because of the nature of our laws. I can go on and on to say what has been the impediment of brave and courageous lawyers who could have lifted this country beyond where it is, but they are incapacitated. Femi Falana is trying to get one thing or the other done rightly which were wrongly done. I remember Dr. Olu Onagoruwa. I got inspired by Onagoruwa to become a lawyer because of the incisive lectures he used to give us when I was a student of Nigeria Institute of Journalism. He used to teach us Press Laws and I made up my mind that after I had become a **journalist**, I would also become a lawyer.

### Judiciary Should Point Out Proactively the Debris Called Laws to Interpret And Enforce - Eyo [interview]

Those are very, very viable contributors. At a time, the (Nigerian Government) even said, "Dr. Onagoruwa, you are very vocal and versatile, come and be our Attorney General!" But somewhere along the line, I don't know how that worked out for him. He did not stay long as Attorney General. But that is beside the point; I am trying to say that we have outstanding legal practitioners. But we have a problem: in that the socio-economic circumstances of any given place, such as Akwa Ibom, has not made us appreciate the industry and intelligence of the lawyers practising in our state. If you think of the intelligent quotient of lawyers, we have lawyers of Akwa Ibom origin who are Senior Advocates of Nigeria but who are practising outside Akwa Ibom. And yet, we also have people from other places doing very well in Akwa Ibom, but it is extremely difficult for them to emerge and become Senior Advocates of Nigeria. So the reason is the socio-economic circumstances in Akwa Ibom.

Yes, a good number of times! You have heard of people who stayed in prisons or police cells, their fundamental rights having been breached and they are told that the court will not sit... and it prolongs the detention, the agony or grievances of that individual? Again, this issue has extended to such an extent that there is a case which has become a scandal to me! A relation of mine was arrested by the Federal Road Safety Commission for allegedly flouting traffic rules. His vehicle, which happens to be the only means of his livelihood, was taken away from him since April, last year. The only way to challenge the matter was to go to court. After I wrote to the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) to release the bus, I went to court. As they say, the court is the last hope of the common man. I had thought in that respect that between the dispute involving the Road Safety and my relation, the court is going to intervene. We filed our papers and FRSC also reacted by accepting that they impounded the vehicle and gave reasons why they impounded it. So, the court wants to give a decision by way of judgment.

The judgment was fixed to be heard on August 3, last year. We went to court with the owner of the vehicle, but the court did not sit. The Registrar of the court would not give me a date because it is the exclusive prerogative of the court to fix the date. The date for the judgment has not been fixed and judgment is not delivered. About three months later, I wrote that the case should be listed for judgment to be delivered, but there was no reply. I went to the extent that I had to write a reminder. Now, the scandalous aspect is that this relation of mine is going around saying that I am incapable of handling this matter and that if he knew, he could have "settled" this matter with the FRSC without having to go to court. He is regretting going to court; and the scandal is on me, mistakenly! I cannot blame him because a good number of litigants cannot see the difference between the role of the lawyer and the judge. They think that the two work hand-in-hand. So that is an incident which I am very embarrassed about because of the scandal going about that I am not an effective lawyer; otherwise, such matter could not have lasted for that long in court!

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## Leadership and the Burden of History [opinion]

This Day (Lagos)

August 08, 2018

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**Length:** 4216 words

**Byline:** Chidi Amuta

### **Body**

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There are far too many reasons to felicitate with my brother and friend Ray Ekpu, a man we fondly call 'Brother Ray' as he turns 70.

Perhaps the most important and obvious reason is that he is a *journalist*. The second reason is that he has lived a life of journalism in a place called Nigeria. Ray's abiding courage and significant leadership lies in the boldness of the choice he made as and when he made that choice.

Ray had a copious array of choices. He could have joined the civil service and retired ten years ago possibly in stupendous wealth and opulence. He could even have avoided the entire grueling process of university education and joined the military early enough. There again, he possibly could have ended up dead or joined the pantheon of retired generals for whom most things are possible. Still better, he could have opted for a career as a perennial politician as an illustrious son of Akwa Ibom State.

He chose differently. He opted for a lifelong career in a profession with no foreseeable financial or immediate material rewards. In our country, journalists hardly qualify for a pension or gratuity. Most often, the organizations where they spend the better part of their productive years hardly survive beyond a decade and where they do, the great journalists walk in and out through a revolving door. When they leave, they walk into a horizon of uncertainty and sometimes end up in near destitution. While on the job, the contentment of the truly great *journalist* is in the intangible and grudging role as part of the 4th Estate of the realm where indeed there is a realm. In war and in peace, in crisis and in normalcy, the *journalist* remains the intangible bridge between what, where, when and how on the one hand and the multitude of humanity waiting anxiously to know why. Humanity will wither in darkness without the multiple exertions of journalists of distinction. We are the unarmed legion of light questing to beam the light on the truth; the

gallant avatars that intercede between the jackboots of power and the loud cries of the oppressed.

Beyond the general category of *journalist*, Ray Ekpu and his kindred spirits offer us a lead into the subject of this lecture, namely leadership. Along with *Dele Giwa* (in memoriam), Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed and Soji Akinrinade, Ray blazed a trail of courageous leadership in the history of Nigerian journalism. Their feat consisted in one novel concept: how to crown excellence in journalism with success in media entrepreneurship. They set out to take the leap from being employees of moneybags to employing themselves and other journalists, a leap that was being taken in the Western world by journalists like those who founded the Independent in London.

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What distinguishes great leadership is vision and the courage to drive it in order to deliver the overall society-wide impacts of the leading stride. That is one essential quality of leadership that gave Nigeria the uncommon gift of Newswatch.

The journalists and their admirers who gathered in January 1985 wore no battle fatigues. If anyone referred to them as 'revolutionaries', I suspect that they would, like Hitler's publicist, Goebbels, have drawn a pistol to silence the misrepresentation. After all, they were all mostly right wing or centre-right idealists at best.

In fact, when the collective of Ray and his colleagues gathered to launch Newswatch in 1985, they probably were unaware of the revolutionary implications of their professional foray. However, they ended up birthing one of the most incisive and authoritative news magazines in Africa at a time when Time and Newsweek maintained unquestioned dominance. These international giants were only being complemented by efforts like Chris Okorie's Newbreed at the national level and geo-strategic and continental efforts like South Africa, New African and Africa Now and a host of others.

Newswatch quickly emerged as the national gold standard in enlightened journalism. Its columnists were easily the most authoritative, influenced and civilized in the nation. Its cover stories were well researched and grounded. The encyclopaedic research prowess of the

Newswatch librarian, Nyakno Osso was everywhere in evidence in an age without today's Google touch screen access to global information.

With the emergence of Newswatch, Patrick Dele Cole's Daily Times, Abiola's Concord titles and the arrival of The Guardian, Nigerian journalism redefined itself as a power centre, not just an accessory to power.

The lead players at Newswatch were no longer 'Press Boys' to be found at Press galleries or the hallways of power. They were purveyors of a certain intangible but real power. Every expression of power comes with inherent dangers. Ray and his colleagues understand this truism all too well as they reflect on the glories, tears and blood of their years in and around real power.

In retrospect, the real significance of the leadership of Ray and Newswatch is not in the sacrifices they had to make as leaders. It is in their legacy in Nigerian media and journalism. The abiding gospel of Newswatch is possibility. It is possible to liberate the voice of the people, to give meaning to the freedom of expression as a cardinal aspiration of a free society.

Accordingly, independent and private media initiatives stepped forward to replace government monopoly. Individual journalists and groups of them stepped forward to try their hands at publishing or broadcasting. An avalanche of private newspapers, magazines and broadcast media emerged to finally bury government monopoly or even participation. Truly, a million flowers were blooming.

This piece is not strictly about Newswatch. But Newswatch has enabled it. It is also a veritable anchor for understanding the requisites of leadership both in journalism and the wider polity. I know the leadership we all seek to hear more about in this time and place. It is political leadership as it concerns Nigeria, the nation we all love passionately.

Let us proceed from the simplest description of leadership. It is the ability to develop a vision of community and the capacity to translate that vision into beneficial reality in a manner that carries the followership along. To envision an alternative higher reality, the leader must be enlightened. To translate that vision into reality, the leader must have executive capacity or find those so equipped. To attract and carry the followership, the leader must possess personal electricity or charisma in the form of oratory, personal carriage, integrity and connectedness to ordinary folks. The people must see aspects of themselves mirrored in the life and story of the leader.

Perhaps at no other time in our national history has the issue of leadership presented itself so boldly in the front yard of national discourse. In spite of elections that fill various levels of public office in the land, our people continue to yearn endlessly for purposeful leadership. It has therefore become necessary to make a distinction between

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power incumbency and leadership in the nation. There is, as they say, no vacancy in either Aso Rock Villa or the 36 state Government Houses across the land. Whether inspiring leadership is emanating from any of these locations is quite another.

Make no mistake about it. The drama of power incumbency continues to rage all over the land. The sirens blare even louder; the pomp and ceremony of public office is in full gear; the perfunctory rituals of government continue unabated. So also is the impunity of power, the arrogance of today's men and the injured ego and deflated importance of yesterday's people.

Genuine leadership is somewhat more subdued than the cacophony of incumbent power. True leadership consists in the ability to inspire and carry an undivided nation along the path of self-realization. It is inspirational; innovative; empathetic. In words and actions and personal conduct, the leader touches the vital chord that unites a nation irrespective of creed, ethnicity, class and even circumstance. More often, what the people value in their leader is intangible.

True national leadership is perhaps best described and understood by what it is not. It is not water boreholes. It is not endless kilometers of roads or even kilowatts of electricity. It is not the meting out of casual cruelty on your perceived opponents or the shutting of the window of opportunity to all except your friends, loyalists and kinsmen. Nor can we mistake as leadership the subversion of the popular mandate into an instrument for dividing nations along all imaginable lines. If anything, these traits create the hunger for genuine leadership in nations such as ours that are so afflicted.

From the immediate post-civil war years till today, the crisis of leadership has plagued our public discourse. It was Chinua Achebe who in the late 1970s identified the crisis of leadership as 'the trouble with Nigeria'. We remain frozen in that moment and mired in that intractable crisis.

The absence of a coherent national vision and sense of mission has bred a polity whose most recurrent fascination is 'our immense potentials'. The hope of what is possible and the dream of where we could still be is what holds this behemoth 'potential' nation together. But in the interim, this generation of Nigerians remains the orphans of missed opportunities, squandered resources and periodic episodes of mindless leadership.

The rhetoric of potential greatness is getting worn out. It is even worse when mouthed by ignorant politicians who want to win an election and further deepen our leadership crisis. There is a potential in every nation, which awaits leaders of purpose to harvest. For how long are we going to remain a 'potential' or virtual nation?

I have heard it said that Nigeria is still a young nation! Underlying that claim is the false logic that longevity confers on nations a guaranteed greatness. If that were true, the most advanced nations would be the oldest! On the scale of global development, where are Egypt, Greece and Portugal today? Egypt is the home of the great pyramids and of decadent dictatorships. It is also the hotbed of the most dangerous fanatics. Greece has a perennial archival interest with an economy that has developed the bad habit of surviving on frequent bailouts. Portugal used to be a colonial power but is now a virtual third world country with only a football club as its most notable export.

At 58, Nigeria is neither old nor young. My fear is that it came into existence with all the infirmities of decadent old age. Now in mature middle age, the nation is afflicted by a cocktail of ailments some of which can only be cured by killing the patient hence the loud cries for restructuring or even outright dissolution.

The consequences of past leadership missteps and failures now haunt us all. Our highways are dangerous; our urban streets are dark alleys hiding sinister possibilities, as no one knows what lies in wait; the frontiers of freedom have been fenced by a rampaging insurgency while squads of killers sometimes difficult to name have rendered life in our villages even more capricious, brutish and short.

A nation that started out united and hopeful is today torn along all known divides just as the number of optimists has dwindled into miserable insignificance. Our youth walk the streets in quest of nothing in a land full of work but with no opportunities to find work.

## Leadership and the Burden of History [opinion]

Yet in the midst of this apparent hopelessness, I could hear the voice of hope rise at the places where our boys were at play in the World Cup. No doubt, the broad majority of Nigerians still love their Naija and wish for no other place to call home. That eternal optimism is for me the loud voice crying for the emergence of true national leadership.

Let us not be deceived. Leadership can kill or save a nation. History is as full of nations that have been ruined by bad leadership as it is of others that have been saved and resurrected from Hell because of the emergence of true leadership in the midst of disaster.

First, the bad news. The instructive thing is that most of the leaders who bring their nations to ruin do not always have the luxury of staying behind to watch Rome go up in flames.

On 17th May 1987, the forces of Laurent Kabila marched into Kinshasa. The long reign of Mobutu Sese Seko in what used to be Zaire was over. Mobutu fled and found his way to Eyadema's Togo. There was no red carpet. His friend Eyadema confined him to the plane at the airport while working the phones in search of a place of exile for him. At last the late king of Morocco agreed to have him. He died in exile.

On 29th September 1991, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was besieged in the Presidential palace in Port Au Prince. Peoples' power had ousted his rudderless regime. Haiti was at the brink of nasty implosion. There was panic in Washington. It took a combined effort of US, Venezuelan and French diplomats to negotiate a helicopter exit for him. But he had nowhere to go. General Collin Powell sent him a plane with a simple instruction: 'take off and be air borne first'. While still in the air, diplomatic phones were busy searching for a place of exile. He was briefly stateless! Then Thabo Mbeki of South Africa gave him exile. But Haiti was in ruins.

Similarly, at 9.30 am on May 22nd, 1991, Ethiopia's Marxist strong man was flown out of Addis Ababa airport aboard an Ethiopian airlines jet. Of all the African leaders that used to congregate in Addis for the annual OAU summit, only Robert Mugabe agreed to have Mengistu as an exile guest. Ethiopia was in tatters, wrecked by civil war, famine and an empty treasury. Of these three examples of the tragedy of leadership, only Ethiopia has managed to turn its tide in a positive direction as a result of concerted purposeful leadership. Only strong purposeful leadership can rescue a nation from the brinks of tragic failure to a new sense of direction. In today's Africa, the poster kid in this regard is Rwanda's Paul Kagame.

By 1994 when the war of genocide ended and a Unity government took over, here was Rwanda:

All institutions had vanished. Government offices were looted up to the last sheet of paper. Most competent bureaucrats had either been butchered or had fled. The entire country had no running water; electricity was scant.

Of the 800 judges Rwanda had before the genocide, less than 50 survived. Prior to the war, Rwanda was a desperately poor country with infant mortality, literacy rate and per capita less than the sub Saharan African average. It has no natural resources except lush green vegetation in an overpopulated small territory. Its per capita GDP was \$217.

An estimated 60 per cent of the people were desperately poor while life expectancy was a pre- medieval 46! The population was ravaged by a cocktail of diseases: HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria were killing people on an industrial scale. Over 90% of Rwandans were suicide prone, having witnessed horrendous acts during the genocide.

Today's story of phenomenal progress in Rwanda must be understood against this horrid backdrop. National integration has been re-established even though the scars of genocide remain. Rwanda is today a prosperous, neat (no plastic bags since 2008!) and orderly country. The economy has grown by an average of 7% since 2010, lifting over a million out of poverty in less than ten years. Per capita income has more than tripled while Rwanda now ranks above Italy and Greece. It is in the regional top spot in the World Bank's latest Ease of doing Business Index. So much for strong, purposeful and visionary leadership.

## Leadership and the Burden of History [opinion]

Irrespective of whatever fancy attributes we may adduce for leadership, the fact remains that national greatness and fulfilment can only be achieved by a succession of the right leadership. Great leadership arises from three domains: national history, the strength of individual leaders and the durability of the institutions of nation being.

On the matter of leadership, certain features of Nigerian history should worry us with the benefit of hindsight. Mr. Lugard's 1914 amalgamation of the two geo-spatial protectorates of Nigeria was never an exercise in the service of Nigerian nationalism or a viable united Nigerian national project. It was at best an administrative convenience and commercial exigency. The idea of a future Nigerian nation was only progressively grafted onto this colonial commercial infrastructure. Similarly, the subsequent anti-colonial struggle by our 'founding fathers' was first and foremost the struggle of ethno-regional elites for separate regional self-rule. This is why the various regions gained self-rule at different times ahead of formal collective independence in 1960. My point here is that in spite of the illustrious struggles of our disparate founding fathers, Nigerian history did not feature a unified leadership model or individual on which independent Nigeria would be built. Our national leadership at independence was a ground-work of arrangements, negotiations and compromises.

This is in contrast to countries like Kenya and South Africa where the struggle for independence or majority rule was hinged on a unified vision that would propel the future independent nation. In this regard, there was no mistaking the mission and heroic leadership of a Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya or the founders of the ANC and subsequently Nelson Mandela in South Africa. In effect, Nigerian history may have denied us the chance to evolve a national leadership with a clear vision.

There are however other nations whose histories were kinder. My best example is Singapore. The late Lee Kuan Yew and his colleagues were in the forefront of the independence movement. As leader from the outset, Lee is the closest we come to a modern philosopher king. He was clear headed on the national vision, mission and the strategies for achieving them. He was lucky to live and rule long enough to realize his dream of Singapore as a modern, decent and prosperous nation. He bequeathed a stable political system and a very enlightened bureaucracy and viable institutions of state.

Another glowing example of consistently strong and purposeful leadership and resounding progress, this time in Africa, is Botswana. Barely 50 years ago, Botswana was an arid and dirt poor backwater country without much water and scant proven natural resources beyond a little coal and copper. It had three times more heads of cattle than human beings. There was hardly any arable land. People and cattle scrambled over land at the fringes of the Kalahari Desert.

The diamonds for which the country has become known was a later discovery. What made the difference between the privations of its beginnings and the prosperity and order of today is the quality of its leadership from inception.

Through a careful and disciplined leadership of Seretse Khama and his colleagues, a country that was ranked as the poorest nation on earth and which became independent as Nigeria was descending into anarchy in 1966 is today the African poster child of prosperity, order and transparent governance.

Today, Botswana is the world's leading producer of diamonds. Its democracy is stable, monitored by honest courts and a free press. For the first 35 years of the nation's history, its GDP was the fastest in the world at a consistent 14%. Per capita income has grown from \$50 to over \$7000. Literacy rate is in excess of 90% while infant and maternal mortality rates are among the lowest in the world compared to the embarrassment in Angola, which has both diamonds and oil!

Botswana has one of the lowest corruption indices in Africa. On the brighter side, it has one of the youngest cabinet ministers in the world- Ms. Bokoto Jenewendo, Minister of Trade and Investment aged 31! Botswana has carefully avoided the resource curse that has crippled countries like Nigeria and Angola. It stands up there like 'a shining African city upon a hill.'

In Nigeria, the disruptive coup of January 15, 1966 further deepened our leadership crisis. I disagree with those who glamorize that act of military indiscipline. How could any set of rational beings have expected our national leadership to achieve perfection in less than six years after independence? It remains the height of youthful

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delinquency and professional rascality that that coup took place. It is an unfortunate precedent which opened an unfortunate chapter of leadership disruptions that have plagued us to this moment. Clearly then, our national history has not allowed us to evolve the leadership we need.

In our search for redemptive leadership, we can no longer ignore the argument as to whether we in Africa now need strong institutions or strong leaders. It was former US president Barack Obama who posited this problematic while visiting Ghana. Our misfortune in Africa has been that when leaders emerge either by vote or by force, they privatize the institutions of state. Thus, even where the strong institutions exist, they fail to make the leaders accountable.

Strength in leadership is not therefore as simple as it seems. Only leaders that have personal integrity, decency and moral stature can respect and preserve the institutions for the common good. In post-apartheid South Africa for instance, the new constitution had just been inaugurated when Mandela assumed power. But he had the leadership stature to rule the country in strict obedience to the law and in consonance with institutions. Confronted with the same constitution, laws and institutions, Jacob Zuma threw decency to the winds and bastardized the same institutions for personal gain.

We are familiar with situations in which African incumbents personalize and privatize the institutions of state rather indecently. The police, the army, the judiciary, the Central Bank, the judiciary, civil service etc. are coerced into seeing themselves as extensions of a particular incumbency. In such a situation, the viability and life spans of these institutions are reduced to the tenure of the particular incumbent. When that regime ends, an incoming administration has the unenviable task of 'reinventing' the institutions of state. This is the basis of perennial instability in our institutions. In the end the nation in question ends up with neither leadership nor viable and stable institutions.

This, therefore, brings us face to face with the troublesome question of leadership selection in Africa's emerging democracies. Regrettably, our political parties especially in Nigeria have no concept of 'fit and proper' persons to put forward for national leadership. Instead of a political meritocracy, we have compromise arrangements that throw up persons purely on account of whether they can win an election. It ought to be possible for a fit and proper person to win an election if they are backed by a political party. Unfortunately, we in Nigeria have consistently had political parties that are merely gatherings of contingents of crass interest rather than ideological movements. I doubt that this type of political party culture can ever produce a credible national leadership.

The foregoing thoughts may cast a sad pall on the prospects of true national leadership in our country. Our dream for a happier place to call home is predicated on how soon we can get the kind of leadership that will fulfil the aspirations of most Nigerians. In that quest, I want to advance some observations to those who decide for us. We need to keep fine-tuning the very legal and political environment in which we choose our leadership.

\* The use of affidavits and other sworn instruments to prove the age and educational qualifications of seekers of high political office should be banned by law. Those who cannot remember when they were born or what schools they attended and certificates obtained have no business leading anybody.

\*The concept of zoning or rotation on geo-political basis of the presidency and other key political offices by political parties should be outlawed. It is in conflict with the spirit of the constitution, which rejects all forms of discrimination among Nigerians. If anything, the political parties should zone the leadership to merit, which can now be found all over the country. We need to enthron a political meritocracy now if we are to become competitive in the world.

\*It is time for the National Assembly to review and amend the constitutional guarantee of immunity to high political office holders. Equality before the law is an elementary requirement of all democracy. A polity that allows unfit persons to occupy high office cannot also grant them immunity from prosecution. We also must quickly ensure true equality before the law.

\* Leadership requires tutelage. We should resurrect the defunct Centre for Democratic Studies to continuously train and orientate elected public officials on the rudiments of democratic governance. We may not have proffered all the

## Leadership and the Burden of History [opinion]

solutions. We, however, hope that we have raised enough questions for just this one-day. With the millions who have read people like Ray for almost four decades, I believe more in Nigeria.

Indeed, there remains a RAY of hope for our country, Nigeria.

\*This column is adapted from a Lecture Given in Lagos on Monday to mark the 70th Birthday of the celebrated journalist, Mr. Ray Ekpu.

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## **Unresolved Cases of Extra-Judicial Killings - So Far, So Bad - Mohammed Bello Adeko, AGF [analysis]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

May 5, 2010 Wednesday

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### **Body**

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Despite the existence of the international human rights treaty obligations and the Constitution, Nigerian security agents and unknown gunmen continue to violate human rights norms that guarantee the dignity of life and human persons.

Both Sections 33 and 34 of the 1999 Constitution clearly made execution lawful only if ordered by a constitutionally empowered institution, authority or person or in circumstances envisaged by the Constitution. It, therefore, follows that any other method other than the constitutionally recognised means of depriving one life is not only unconstitutional, illegal, but also unlawful and nothing but extrajudicial. Evidence of accidental discharges, assassinations, killings of innocent citizens and disregard for human life by paid assassins, however, abounds. Observe that notwithstanding the provisions in the criminal and penal codes and the nation's criminal justice system, a large percentage of extra-judicial killings and cases arising from assassinations and murders in the country has remained unresolved.

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of this rights." The provision is also replicated in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights thus , "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."

By extension, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria recognises the fact that human life is sacrosanct. Section 33(1) of the constitution provides that "Every person shall have a right of life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria". Prior to the inauguration of the 1999 constitution, all the previous constitutions beginning from the 1960 Independence constitution had provided for the right to life of all citizens.

In spite of the universal protection against extra-judicial killings provided for in various human rights instruments, incidence of these criminal acts have become more pronounced in the country.

Many innocent souls including those of the mighty and the lowly had been wasted over the years and personalities who would have emerged as future leaders had been sent to the world beyond through extra-judicial killings.

## Unresolved Cases of Extra-Judicial Killings - So Far, So Bad - Mohammed Bello Adoke, AGF [analysis]

The Nigeria Police became even more repressive and some of these acts could be linked to them as they continue to violate with impunity the treaty obligations entered into by Nigeria with other countries.

Indeed, extra-judicial killings and assassinations in the country dated back to the 1970s, when a United States-based Nigerian sprinter, Dele Udo, was killed at a checkpoint in Lagos. Since then, several other extra-judicial killings had taken place in the country.

Some of these killings were perpetrated at the checkpoints by the police while others by assassins and killer-squads.

In the early 1980s, two Dawodu brothers were killed extra-judicially by a police cop, Ezeh Ibe, at Anikantamo Square on Lagos Island, and a businessman, Mr. Obuseh, was also gunned down in Surulere, Lagos by unknown persons. Years later, the founding Editor-in-Chief and Chief Executive of Newswatch Magazine, Dele Giwa, was killed by parcel bomb in October 1986; a female journalist and former treasurer,

Lagos State Council, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Bolade Fasasi, was also killed in Ibadan by unidentified persons sometime in 1999.

The military men also were not spared by unknown gunmen and the list of big wigs and ex-top functionaries killed extra-judicially included, Admiral Mufutau Elegbede (rtd), a Naval chief, Akinterinwa, Group Capt. Anthony Ikhazoboh, (rtd), and Col. Rindam among others.

A member of the Osun State House of Assembly, Odunayo Olagbaju, representing Ife Central Constituency, was murdered on December 19, 2001 while a couple of days later,

December 23, 2001, former Attorney General of the Federation and Justice Minister, Chief Bola Ige, was killed by assassins at his Bodija residence, Ibadan. The killings which shook the whole nation were linked to the lingering feud in Osun State politics.

Of course, elder statesman, Pa Alfred Rewane, was assassinated in his GRA, Ikeja residence in October 1995. There were the killings of other notable activists and politicians, like Chiefs Dikibo, Harry Marshal, Suliat Adedeji, Funso Williams and some months ago of Dipo Dina.

Equally remarkable was the murder of six traders in Abuja otherwise known as 'the Apo Six' by the police at a checkpoint.

In the last few years, a number of journalists, Tunde Oladepo of the Guardian, Omololu Falobi of JAAIDS, Godwin Agbroko and Abayomi Ogundele both of THIS DAY, Bayo Ohu of the Guardian and lately, Edo Sule Ugbagwu of the Nation were killed extra-judicially at different times by unknown persons. Two Plateau State-based journalists were also murdered about the same time Ugbagwu was killed on April 24, 2010.

Save for the killer of the Dawodu brothers in Lagos Island who was immediately arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced by the High Court and later freed by the Supreme Court, the common thread that runs through other series of extra-judicial killings is either that the suspected killers were not caught, there was tardy prosecution of the accused persons, and in most instances, the cases were yet to be resolved by the courts.

In some of these criminal cases, the prosecution had given up due to inadequate evidence to establish the charges against the suspects and yet in others, the cases were bungled, prompting the courts to set free the suspects. Some of the cases are equally pending before the courts.

But the sole question often being asked by the ordinary citizen is that why it has proved difficult to resolve some of these murder cases and thereby secure the conviction of the suspects. The answer is obviously blowing in the wind, as the Federal Government for example, could not successfully prosecute the suspects linked with the killing of the ex-Attorney General of the Federation.

## Unresolved Cases of Extra-Judicial Killings - So Far, So Bad - Mohammed Bello Adoke, AGF [analysis]

A Lagos Lawyer, Mr. Steve Adaramoye, said "extra-judicial killings in the country are prevalent because of lawlessness. Because the rule of law has not been fully entrenched in the country people take laws in their hands. Rule of law is the adjunct of democracy. This type of extra-judicial killings that we all know is very common with the police at the police stations and checkpoints. During the torture of suspects at the police stations, the police have killed a lot of the suspects. At times in the course of extracting information and confession from the suspects, the suspects are killed. We all know that at times, the Police will arrest suspects without warrant or recourse to law and in the process, they kill extra-judicially. You cannot condemn someone until a *prima facie* case is established against him. In some cases, where the court has convicted as in Nafiu Bello's case, execution warrant is hurriedly executed while appeal is pending. At the level of the executive, we usually have extra-judicial killings of innocent people. It is however not as notorious as that of the police.

Of course, what happened in Boko Haram is another instance of extra-judicial killings, the same goes for the killings of Apo Six in Abuja.

I hope with enlightenment, the Police will reduce the tide of these killings and there should be speedy prosecution of suspects arrested for this crime and other related offences.

Another Lawyer, Chief Oladimeji Longe, said "The type of extra- killings we see in the country today are politically motivated killings. Some of the extra-judicial killings are from the authority above, so it will be difficult to investigate them. You don't expect a slave to investigate his master. If extra-judicial killing has no political motive, it must provide a basis for its investigation. In some cases no disputes are visible, it is just an attack.

The extra-judicial killings are off-shoot of bad leadership of the military in the past years. They were introduced when the military made incursions into politics.

The soldiers are to protect the territorial integrity of the country but they have abandoned their responsibility. Soldiers in khaki are not different from the ones in Agbada. Generals Obasanjo, Babangida, Buhari and Col. Oyinlola may be in politics now; they are still soldiers who ruled in the past. A leper will never change his colours. Soldiers are branded with cruelty and they cannot make good democratic leaders.

In his own submission, Mr. Kelvin Okoroafor, a lawyer said "extra-judicial killings have to do with the national security problem. There are lapses everywhere and this casts doubt on the integrity of the government. The government still makes excuses and it never admits any responsibility. If government is serious, they should appreciate our successes and our failures. Extra-judicial killings and the inability to get to the root of many of them are our failures as a nation. The problem lies at the door of the police. The Police Act prescribes that the police has responsibility for the security of the country. It is the primary function of the police to investigate crimes, by extension all the cases of extra-judicial killings are supposed to be investigated by the police. But because the Police are doing their work properly, the politicians in charge of the affairs of the country are not showing responsibility. The Political leaders and the Police should show sense of responsibility and the political will to discharge their duties effectively.

We cannot really fault the government lawyers in charge of prosecution of the cases arising from extra-judicial killings because the prosecution works on evidence. There is hardly anything a prosecutor can do in the absence of evidence referred to him by the police. The government should address all these peculiarities so that it can prosecute and resolve some of the extra judicial killings in the country."

Basically the police have the power to detect crimes in the society and in the process, they could resort to stop and search at the checkpoints. The law also allows them to use reasonable force to arrest suspects.

An instance of detection of crime at a checkpoint was the discovery of the head of a boy, Ikechukwu Okoronkwo, murdered and beheaded which led to riots in Owerri and became the celebrated 'Otokoto trials' in Imo State some years ago.

In his paper "Execution and Unlawful Termination of Life in Nigeria", Morrison Quakers, attributed the menace to lack of adequate training for our police as well as absence of criminal justice policy.

## Unresolved Cases of Extra-Judicial Killings - So Far, So Bad - Mohammed Bello Adoke, AGF [analysis]

"As a country, we have no criminal justice policy. Our policemen are inadequately trained; they have no instructions on the use of force, no adequate resources and equipment to combat crime, high level of corruption in our various prosecutorial agencies, existence of the culture of impunity and the lack of accountability, no respect or regard for the sanctity of life, slow and ineffective criminal justice administration with poor and obsolete criminal justice apparatus," he said.

Quakers however proffers a way out. Presenting what he considered as a way forward, Quakers said, "The Police Act and Regulations and other enabling laws of prosecutorial and enforcement agencies should be reviewed, particularly as regards the use of force. This should be done in line with international human rights law and standards. As a country, we should criminalize torture, extrajudicial execution and unlawful killings and enforced disappearances of prisoners. A witness protection programme ought to be established and all persons arrested for whatever offence must be registered in a criminal registry, accessible to the public on application or request. All agencies of government saddled with the responsibility of arresting, detaining or prosecuting offenders must be adequately funded, trained and equipped for the responsible use of force and firearms in line with international human rights standards. A system should be in place for compensation of families of victims and their dependants. Any officer found to have ordered or participated in the implementation of unlawful termination of life or extrajudicial killing should not only be dismissed but must also be prosecuted. The Duty Solicitors' Scheme and the Human Rights Desk presently in place and being practiced in some states of the Federation should extend to other states, as this will help in checkmating and curtailing human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearance of suspects. Custodial centers must have proper record keeping, as opposed to the archaic and obsolete practice of writing with chalk, names of inmates in custodial environment, on the wall, which can be easily erased, leaving no trace, in this age of information technology."

He said further that the authorities, agencies and persons empowered to carry and use firearms must give and be made accountable to an independent body, "where allegations of excessive use of force occasioning constitutional infractions are made against any of such persons or agencies by families of victims or civil society organizations."

Like Quakers, George Amadi of Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria, Enugu, campus ascribed the crime on the incivility of police officers at checkpoints.

The university don in a paper titled 'The Impact of Police Checkpoints on Crimes and Community in Nigeria' delivered at the National Summit on Crime and Policing In Nigeria in 2004, stated that the power of stop and search as embodied in Section 4 of the Police Act tended to bring about the desired effect if conducted by officers who have adequate police personality.

"If checkpoints are to have any meaningful impact on crime and community, then the need for various command checkpoints to exchange and coordinate intelligence cannot be overemphasised," Amadi said.

Granted that the Police could occasionally abuse their powers at the checkpoints and their police stations, it behoves on the high command of the Police structure to always ensure senior officers put their subordinates to check while over-stepping their bounds in the course of their duty.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2010



## **Utomi - Countries That Have Made Progress Did So Because Leaders Inspired Followers [interview]**

This Day (Lagos)

October 26, 2014

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**Length:** 3163 words

### **Body**

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, a professor at Lagos Business School, is a former Presidential aspirant. In an interview monitored on RockCity 101.9 FM, Abeokuta, he speaks on several issues including how he became a presidential aide in his 20s, what he thinks is Nigeria's major problem, how the nation can tackle corruption, the killings in the North, his tour of duty at Volkswagen of Nigeria limited, why he thinks the Import Substitution Industrialisation Strategy was a misplaced policy, and his days as journalist in the late 70s and early 80s. Excerpts:

Journalism then is rather different from today for a variety of reasons. First of all, back in the 70's newspaper in Nigeria sold big. Bola Ogusanwo who was editor of Sunday times had days which he sold a million copies. Today, i don't think most Nigerian newspapers sell 50,000 copies and its extra- ordinary when 100,000 is sold, that shows that the power of a great reporter from those days does not quite exist today. Unfortunately, back in those days, there was a certain sense of mission that journalists were there to change the world. Amuka Pemu, publisher of vanguard, Peter Pam and all those columnists were extra-ordinary people who were paying their dues as an investigative reporter, great correspondents before they got to write a column. Today everybody leaving school is a columnist, and so people just feel journalism with opinions rather than serious investigative reports. As a 21 year old youth corper, I wrote an investigative report that led to a carbinet reshuffle in this country. I am not sure if young reporters have that same sense of guardians of the public space.

To be fair to the reporters and journalists, probably what has happened is the economics of journalism. There has been such that many media enterprises were not properly funded. Just like an experience not too long ago when I checked into a hotel in Washington, surprisingly, a wall street journal correspondent called me, because he thought I could help shed some light on a story he was working on. It was a story about a certain American oil service company that was alleged to have offered bribes in Nigeria. The then incumbent vice president of the united state of America was associated with the company. When i probed a little further, the reporter said to me, "here is a \$100,000, nail the vice president, confirm that he was involved in bribe giving in Nigeria". I was amazed; I mean can you think of any editor in Nigeria giving a reporter hundred thousand naira not to talk of a hundred thousand dollars to chase a story. So the economics of journalism has affected the quality of the work that people do, everybody is just an opinion offerer rather than people who do careful research and on the basis of that present evidence that can lead to choice been made.

My role and place in government, tells a story about how different today is from those days. My role had simply everything to do with perception of ability rather than any network, any contact or any desire to be in a political position. As the story goes, people like Ray Ekpu were more or less contemporaries, they were the early editors

## Utomi - Countries That Have Made Progress Did So Because Leaders Inspired Followers [interview]

straight out of journalism school, they were in senior positions and Okon Akiba, one of his colleagues in the "chronicle". Interestingly a group of smart journalists came out, around the Calabar area, about the mid-70s. Ray Ekpu, Pat Okon, Okon Akiba and a number of them started the "chronicle" and they were running very well. When I was in Grad school, Ray moved to Lagos and became editor of the Sunday times and on one visit to Nigeria, he asked if I could write for him from the US and make contributions. Incidentally, he had become friendly with a well-known Nigerian journalist called Dele Giwa. They were colleagues working together. Dele had run into my name in the US reading The "Christian Science Monitor" which was one of the greatest newspapers in the world. Back in those days, I got a pretty interesting early break running into its overseas editor called David Annabel who asked if I could write on African issues for him. Dele was amazed to see a Nigerian whose bye-lines appeared in The Christian Science Monitor. So when I met Ray, he asked if I can write for Sunday Times. I then began writing pieces from the US while I was still in Grad school and many of them were policy-type issues, taxation and so on. Obviously a couple of people took notice of the kind of advice that came out of those pieces and one of them was the vice president of the country. when I returned into the country, a group of people were talking about ideas being offered so my name came up in the conversation and they reached me and asked if I could do some policy issues as a consultant and I accepted because that is what I set up to do. In my return, I had set up a policy management consulting firm called "Utoma". The first piece of work I did which was around tax policy was taken to the then vice president. This group was actually led by chief Bayo Kuku and in the course of a general conversation, he just said it very casually that "President Shagari approved of you to replace professor Odenigwe" who was a special adviser at that time and I said "I would think about it". So that is how I ended up in that position.

If I had the right; I would have closed it down the day I was appointed.

Why? Because the strategy was foolish and we were about to repeat that foolish strategy. How can a country keep making wrong judgments. Volkswagen of Nigeria, Peugeot Automobile and those other firms like ANAMCO, LEYLAND in Ibadan and co were the result of a policy called "The Import Substitution Industrialisation Strategy ".They came out of the writings of a Latin American Economist called Rahul Pribish. Most Asian countries started with the import substitution industrialisation strategy but at the time we went into it, it probably had some rational things that was justifiable except that the window was closing very quickly on us. What was one of the major attractions of import substitution was that back in the 50's shipping cost was very high and because of that, if you put four trucks on a ship going from Madrid to Sao-Paolo in Brazil, the cost was so high. If you put those four trucks in one container as SKD and you re-assemble them on the other side, there was such a significant gain in the reduction of the cost of shipping. Even if you spend a lot of money re-assembling it here, you have plenty of benefits from creating jobs and the advantages you got from the savings and from the shipping cost. Now, the shipping industry realising that it was losing grounds as a way of moving things, although there was a prediction in the 50's that by the 1990's, it will be cheaper to ship things around the world by air than by sea, so industry got concerned and began to look at how to deal with this problem. Typical thing managers do when they have a problem is manning levels, like let's reduce the number of people who man ships or design ships that can be manned by fewer people. So the more they designed and reduced shipping cost, the less competitive ship continued to be until they came to the real question of the moment which was...What is the reason shipping costs are very high?. In the analysis they discovered that shipping costs were high because the ships spent most of their time at harbour offloading and loading.

What Nigeria needed to do was to say" let's not waste our time, we've missed the window on building the motor industry. What we should do is take some components of the motor car in which Nigeria had strong factor endowments. For example, let's say" my favourite item was rubber, in those days as my own studies showed that Nigeria had the best yield per hectare of rubber in the world. There were a couple of car components out of rubber that will determine you to become the best quality producer in the world to export to these companies that are in Nigeria for use in their global production. My estimate was that Nigeria will earn more money from selling those components than it was earning from crude oil. So I said to people back then that if I had my way, I will shut down and people thought I'm not a patriot. Fifteen to twenty years later, the entire industry is dead as I predicted the day that I took the job. If Nigeria became the best producer of just one rubber component in a motor car in the world, it will provide Nigeria more than a million quality jobs, we will earn foreign exchange and so on. That is the point of a

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motor industry, so this is the vision that I saw that made me in 1986 suggest that if I had my way, I'll shut down the industry.

I think we have to look at manufacturing as being critical to creating jobs. Manufacturing sector in Nigeria has literally gone from a point where in the 70s manufacturing contributed nearly 13 per cent of GDP to a point where it contributed literally less than 3 per cent of GDP. Manufacturing in Nigeria, following the import substitution industrialisation logic, did not emphasize the country's factor endowments, what are the comparative advantages of the country and then the manufacturing strategy. Instead we went for the things that were deleted from our import list, they were generally what everybody was trying to do which was getting to manufacturing and our competitiveness suffered because we were not doing what we could do well. If you notice when manufacturing went into a slump after the structural adjustment programme was introduced, the price of inputs became higher because of the return to market for foreign exchange, many of the manufacturers that thrived were in sectors like food and beverages whose inputs were primarily local, and so manufacturing going forward must be based on our factor endowments and our exploring global value chains of those endowments. We need to look at agriculture and manufacturing and how they relate in terms of global chains not just exporting. We also got to think of some of our endowments around the hydro- carbon value chains. Years ago, I also repeated this in a lecture I gave recently to NNPC managers in Abuja, I talked about Gas Utilization. Nigeria often is referred to as an oil producing country but the truth of the matter is that Nigeria is a gas producing country with associated crude oil. There is a lot more gas in this country and if you look at the value chain originating from gas, you could literally create millions of jobs out of that. If you think of manufacturing possibilities out of gas, a lot of fertilizer companies just simply require gas and another easy take out of gas value chain, is the fact that there are certain heavy industries that can only thrive when they have very cheap power available. If the country made a strategic choice of selling gas to attract those kinds of industries into the area, Nigeria will find itself up there, in a very short period of time with jobs created all around the place.

Well, I think it's a very good thing that our country is gifted with talented young people who are anxious to use those skills to create value. The truth is that there is an over-exaggeration of the lack of capital because when you have a really great idea, you will always find some source of support financially. It's not going to be easy but most businesses started with a couple of aunties, uncles, mom and dad giving the child a few thousand dollars to start a family garage or something else once you show promise. So the idea is beyond availability of capital, the capital is there but there are also institutional factors. For instance, somebody who is absolutely nothing can because he went to a school like university of Chicago graduate school of business or any of the great university goes to a search fund and say he wants to search for a business to take over. Even if he doesn't know the business, he says he needs \$300,000 to do the search, he will get the money because he is set up for that purpose.

I hear that many times, but I think the issue is being misstated. Countries that have made progress did so because leaders enlightened, inspired and mobilized the followers. Not everybody in the society have a gift of seeing tomorrow very clearly and the capacity to navigate obstacles. You have to have enough knowledge to see tomorrow clearly, you also have to have a sense of service to be able to think about the interest of others as the essence of my position rather than me, myself and I which unfortunately is what dominates the Nigerian leadership terrain. Most people are not educated to take role of leaders and so hustlers call themselves leaders. But that is not what leadership is about, leadership is sacrificial, giving of oneself for the good of others. If you are unable to think of others most of the time, you analyse your day and you find out that 90 per cent of your time, you are thinking of me, myself, and I, just accept that you are not a leader. So discovering that this is the major problem with Nigeria, we decided to find a center where we can have research workdone, advocacy and spreading the ideas that we have generated from our research to many people.

Among the things that are critical to do is ensuring teacher quality. Most of the reasons education system is the way it is, is because we don't have quality teachers anymore. We have teachers who can't teach, we have teachers who even when they know cannot impact what they know but more importantly we don't have teachers with the kind of passion the teachers of the 60s had. I believe, we are not getting value for money we spend on education. The money for education, small as it was, was being misappropriated, so education budget is critical. Ownership of the process is a major issue, I believe parents are the first teachers of their children. Until parents can play major role in the family to educate their children and to take an interest in what they are being taught in school so that through

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joint action, maybe through P.T.A, help monitor quality. We also need to ensure that we invest appropriately. I think in continuing teacher education, we need to get the system to focus on relevance. What makes the education more relevant? We agreed as a country years ago that we must have majority of students in the sciences and that has not happened. We need to have incentive skills so that the best students in some of those critical areas are the ones that get the appropriate kind of support to achieve the goals set for education.

Its beyond understanding, it takes away from my sense of civilization that in this age, human beings can still do this kind of things to people who have never offended them. I find it really obnoxious and I think that this time to know who statesmen are. It's not a time for politics. Everybody have to realise that this is the worst thing that has happened to our country. What is done is that Nigeria is in a creeping civil war. People don't think there is a civil war but more people are dying in Nigeria than Syria everyday.

Stop seeing corruption as a moral thing. Corruption kills, there is a book published years ago on corruption and development in Africa. First paragraph of the book run like this "corruption runs a spectrum in Africa, from rare in Botswana to widespread in Ghana, to systematic in Nigeria". Many things made it rare in Botswana and systematic in Nigeria. Not just catching the thief, first of all you have to have systems that reduce arbitrariness. So many things are arbitrary. The temptation to do things happen, you've got to have consequences, you've got to have strong institutions, you've got to have a value frame in the society. Today a criminal will come home and they will celebrate him, give him chieftaincy title, that is not right. We have to learn to ignore people who, quote and unquote, whose wealth we don't know where it have come from. If they have gone into government and they come out as rich-men, we should be able to hate them with contempt. Dr. Micheal Opara who was premier of the eastern region allocated hundreds of plot in GRA Enugu, did not give himself one because he taught it was unethical. Today, a governor will give himself two hundred plots. We should not think of this as a moral problem. It's a practical mismanagement and development problem.

It is well known that partisanship has been too much a panacea. There is a place for government in everything but I will say the more you put things out of the hands of the people who see it as belonging to the public and not a person's interest, the more we will reduce corruption. There is a concept referred to as "The tragedy of the commons". The common grazing field where your cattle comes and eat, mine comes too and eat, nobody will care about replenishing the grass because it belongs to nobody. One day the commons will become Sahara Desert but if it was owned by you, you will be re-grassing as they are eating. That is what is happening to Nigeria, that which belongs to all belongs to none and that is why privatization is a useful way of looking at this, but also selection of leadership elite. Let me be honest, though it's not a nice thing to say, Nigeria- state is a criminal enterprise.

I don't know, it could be true, it could be untrue. But that is what he needs to do as a person who has evidences, he gives us the evidence so we can calculate if it is missing. There is a lot of corruption in Nigeria and there is a tendency to speak without evidence and that is not good. The Bank PHB story was just an attempt by a certain group of people to steal a bank. Look at what happened, people's reputations were ruined, lies were told just because they wanted to steal that institution. Sanusi should never have been hired as the Governor of Central Bank, he should have been fired a year after. Look, there are certain kind of jobs that you need people who are level-headed, they may be good people, Sanusi Lamido would have made a terrific minister of finance but not CBN Governor. CBN Governors don't talk anyhow, in America, the central bank Governor when he says "good morning" you go and check if the tone of his voice reflects in this direction or that direction . The Bank PHB story which was abated by the central bank, if it is in other parts of the world, many people will be imprisoned including himself. He is a wrong guy for the job. Nigeria economy lost at least fifteen years. He mis-behaved.

I don't think its news that I am not a fan of the federal government so what do you want me to say.....

Looking ahead of 2015, do you think Nigeria will remain one indivisible entity? It's my prayer, it's my hope, it's my expectation but I think Nigeria needs to change dramatically. I think we need to renew our country. There is a huge possibility for Nigeria to make dramatic progress but we need new leaders, we need more impassioned committed people who really want to offer society a better place rather than people who just think about power.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2014

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## **A Part of Us Died When Newswatch Was Sold to Jimoh Ibrahim - Ray Ekpu [interview]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

August 25, 2013

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**Length:** 4849 words

**Byline:** Nurudeen Oyewole

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### **Body**

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For close to three decades, Newswatch magazine bestrode the Nigerian media industry like a colossus. Buoyed by the creativity of its founding fathers, the magazine took journalism to another height. But suddenly its shinning light dimmed. Regrets have since trailed its sale to a new publisher.

As it is, the battle has shifted to the courts of law. But as the public wait to know where the pendulum swings, SUNDAY TRUST cornered one of the co-founders and a long-standing Managing Director of the magazine,

in Lagos. And in a no-hold-bar interview, he bared it all.

Thank you very much. As at the time we were thinking of expanding the company, we had done 26 years. We thought it was time not only to consolidate on the achievements of those years, but to also expand and do some other things within the broader canvass of communications. We thought we could establish a newspaper, a printing press, establish a video company and run a radio station, among other things. We believed by doing all of these, we would have succeeded in giving the company the most solid footing and that was why we shopped around for investors. We carried out a research study and we have all of these in a document to prove that all we have done are actually doable projects.

During the period, one of our managers, Mr Bankole Makinde, said he knew one Jimoh Ibrahim who was already making investments in the media industry. And we said to him, go ahead and approach him if you can. He (Bankole) approached him and we had a meeting with him, Soji Akinrinade, Yakubu Muhammed, Dan Agbese and me. We also hired a firm, which led us in this transaction which also assisted us in the preparations of all the documentations. We later arrived at a decision that we could sell 51 percent of shares in the company. And on the 5th of May, 2011 we had a board meeting led by our chairman, Chief Alex Akinyele, and Jimoh Ibrahim came with some of his people and we signed an agreement to sell 51 percent share in the company to his company, Global Media Mirror Ltd. That day, the four of us retired from our positions as executive directors of the company and at the same meeting we were re-appointed as non-executive directors.

Thereafter, Mr Jimoh Ibrahim came and addressed members of staff. He told them we had retired as executive directors but have been re-appointed as non-executive directors. He made lots of promises of what he intended

### A Part of Us Died When Newswatch Was Sold to Jimoh Ibrahim - Ray Ekpu [interview]

doing to lift the company. And we thought that was a good transaction that was capable of giving the company a new lease of life. But as things turned out, that was not to be.

Well, you will not know how a transaction will go at the beginning because as Shakespeare said, "there is no how to find a mind's construction on the face". We thought we were dealing with a serious businessman and that was the basis we entered into that agreement with him. As a matter of fact, we went and inspected his premises, the Global Media Mirror Ltd in Lagos. We saw his printing press. We saw rolls and rolls of newsprint, newspaper distributing vans, and that convinced us that he is a serious investor in the media industry. He said to us that he hoped to put each printing press at each geo-political zones of the country and that since he now has a transaction with Newswatch, he hoped to put one of the printing presses in Newswatch. For us, that was a major attraction. And that was how we allowed him to take over the company.

He sent his staff the very next day to take over and we moved out. He ran it for one year and three months, during which we observed that he was not keeping to the terms of agreement. We tried to draw his attention to some of the violations of what we noted are the terms of agreements, written and unwritten, the violations which are not only in letter but also in spirit. He has actually not been able to do those things he has promised to do for the company. The staff union had to write him that quite a number of things were fast deteriorating in the company and I guess that annoyed him and he went to the office, No. 3 Billings Way, summoned the staff, scolded them and shut down the place.

So we decided to serve him a notice, asking him to reverse some of those decisions he took, which we believed were not in the best interest of the company and the partnership. But before the expiration of the notice, he rushed to the court to obtain an injunction, asking the court to stop us from speaking on behalf of other shareholders of the company and stopping us from performing our duties as directors from the court even when there has been no change to our status as directors in the company. Now, we are in court. He took us to court and two of our shareholders also took him to court. The two cases are in courts; one in the Court of Appeal, the other at the High Court. The case in the Court of Appeal was meant to upturn the injunction he had earlier obtained from the High Court but that hasn't been heard because of the ongoing vacation of judges.

Well, what you can say when you enter into a transaction like ours is that you expect the best. We thought Newswatch will continue to flourish and the magazine will continue to be on the streets. But that is not the case. One does not expect us to be happy at all. An institution we laboured for 27 years, you expect it to be standing tall and at a time be able to point a finger that, I worked here. But if that is not the case, it is something that one has to regret. It is something that can never make you happy. An institution like ours is supposed to last and become shinning beacons to other institutions. We thought, as professionals, we can continue to publish professionally and the company will continue to grow. It should be an institution that other journalists or other similar institutions can come to and possibly build on or contribute to.

The media industry in Nigeria has not really been respected the way it should. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, media people were derided. It was not being reckoned with as a serious profession because many of the practitioners were poorly educated. People do say journalists are people who just found themselves in the newsrooms after the completion of their secondary schools and that is why they write all sorts of things. They really didn't see journalism as a profession. Some people used to call it a craft. But over the years, some well educated persons have come into it. People who have their degrees, Masters and PhDs, I mean people who didn't stray into it. Those who came to make a career out of it and have continued to stay in there. This has given the profession more credibility and put it in the rightful place it belongs.

We now know that there is a body of knowledge called Mass Communication. A knowledge that comes from many disciplines which include Philosophy, Psychology, Social and Physical sciences, History, among others. They all form what is now known as Mass Communication. But it wasn't like that when we and many others in the older generation joined it. It was a trend that those of us who started Newswatch were determined to reverse. We believed we can start publishing professionally and ethically so that people will stop accusing us of being rumour mongers and sensational writers. It was a legacy we are so interested in leaving behind for the younger generation of journalists. We want journalism to be respected and the people out there will stop calling us "press boys". We

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consider that as derogatory and we were passionate about leaving a better legacy for the younger ones. And that was what propelled us to establish the magazine.

It is not dying. Investigative journalism is still there and it had always been there even before Newswatch magazine came on board. We merely took it to the next level. We thought if we continued to get exclusive stories, week after week, it would continue to make the magazine strong. We believe it will make journalism strong and make the society better, and by that we would have contributed our quota to nation-building. What appears to be lacking now is that we really do not have quite a number of newspapers focusing on it. But we all know that investigative journalism is not easy to pursue. It needs time. It needs resources. It needs dedication.

I remember there was one story that we published in Newswatch that took us up to a year to investigate. It took us lots of money and resources. And you don't get to do such stories all the time. It comes once in a while because of the time and resources involved. And not all newspaper organizations have the means and the resources to invest to the extent that they get to the bottom of the stories. Of course there are other stories out there that can make headlines news but investigative journalism can only come once in a while because of the problems I have already enumerated.

One of the challenges I guess, is the issue of inadequate resources. You will see some newspapers quoting from CNN, BBC, New York Times, among others. If they have the resources, they won't be quoting these news establishments but quote their own correspondents in many of the capital cities around the world. But one can always supplement that because there is no newspaper that can cover all the major cities of the world. That is why the news agencies exist. You have Reuters, AP, NAN, among others. Of course I'm aware that some newspaper organizations have correspondents in New York, Washington DC, London, among others and they try to fill in the gaps.

But the most pathetic one is that we don't have more correspondents in other African countries. How do we report Africa to the world if we don't have our correspondents in most of the continent's cities? We now have foreign countries reporting Africa to us, whereas we ought to be reporting Africa to Africans and non-Africans. The challenge we now have is a situation whereby a correspondent from any of these media organizations will simply jump into any African country, spend two or three days and go back to write huge articles which are actually misperceptions of what is truly on ground. These foreign journalists are coming with stereotype mindset of what Nigerians are and what Africans are. And these stereotypes can actually be eroded by speaking to actual people on the streets. And that is a responsibility we have not been able to deliver over the years and I think the governments in Africa should worry about these things and see how it can be addressed.

I know they started Pan-African News Agency which collapsed. But there are many more challenges, one of which is that African journalists cannot travel freely in Africa because the roads are bad. The airlines are few and not well-connected. So, communication is actually impossible. Though you can say there has been relative improvement in the last 10 years especially with the advent of telecommunication and internet, but there is a greater need to move around these cities with ease. And this actually depends on economy. The economies of African countries are weak, very, very weak. They are not strong to sustain all of these in a way that will bring about efficiency.

Also, there is high level of poverty. And, of course, Nigeria has about 66 percent of people who are living below one dollar per day, which is about N150 and N160 per day. Related to this is the poor standard of education. That appears to have even worsened everything. UNESCO prescribes that countries should at least dedicate 26 percent of their annual budget to education, but Nigeria puts in about seven percent of its annual budget. That is a huge gap of about 19 percent and that affects the leadership of the newspapers and its readership as well.

While I was the Editor of Sunday Times between 1980 and 1982, we were doing more than 500, 000 copies in a week. It hasn't happened like that anymore. How many newspapers can do 100,000 copies per day, not to talk of 500,000 copies per week? That shows you the economy is weak. It also shows you that the newspapers might have increased their cover price beyond what an average Nigerian can afford. It also shows that Nigerians are not earning enough to be able to have disposable incomes to buy newspapers and magazines. It also shows that there is probably a decline in the readership of newspaper. It also shows that many Nigerians have other sources of

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getting their news reports other than the traditional media. These sources might not be as credible and as the well-grounded media, but the truth is that they have sources.

As you are aware, the newspapers, magazines, radio and televisions are set up to disseminate news reports. When a story breaks, they pick it up, clean it and distill it for the people who are yearning to acquire information. But the tragedy today is that many people, who are not well-trained or are not trained at all, have also come into the business of news dissemination, especially with the advent of the internet. And they create problems for journalism profession as well as problems for the society. Many other countries of the world are now creating laws on how to deal with invasion of internet space to publish all sorts of things. But unfortunately here in Nigeria, that is a challenge we just have to live with for now.

I think the media already appreciated the fact that the internet has indeed come to stay - that the internet is attracting a lot of young people and not only the young people, but also other people who are attracted by its inventions and usefulness. Thus, we now have a situation that whatever that is published in the newspapers or magazine are put on the websites and made accessible to journalists. And in order to meet up with the breaking news reports, the media now try to announce on their websites the latest development, but will not be able to give all the details required until the next day. That is what we call "announcement journalism". And by next day, people will be willing to get there and get more details.

You can also see a number of television and radio stations referring their audience to Android and iPhone Punch newspaper pioneered the platforms. So for me, that is the way the media has been filling the gap. When the idea of mobile phone news delivery it probably didn't succeed because internet penetration in the country is still low. I was reading one survey report towards the end of last year and it was reported that internet penetration in Africa is about 25 percent. I'm sure that percentage can only be gotten in South Africa. May be when the internet penetration is high, the country will be ripe for that.

No, no, no. It is a free society. It is a democratic society. Anybody is free to own and invest in the media of his or her choice. It is actually a plus for a big country like Nigeria. It is good to have multiple sources of news dissemination to the people. In that way, there won't be what I call, "mechanization of news production" coming from one source. It allows you to access information from many sources. That is what I call media plurality. You read news about government in power, so you read news about the opposition, all of which you can get from different sources. It is up to the audience to choose which of the newspaper to read. It is up to you to choose which newspaper to ignore. I'm sure the average reader knows who owns which media and also understands the interest each of them represents. They know what to take as absolute truth and they know what to take with a pinch of salt. So, I will say, let all the flowers bloom. Let everybody come to the space. It is a big space. Whatever you want, you get.

In the 1960s and 1970s, most of the newspapers owned by government always aligned with government policies. Sometimes ago, a newsspaper called the Morning Post which was owned by Federal Government published in 1964 that a general strike that has been on for many days have been called off, whereas the strike was on. That was what killed the newspaper. It never existed again since then. I started my journalism with a government newspaper known as Nigerian Chronicle in 1974. I know what it is to work with government newspaper. Most of government newspapers don't always last long because those in government and their allies don't want proper journalism, but only publish what they (government officials) consider as newsworthy. Today, most government newspapers have been out of newsstands while those that are still alive are struggling to survive. This is because, they cannot survive the competition. They cannot deliver in terms of reporting accurate and unbiased reportage and they even lack manpower to prosecute all of these. I believe as times goes on, all of these will sort themselves out. The strong ones will stay, and the weaker ones will wither away.

Well, my colleagues - Soji, Yakubu, Dan - and I, decided to go into book publishing. You know, while we were at the Newswatch, we were publishing books through what we knew as Newswatch Book Ltd. We have published 30 books through the company. So after we retired as Executive Directors, we felt we could continue with book publishing under a different platform. And that is basically what we are doing now. Already we have published three books and we are working on four and five. Three of them were written by outside authors while the rest were

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written by us. Though people try to discourage us that Nigerians don't like to read, but I do tell them that when there are good books, those who want to read, will read.

Already, we are trying to introduce a new dynamism into the industry, one of which is that we plan to meet successful Nigerians, elder statesmen and captains of industries to put into writings their experiences and knowledge which we believe will serve the younger generations. If such thoughts and experiences are committed in newspaper, there may come a time that some of the unsold copies can be used to wrap groundnuts. But if such is committed into books, nobody will dare tear the book or use it to wrap a gift.

And when people complain about the falling standard of education, I do ask that when people do not read, why won't the standard fall? Any right-thinking Nigerian should be worried about the sharp decline in the education standard in Nigeria. I was reading sometimes last year, the report of a survey of about 100 Universities in Africa and it was only two that were mentioned in Nigeria - University of Lagos that was placed in 21st and University of Ibadan that was placed in 40th position. In a country where we have more than 100 varsities and such a large population, it is a big shame. It simply means no university in Nigeria can be said to be truly global. It's a shame.

Well, you have to make it a thriving business. It is true that the reading culture in this part of the world is low. I am told that Segun Adeniyi's book must have sold up to 5,000 copies. I was told, I do not know. But you see he dwelt on an issue that many people were quite interested in. And that explained the euphoria that went with it because people were actually rushing to buy it. So, it can thrive, especially when you deal with an issue that many people are quite passionate about. I remember when we wanted to start the Newswatch magazine, some people tried to discourage us, saying it can't thrive and all of that but the first issue we published was cleared off in a number of days. I'm not saying the same thing goes for book publication, but I think if you get it out there, it can thrive. And in this part of the world where it may be quite hard to sell about 100, 000 copies of book, you see people launching it and making donations, all in a bid to make up for the cost of production, so that they can make for the shortfall. In Europe and America, authors just go and sign autographs at the bookshops and people buy. But that is not the culture here. But as time goes on we can actually get it right.

I didn't know. I can't say because I went into journalism even at a time I don't know its full implications. I was in Primary Five which used to be standard five in those days, when I used to collect Nigerian Outlook newspaper from my father to read. The Nigerian Outlook newspaper was then being published in what was known as Eastern Nigeria. Being a member of the Customary Court of Appeal, my father, subscribed to Nigerian Outlook newspaper. I remember that I did use to help him collect it from the vendor at the time and before he comes home, I would have finished reading the paper. And that was when I can say my passion in journalism began to develop. Then I used to read MCK Ajuluchukwu and Dr Nnamdi Azikwe's articles and it was then I began to make up my mind that I will be a journalist. So, when I got to secondary school, attended sporting activities like inter-house sports and write for other students to read. That was when I was at Ibibio State College.

Then when I went to a higher school, Holy Family College in the present day Akwa Ibom state, I started the first students' publication. In those days, before you get to the university after the completion of secondary school education, you must attend a higher school to bag a Higher School Certificate or A' level. The publication then was called the 'Nightingale'. We would get it typed and stapled to the board for students to read. So at a time, it drew the attention of the principal and because it is a Catholic school, he actually assigned one of the Reverend Fathers, who was then the English Language teacher, to me to help us with the production. So from then onward, it was quite easy for me to get the production done.

So after the war in 1970 and I wanted to go to the university, I applied to the University of Lagos to study Mass Communication, University of Ibadan for English Language and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for Sociology. Then, there was no UTME so you can apply directly to the universities. I was offered admission to all the schools but I chose University of Lagos to study Mass Communication. From there, it actually appeared that I was destined to be a journalist.

Though my father wanted me to be a lawyer, apparently because of his law background, but I resisted it. So he refused to pay my fees for the first session which lasted for nine months. But before I gained admission into the

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university I had worked as a teacher in a secondary school, so I had some money on me and I went to university. So, if there is any other profession I would have loved to practice apart from Mass Communication that perhaps could have been Law. Not just because of my father's pressure but because it is the other profession that is akin to journalism, because it also dwells so much on communication, the use of words and the ability to express yourself. Maybe I would have been a lawyer but then, I still consider journalism a better option, because in journalism you can't twist the fact. The fact is the fact. But in law, you can twist the fact for the sake of your client.

Honestly, I can't say. All I can say is that I just like to write. You know when I was made the Managing Director after Dele Giwa's death, I wasn't really a happy man because I really do not like to sit down and be pushing files, trying to run after some staff who may want to steal the company's money and have to block all loopholes and all of that. I thought that was a distraction to me because all I wanted was to be a writer. That was the attraction that got me into the profession, in the first instance, and it often pumps my adrenaline. But then, I realized that in the Nigerian context, when you have practiced the profession to a certain time, people expect you to be a moderator.

I used to tell the staff that I really didn't think I am cut out for this and that I was willing to quit this place and relinquish it for anyone who so want it. My abiding interest in journalism is to write. If I had wanted to be an administrator, I would have studied Business Administration or Public Administration. I just wanted to be a journalist and that is why I had my first degree in journalism, second degree in journalism and a diploma in advance journalism.

No, no, no. I have been tempted before but I rejected it. I don't have the qualities to act as a typical Nigerian politician, because you have to dance on stage and say one thing in the general meeting and say another in the smaller meeting. I am not capable of that. I don't think I can make a success out of it. Some years ago, some young men from my state came to my house in Akwa Ibom State. They had been longing to see me and they came along with my brother. When I asked him before hand, why they wanted to see me, he said no he didn't know. They were all successful in their own respective fields. So, they came to me and said they would want me to contest for the governorship seat of Akwa Ibom state. I listened to them. But I didn't tell them, O! come tomorrow or next tomorrow, I will give you answer. I gave them the answer right in there. I appreciated them and saluted their courage, but I told them I was not interested.

I said I cannot make a successful Nigerian politician because I am too blunt and I am going to have problems with people. They said, 'yes, that is the more reason we want you'. I said no. How do you win an election in Nigeria? I don't want anybody to kill in my name and neither am I ready to follow anybody to any kind of shrine to swear to any juju. For many politicians, the end justifies the means, but for me the means must be good to justify the end. So that is not going to work. So they said to me, 'no problem, we will go and get your picture and paste your posters across the towns and villages'. I said, well, it's your choice. If you want to waste your money, you can go ahead with it because I am neither going to deny it nor confirm it. I will just sit in my house and continue to do what I am doing. So, if you wish to waste your money, good luck to you.

I told them that in 1998, when Obong Victor Attah was chosen as a consensus candidate, I was contacted by the leader of the party who chose Attah, Chief Don Etiebet. He asked me to come and become Attah's running mate and I declined. So, if I had taken it, I would have become a deputy governor of the state because Attah went ahead to win that election. It was at that time they were convinced that this is a wrong guy to talk to. So they gave up.

Do you see the paper out every week? If you see the paper out every week, you feel something. And if you don't see the paper the way I don't see it, you also feel something. Something you laboured for. Something you nurtured for over 26 years of your life. Something you carried out extensive research on before its establishment. A paper that was able to rank among the best 12 in the world. When we started, we were passionate about it. We loved it. The public loved it. It was something that was so dear to us. When you don't see it anymore, something in you dies!

When I was tried by Uwaifo Panel after I had written something about Shagari and I was later fined N20 , if you see the number of hands in the courtroom, wanting to pay the fine. Tai Solarin was there, Gani Fawehinmi was there, the public were all willing to pay for me right there. It wasn't about me, it was about the magazine. When the magazine was proscribed, a group of people came and the whole of Billings' Way in Oregun was blocked with cars.

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They were shouting, "our paper, our paper". Our account was frozen and people were saying, we will give you money. We want to give you money to survive.

When **Dele Giwa** was killed, a lot of people came out and donated lots of things. Someone donated aircraft. It was a fascination they had. A product like that, which has moved from being a mere newspaper to an institution people so much respected and want to associate with and want it to last. When you do not see it anymore, how do you feel? So it wasn't about us. It was about what we made possible for the Nigerian public.

Well, we can't say that for now. Let's finish with the court cases then, we will know what to do.

Our production nights were like festivals but without the trappings of festivities. We were always excited. We were always jumping up in euphoria. Despite the stress associated with where we were compiling the editorial materials and the printing press, we were enjoying it all. I mean despite the enormous work, we were enjoying it all immeasurably. You can't recreate that. It was the most memorable thing I can think of. When you are through with this production, what you and others are looking forward to was, the next paper, the next paper and that was it. With all the difficulties we were having then, I mean you will do the typesetting at New Nigeria Newspaper then take it to Ikeja for page-planning, then return it back for proof reading. After that you return to go and drop the corrections before the production proper takes place. It was that excitement we shared and I considered it memorable. But most importantly, the excitement of doing what Nigerians love.

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## A Night of Horror Recalled [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

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**Length:** 2452 words

**Byline:** Ademola Adedoyin

### **Body**

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As another holy month of Ramadan made its spiritually majestic and overwhelming arrival weeks back, it became imperative to reflect on the event of July 14th last year, a most gory occurrence in a month when men and women of conscience seek reconciliation with their maker, a most violent and bloody event perpetrated by some sons of Lucifer who had long lost their souls.

It was bloodbath at dawn,a most horrendous and evil act by some sadistic servants of Satan. Early that morning, these servants of Satan on the loose made their way to my home.

It was the late **Dele Giwa**, that unforgettable journalism icon and engaging columnist who described Lawrence Anini called The Law, who gave Benin City and environs one hell of a time in the mid 80s as Son of a Dog. Those who visited my home at Mainland Park Estate (a.k.a. Pentagon Estate), Mowe, on this particular date last year when the Ramadan broke into half - the 15th and left in its wake tears, blood and sadness were sons of wolves.

For, come to think of it, yes truly dog can be nasty, murderous even, but they can also be reasonable, friendly, loyal and truly so.

These sons of wolves that shattered the peace of my home at dawn a year ago were animals in human skin, as the inimitable Fela Anikulupo Kuti would have put it, they were blood thirsty, truly predatory carnivorous animals, irrational and without conscience or soul.

The event of that early morning left me wondering about the human persona. My wife who speaks impeccable Hausa confirmed that these blood cuddling youngsters had their conversations in Fulfude (Fulani language) with a mix of Hausa words. Given such background, one is still left wondering about the depth of moral depravity that would make young men from such cultural milieu to choose the holy month when men and women of conscience were seeking reconciliation with their maker and atoning for transgressions to perpetrate evil and visit mayhem on any creature at all.

The gang that ruptured the serenity of my abode one year ago was not just a robbery one, but a murderous group of young men who have no values for the sanctity of human lives and whose desire for material possession made no room for any modicum of compassion or guilt. They were a pack of wolves at their most sadistic and iniquitous rage.

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These professionals from hell brought their tools of nefarious trade with which they neatly cut the burglary proof iron bars on the windows of my kitchen.

That done, they made their way into my sanctuary. With nobody in the guest room downstairs, they came upstairs without any qualm. Until two weeks before then, my intellectual sparring partner Yoruba philosophy and mother, the 92 year-old Yeye Oba, Alhaja Memunat Ahinke Adedoyin, our guest for almost two months, was the occupant of the guest room, passing the night there either alone or at times, with her granddaughter, Temilade. That this event occurred in her absence has left me grateful to the good Lord. One can still not imagine the old woman witnessing her son being shot in the chest at point blank range at dawn. Accessing the rooms upstairs was made easy by the fact that we rarely bolt the entrance leading to the living room and bedrooms upstairs. While one snored away, awaiting the clock to rouse one from slumber by 4.30am for the sahour (early morning meal and salat during Ramadan) the evil gang had made their inroad into the children's room upstairs. It must have been about a quarter to 4.00am. From the children's room, they seized our housemaid and led her at gun point to the master bedroom. What followed was a most horrendous and dastardly act straight from the heart of the most sadistic soul.

The five man team entered my room where my wife and our two little boys - Babawamide and Oloruntwooni - and yours sincerely were deeply in slumber. It was the penetrating ray of light directed into my eyes from their torch light that roused me from sleep. Half awake and half asleep, I leapt out of bed and with a lame sleepy voice I muttered, "Who is this?" That was it. Within the split of a second, one of the gang members responded with a volley of gunshots straight into my chest.

The devastating impact of the hot lead in my right chest threw me up and landed me back on my bed. Sleep took a flight. And horror stepped in. Blood gushed out as you would have water gushing from a broken pipe. My body quivered and trembled in quick successions and involuntarily; the pace of my breathing raced faster. In all this, I heard a staccato of conversations by the marauding beasts and my wife's cry of agony saying repeatedly: Lahila ila lahu, you have shot my husband, lahila ila lahu, you have killed my husband.

As seconds rolled into minutes and my bed was turning into a river of blood, I had to feign death. I breathed heavily and held my breath. The evil guests, now convinced I had given up the ghost covered my face with our duvet and turned their satanic attention to my wife. Only two words were clear: gold, money. They said this repeatedly as they ransacked the house like professional robbers that they were. They emptied every pocket, raided every drawer, looted all watches, collected all monies ... ten minutes, 20 minutes ... I was still bleeding, getting weaker, but through God's mercy, still conscious and mentally alert.

About twenty five or so minutes into their operation, they hit the goldmine literally and metaphorically in one of the drawers of the wardrobes, they found madam's box of trinkets. Even without understanding the meaning of the words they were exchanging, it was obvious they were elated that they have made a haul. They screamed at madam and threatened to shoot her dead for not telling them early about the hidden treasure.

Madam pleaded with them to show mercy. They led her out of the master bedroom, and as I guessed correctly, to her bedroom. There they ransacked the wardrobes and took her niece's laptop and other valuables. Meanwhile, my bleeding continued and I felt life draining out of me. But for reasons that defied human logic, I had become supremely confident that it was not going to be my last day, that I was going to survive the ordeal. I kept telling myself: "Ademola, it is not your last day, you have not fulfilled your destiny". I remained conscious and mentally alert even though by now, I was sleeping on a bed soaked totally with my blood.

And I knew the bandits would soon vanish. Having made great fortunes, the next logical thing was to scram with their loot. I asked God to let them leave without wreaking further havoc. Suddenly, there was cold silence; it could be cut with a knife. I knew they were gone and was relieved that there were no other gunshots. But where are my wife and the children and other members of my household? Have they led them away or locked somewhere?

Since He is a merciful God, who never fails to provide succour even at the most difficult times, the saving grace He provided at that critical point was through my mobile phone. Although they had collected all phones in the house, my two mobile phones were underneath my pillows and having shot me as soon they came in and with my bed

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drenched in blood, the idea of checking the underneath of my pillows for any items became far remote. They left without my phones.

Convinced that they had gone and still conscious and alert, I reached for my phone and put a call across to my brother and friend, Yusuph Olaniyonu, the then Ogun State Commissioner for Information and Strategy and now Special Adviser on Media to the Senate President . Obviously still going through the sahour routine, Alhaji Olaniyonu picked my call at the first ring. I told him the gory tale and that I needed policemen in the estate immediately to lead me to the hospital if I was to be saved from dying. Yusuph did exactly that. Bless him O Allah.

My next move was to come out of my room to go in search of my family even though I was soaked in the pool of my blood. With Madam's room left scattered and the door left ajar, I made for the children's room where I found the door locked and the key left there for whoever may come to rescue the helpless souls. I opened the door. My wife screamed, she thought she had seen a ghost. She was so sure it was either I was dead or about to give up. She could not imagine that her husband could still have any energy left to walk out of the bed, not to talk of coming out of the room to rescue them. I calmed her down and assured her it was her husband in flesh and truly so, in blood.

Again, my timely act also manifested God's mercy upon my household. In the room before I came to open the door, my wife, convinced that the marauders had escaped, had made to scale the window and jump down from the first floor bedroom to call on neighbours to rescue her husband before he gives up. Our then nine year old daughter, Temilade pleaded with mummy not to take such risk as she was going to hurt herself.

Mummy insisted she was going to do just that. The little girl gave up and urged mummy to be careful in jumping down. She was about to do that when I flung the door open. A two minute delay could have proved fatal as no one could predict what would have been the consequence of such risky endeavour.

It was in this state of confusion, uncertainty, fear and multiple injuries in my chest and neck that my entire household accompanied me to the Redemption Health Centre at the Redeemed Camp. My wife drove like she was racing to escape from hell. She demonstrated courage that was rare for a lady. I urged her to take it easy as I was alright and would be well. By then it was well past 4.00am. May Allah's mercy continue to be upon her and her offspring.

The management and staff of Redemption Health Centre deserve special praises for their humanness, professionalism, civility and devotion to duty. If health institutions in Nigeria are run like it is done at that centre, many souls would be saved from avoidable deaths. At that centre, Daddy, G. O., as Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye is affectionately called by all, practices what he preaches. Bless him and his Godly works even more O Lord.

For my extended family under the leadership of our Olori Ebi, Imam Adebayo Ibrahim Ali, and Mummy, your love, prayers and assurances made all the difference.

At that low period of one's existence when some could cavalierly choose to hit a man that was already on the ground the more, they stood by me insisting whatever happened to a man was divine and destined and for a purpose. Daddy insisted armed robbers could strike and do strike even in the most secured of places. Bless my loving family and continue to deepen our love and togetherness O Allah.

What about my friends, many of whom I am not sure if to describe as friends or brothers? What about colleagues who stood solidly by us throughout our ordeal like the rock of Gibraltar?

How does one thank a friend, a brother and now my boss, my Chairman - Dr Olatunde Ayeni sufficiently. On reading my text informing him of the unfortunate incident, the business icon put a call across to me immediately and requested to know the state of my health and the situation with my family. In a demonstration of brotherly love and kindness that only the Good Lord can reward, Dr Ayeni directed that my family be relocated to another apartment immediately. May he and his generations continue to receive God's mercy.

How can one remember this incident without mentioning Mr. Austin Avuru, the Managing Director of Seplat Petroleum and Chief Tunde Afolabi, the Executive Chairman of Amni Petroleum Development Company. Not just

### A Night of Horror Recalled [analysis]

that their generous donations helped in offsetting my huge medical expenses; particularly at Reddington Hospital and abroad, their assurances that they were ready to commit whatever it would take to keep me alive was a soothing balm and a psychological therapy at that most trying and uncertain times.

Then my friends, my brothers, how do I start thanking you. Stand up for recognition, Olayinka Aroyehun and his wife, Arinola. This brother from our second mum from whose chest flows milk of human kindness demonstrated brotherly love. For this kind hearted soul, no amount was too much to bring a victim of such attack to perfect health; particularly when that victim is Mola Ishola. God will continue to reward your kindness as He has always done, Abefe.

Then my twin brother and my soul mate, Zik Zulu Okafor and his wife, our own adorable Adora. How can you thank enough a brother who is ready to go to the end of this world in search of whatever would be needed to restore me to perfect health. His writing on his Facebook wall was most touching and tears - inducing. Zulu coordinated efforts to get friends to rally round to ensure my survival and he discharged himself creditably. He practically suspended every other thing to ensure I accessed the best medical treatment available. May the Good Lord continue to deepen your joy and never fails to continually give you victory over adversaries.

My Good friend and brother, the sports entrepreneur, Taye Ige was wonderful. Up to now, he has not relented on how to ensure I recover fully and became fully fit again. May you continue to score critical goals in all aspects of your worthy life.

Same prayer goes to my Ichie as I fondly call him, Chuddy Oduenyi, Nigerian's Public Relations lead player and remarkable friend. Chuddy's support and his many trips to Redemption Health Centre was the stuff good friendship is made of. God will preserve you in good health for many more decades in your service to our profession and to humanity.

May the Good Lord also bless my friends and brothers; E.J Williams, Mr & Mrs Ismaila Bello Mr & Mrs Olayiwola Lawal Olarinoye, Prof Noah Yusuph; the humane Amolegbe brothers: Sikiru, Fattah and their spouses and Olatunde, Otunba Biodun Ajiboye, Lanre Alabi, Niyi Kolawole, Barrister Ogbonnaya Agbafo, Kenny Alata and others who through prayers, visits, gifts and show of love and affection made the life-threatening ordeal light.

My in-laws at Offa, Kaduna, Ilorin, Lagos and United Kingdom were simply wonderful. Your genuine concern, love, visits, prayers and affection was truly therapeutic. A ni fi iru eleyi san fun ara wa. God bless you all. Our neighbours in Mowe were good neighbours by every definition. It is only God that can reward your kindness.

Most important and deserving of the most profound gratitude and appreciation is the Almighty God. God assured me July 14, 2014 was not my last day and He kept His promise. He assured me it was a new dawn for me: The arrival of my Victory at Dawn; a rebirth. I claim it. I cannot thank you enough, God of Miracles.

Adedoyin, a journalist, writer and public relations expert writes from Lagos

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2015



## Why I abandoned CBN job for journalism—Ugochukwu

The Sun (Nigeria)

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### **Body**

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FRED ITUA, ABUJA Chief Onyema Ugochukwu is a household name in the journalism profession in Nigeria. He is rated as one of the few seasoned journal-ists in the country, who tasted virtually all the top positions in the then famous Daily Times Newspapers. He later built a reputation for himself in the political turf. In [...]

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Chief Onyema Ugochukwu is a household name in the journalism profession in Nigeria. He is rated as one of the few seasoned journal-ists in the country, who tasted virtually all the top positions in the then famous Daily Times Newspapers. He later built a reputation for himself in the political turf.

In this special interview with Daily Sun, preparatory to his 70th birthday anniversary, the revered ***journalist***, administrator, politician, economist and image manager spoke exten-sively on many issues. He opened up on why he left a lucrative job at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to pursue a career in journal-ism, the Biafran war, the recently concluded National Conference, among other salient national issues.

Excerpts.

Congratulations, sir, on your 70th birthday. Looking back, can you recount how it was during your early days?

I started out in the village in Umuahia, Abia State. It was a more secure society. You could project where you were going or what you were going to do. You could tell when you would start a school, graduate and get a job. You could easily project back then. But things changed rapidly after the civil war. After the war, the oil boom came in. Growing up was very interesting. I had a very large family where I was number three. We were seven in number. Unfortunately, most of my siblings are gone now. My sister is the only one left. I pray to God that she sees 70 years

### Why I abandoned CBN job for journalism—Ugochukwu

and beyond. I started primary school in my village and completed it in Ikot Abasi. It was called Igwenga Opobo at a time. I completed my primary school in 1958. Then I went to Methodist College from 1959. We were 30 boys in the class. They did not want too many students, so they took only 30 boys that year. There was also Government College in Umuahia, but my people tended towards this particular school.

Why?

It was a Methodist College and one of the oldest schools. We are Methodist. My uncle actually went to the same college in 1934. So, it was more like a tradition. It was a very good school up until when I was there. We got in in Form 1. Within a month, they packed 30 of us to Onitsha with one young English man. We spent a month in Onitsha, came back and wrote essays, which became a book. That was how we started our secondary education. We were not the first to start that in the school. It went on for more years after us. I did seven years there. I did my school certificate in 1963 and higher school in 1965. You finished secondary in December and the universities opened in September. There was that gap. I was kept there for another eight as a small teacher before I went to the university.

Why were you uncomfortable with that arrangement?

I wanted to go out to Lagos. I even had a job actually, except that the coup happened. The January coup changed a whole lot of things. There was order in the system. But when the coup came, it was like the whole world exploded. I was going to work in NIDB (Nigerian Industrial Development Bank). That would have been for eight months before going on to university. I was persuaded to stay and teach. Then the war came. I went to the University of Nigeria (UNN) to read Economics. The war came and interrupted our education for about three years. During the war, we had to go into the Biafran army and fight. When my best friend, Henry got killed, I had to join. Henry was my classmate from Form 1. We were very close. He was killed in April 1968. I joined the army.

Did you join the Biafran army voluntarily or you conscripted?

I had to compete to join the School of Infantry. It was a tough competition. I joined in May. Six weeks after training, you were commissioned an officer. The next thing was to face the warfront. If you were alive in three months, they would confirm you a Second Lieutenant. I got a double promotion to become a full Lieutenant, although I got injured not too long after. The war ended and we went back to school in 1970 and I graduated in 1972, went to work for the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as a research officer for three years. The CBN paid the highest salary then.

...But you left the CBN after three years.

Yes; I wanted to be a **journalist**. That is why?

Why would you leave a CBN job to become a **journalist**?

I wanted to be a **journalist** because it was exciting. I took a salary cut to become a journalist. My starting salary in the CBN was £1,440. The federal civil service was starting people at £800. You can see the gap. When we converted to Naira in 1972, it simply multiplied by two. My salary became N2, 880 per annum. In 1975, my salary was N5, 600. Daily Times offered me N4, 500 and I accepted it. I went over to work for Business Times, which was just starting at that time.

Were there people who influenced you to go into journalism?

No; I had an interest in it. I started reading newspapers when I was a child. Even when we were in secondary school, my friend who is now late, started the press club. We published a newspaper, which we called The Weekly Pressman. It was regular in those days. It was just a matter of interest. I did not tell my brother before joining Daily Times. I told him after I had resigned. Imagine how upset he was. Journalism has been very good to me. I was lucky. We had a great newspaperman in the person of Alhaji Babatunde Josè.

Back then when you became a journalist, journalism business had not grown in Nigeria. You were coming from a different background. How did you fit in?

### Why I abandoned CBN job for journalism—Ugochukwu

That is the great thing about Alhaji Josè. He was starting the journalism business in Nigeria, with the publication of Business Times. They have had a business section in the Daily Times for sometimes. But in 1975, the Daily Times decided to publish a weekly newspaper called the Business Times. The first editor was Effiong Essien. I was employed as an economist analyst. I went over there and Alhaji Josè adopted me. He encouraged people. In eight months, I was appointed acting editor of Business Times and then editor. Even after he left, Alhaji Josè took an interest in my career. I remained closed to him until he died. That was a great influence.

At what point did you decide to relocate to London?

I had been editor of Business Times for five years. I was getting a bit restless. The Guardian was starting. I was part of the planning for The Guardian. They gave me a letter of appointment as an associate editor. My managing director heard about it and tried to talk me out of it. Not too long after, I had gone for an interview in Vienna, OPEC and they offered me a job. It became 'if going to abroad was what you wanted, why don't you go to the West African Magazine in London?' So, I went to the magazine in London as deputy editor and I became the editor. I was there for a little over four years. I was favoured and lucky. I worked hard. I was committed to the job.

Journalism in those days was considered as something for people who were educational misfits. How did you fit in?

Alhaji Josè changed all that. He began to employ graduates, although he was not a graduate himself. He started bringing graduates to Daily Times in the 1960s. He encouraged some people to go back to the university. For the Business Times, Effiong Essien was also from the research department of the CBN. Daily Times then expanded the employment of graduates. Alhaji Josè was replaced by Dr. Koro. Dr. Koro had a proper vision to follow up on what his predecessor was doing. The emphasis shifted to PhD holders. A whole lot of PhD holders joined Daily Times. That was about the same time Dele Giwa was recruited. Daily Times brought him from New York as features editor.

Having got to the height of journalism, how do you feel?

After serving as editor of West African Magazine, I came back as editor of Daily Times. That used to be something big in the profession then. I was editor of Daily Times for five years. Then I got pushed to the board as executive director. For me, the ultimate was being an editor of Daily Times.

When you left the newsroom and joined Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's government, how was the transition?

I retired early from the Daily Times during Abacha's regime. He was closing newspapers. I did not feel comfortable. Down the road, I had been president of Guild of Editors from 1988. We had to revive the guild because it was moribund. I did only one term and handed over to another person. Since then, we have been able to keep the guild going and it has grown beyond my wildest imagination. The current president is doing so well. I could not cope with the political situation in a government-owned newspaper in that particular regime. It was okay when Ibrahim Babaginda was there. So, I took an early retirement. I tried to trade, but I was a failed trader. That is one thing I know I failed in. I lost my friends' and brother's money. I fell back on media consultancy. I continued trading because I did not want to give up.

What were you trading on?

I started out with papers. A bit of newsprint, but art papers. What happened was that, people will get you to give them on credit and they will not pay on time. The real traders kept pushing the price down when your own arrived. They made you sell it to them at a discount.

How did you get into Obasanjo's presidential project?

My friend, General Aliyu Gusau who is now the Minister of Defence, asked me to come and work on the publicity team. I could not say no to him. He and I drove over to see Obasanjo. We had a chat for a while.

You eventually became one of Obasanjo's staff. How was the experience like?

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Through out the campaign, I worked closely with him. There was a time he asked me to move into Ota Farms. I could not do that because my family was in Lagos. It was a great experience working for Obasanjo. Obasanjo is fanatical about Nigeria. He believes in this country so much and he will do anything to pro-mote the interest of Nigeria. Obasanjo is a great thinker. He is full of ideas and original thinking. Obasanjo would try new ideas if he thought it would help Nigeria. I have never seen anybody who worked as hard as he did. He could go on almost round the clock if he had to.

Many people equally believe that he is self-ish and a fox.

Of course, if you are a General, you have to be a fox. That is how you win wars. You have to outfox your opponent. When he came in newly, every Saturday was devoted to workshop. For instance, he would pick education for a particular Saturday and invite all the education experts in the Council Chambers. We would spend the whole day talking about the way forward. He would be the one at the end of the day that would be bubbling. People often say he does not listen to advice. That is not true. I used to say that he listened too much. If he thinks you are a bloody fool, he will tell you. If later on he thought that was an idea, he will call you. He had an open mind. The way people are going on about it does not really represent the man. He is my Oga.

You set up the NDDC and was the pioneer chairman. Looking back, would you say the aims of setting it up was achieved during your time?

You are now putting words in my mouth. Yes, we were pioneers. The president told me to go over there and sack everyone that worked in OMPADEC. He thought the place was very cor-rupt. He put it in writing. I could not argue with him. I realised that there were good people. I came back and told him there were good people there. We reviewed some files. We literally started from the scratch. We had to draw up new administrative guidelines. We appointed experts to do that. We had a new salary structure. We were able to set up a good administration. Because there was youth militancy, we needed to engage with the youth as soon as possible. We came up with quick impacts projects. We also did major projects like roads into areas that had never seen cars. I think one of the most impor-tant things we did was the master plan. That is the Niger Delta Regional Master plan. We tried to engage with the states, the oil companies and the Federal Government. The plan was for

15 years. If implemented, it would have changed the region for the better. We used a German firm as consultants. There were more than 100 Nigerian firms we used as consultants during the sector study. I thought that was our biggest achievements. Along the way, we did about 832 projects while I was there. I am at least happy that a presidential committee that went on a verification exercise after I had left held a press conference and said they did not find one ghost project. That was something. At the end of the tenure, I owed the president a duty to write a report, with recommendations. I wrote to the president. The law said I could be appointed for a second term, but the position of a chairman rotates between the states. In the memo, I wrote that if I did eight years, every other state would want to do eight years. Before it would get to Rivers States, it would be about 54 years. In my recommendations, I advised the president to appoint somebody from

Akwa Ibom State. Some people interpreted it as saying I did not want to continue. That is not true. But I had a duty to give an honest opinion. My considered opinion was that it should move to the next state, which was Akwa Ibom. If the person I had recommended had been appointed, I think NDDC would have maintained the guts. Politics came into it and along the way, there was some disorientation. But they are carrying on. The thing I worry most about is that the master plan is not being implemented. It's not even being talked about. People talk about new master plan. We do not need a new master plan. We need to review what had been designed. It is not being implemented and I am sad about that. The NDDC was Obasanjo's idea. Obasanjo was in that region during the war. I think it was at a meeting in Yenegoa during the campaigns that the idea occurred to him that he needed a special agency for the Niger Delta. Nobody bullied him into it. It came from him. It

was his vision. I tried to implement that vision to the extent to which I understood it. I made an effort. I just wish people would go back to the master plan and update, then implement it.

When you held sway as chairman of NDDC, keen observers opined then that some top management staff in the agency to enrich themselves. How true was this?

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In any organisation, it is inevitable that there would people who would want to make money. It is a natural thing. We were very strict about our practices and financial guidelines. We did not award projects we did not have the money for. Whenever we awarded a project, we deposited the money with the banks. If you reached a milestone in the execution of the projects, your money was paid from the banks. You did not have to come to us. That was what we operated. At a time, we tried to eliminate files by computerising everything. My own evaluation of projects was to arrive at actual cost of the projects and we added 25-30 per cent profit margin on top. It looked rather drastic, but the contractors, because they got their money on time, began to like it. They did our jobs as quickly as possible and got paid. I discouraged any attempt by our people to make money from contractors. You may remember that our first executive director of projects had to resign. I

insisted that he had to go. The president backed me up. There are bound to be leakages in any organisation. I am happy that by the time I was leaving, we got to a point where the oil companies felt we were partners and they trusted us. It got to a point where Shell was providing 70 per cent of the funds for the construction of Yenegoa-Nembe road. NDDC provided 30 per cent. NDDC was even asked to manage it. They trusted us up to that point.

Many people are yet to fully understand why you made so much effort to rule Abia state...

We had great ideas of what we could do with the state and how we could advance it. We tried to sell the idea. It did not work and I did not become the governor.

Who would you blame that on?

I would not blame it on the people, but on the system. Ultimately, one felt God did not want it. I tried my best, but it did not happen.

You were at the National Conference. A lot of people are skeptical about its report. Looking at all the efforts put in and the posture of the National Assembly, would you say you are worried?

At the beginning, I was as skeptical as the people you mentioned. I did not think the conference was going to achieve much. Then, I was nominated. At the end if it, I am very impressed with what that conference achieved. There was a belief that we were going to disagree and then some groups would walk out. But we achieved consensus Nigerians in public never agreed on. We came up with a report that can change this country if implemented. Implementation is a different thing. There were people who insisted that we should subject the outcome of the conference to a referendum. But there is no referendum in our constitution.

The only way to go is through the National Assembly, which has the power to amend the constitution. I believe the president will present the report to the National Assembly to look at it and implement the very good things in that report. I do not expect that they would accept everything. But that report is very good and it will help this country for the better. When I went to that conference, one of the things I wanted to advocate for was regional system of government. I felt that we had federalised everything in this country to the point that we are now suffocating under that centralised system. Let the different regions run their administrations and their schools. We do not have to have the same school curriculum. We were not able to get a regional federation. In general, the conference did a great job. One can only hope that the National Assembly will look carefully at it. Do not worry about the rhetorics during the conference. Maybe that annoyed the National Assembly members. People were saying we did not need the National Assembly. We need them.

As an elder statesman who is now 70 years, what do we expect from you, going forward?

If God keeps me alive, there are so many things I will like to do. I have refused to be a veteran journalist. I insist that I am a journalist. I have written for sometime now, but I intend to sit down and maybe write an account of my journey through this life. I do not think I have the talent for business or trading. I might as well sit somewhere and write things.

How fulfilled are you?

### Why I abandoned CBN job for journalism—Ugochukwu

I ran for governor and I did not get it. There are few things in life that did not work. But in general, I have been very lucky. God has been very kind and merciful to me. Right from my school days, it's been great. During the war, the bullet that went through my hand and leg would have killed me. Some of my colleagues died. I went through the war alive. I had a successful career in journalism. I am not sure about a good career in politics. I have to thank God for what has been a wonderful life.

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All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State



## All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

The Sun (Nigeria)

February 8, 2015 Sunday

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### **Body**

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FROM CHUKS ONUOHA, UMUAHIA HRH, Eze Cletus Uwadiegwu Ogbonnaya is one Abia State traditional ruler who speaks his mind with forthrightness. He is a veteran ***journalist*** who practiced for 23 years and rose to the position of Editor and Managing Editor at various times, before answering the call of his people to come home and [...]

FROM CHUKS ONUOHA, UMUAHIA

HRH, Eze Cletus Uwadiegwu Ogbonnaya is one Abia State traditional ruler who speaks his mind with forthrightness. He is a veteran ***journalist*** who practiced for 23 years and rose to the position of Editor and Managing Editor at various times, before answering the call of his people to come home and be their traditional ruler. He has been on the throne for 14 years. Quite often, traditional rulers tend to be polygamous, but the monarch who has been married for 35 years to his wife holds the view that a man does not need to substitute his wife as long she performs her duties well. In this interview he relives the experience of ascending to the throne and his career as a ***journalist***, particularly, the story that got him detained for one month under Major General Muham-madu Buhari's Decree 4 of 1984.

Excerpts...

Could you give us a snap shot of who Eze Ogbonnaya is?

HRH Eze Cletus Uwadiegwu Og-bonnaya is the Ojim 1 of Umuanya Autonomous Community, Uturu , the host community of Abia State University, Uturu. I practiced journalism for 23 years. I graduated from University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1978 with a degree in Mass Communication. I was in journalism practice up to 2001, when

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

Umuanya Autonomous Community, Uturu was created and my people felt that they needed somebody with my level of exposure to be the Eze. It was on that basis that I came home and since then I have been the traditional ruler of this community for 14 years. I got a Master's degree in Mass Communication from Imo State University, Owerri. I have an honorary doctorate degree (Doctor of Literature) from an American University and I am a member of the Governing Council of Gregory University, Uturu, a private University in Abia State. I sit on the Governing Council of the Brethren College of Theology, Umuahia, Nigerian affiliate of National University, USA.

I am 63 years, having been born on October 30, 1951; I am a product of Holy Cross School, Uturu, where I got my First Leaving Certificate in 1964, before proceeding to Acquinas Secondary School, Nsu, Mbano. I was barely 16 years old and in Class-3, when the Nigerian Civil War started in 1967; like all other young men in Biafra with true Igbo blood in them, I enlisted into the Biafran Army on February 12, 1968. I fought as an infantry and a ranger in the guerilla wing of the Biafran Army. I was an intelligence officer too. When the war ended in 1970, everybody had to start all over again.

What does it feel like being an Eze?

I had no idea that I was going to be an Eze; the constitution of Umuanya community specifies that the Ezeship is neither hereditary, by seniority of villages or by rotation. What you have is a situation, where any time there is vacancy for Eze, the person seen to be most eligible either through election or selection becomes the Eze. I was not born into royalty, I'm a free son of the soil and luckily in Uturu, we do not have the outcast system. Any free born son of Uturu can aspire to be the monarch in his own community; so by the grace of God, I became the monarch on personal merit. My people saw me fit and qualified to be their monarch. I feel honored and that is why I left journalism and the left urban area to relocate to the rural community. I have been here for the past 14 years.

Were you given a new name when you became the Eze of your community?

From my title, Ojim, you get the history of the community. Ojim was the legendary founder of Uturu, Umuanyim, and he was very warlike. Through conquest, he extended our frontiers up to Okigwe, we have a border with Okigwe, towards Ihube. In those days, Umuanyi people were said to be very warlike. They could muster up to 400 men in the warfront. And allow 400 men to remain at home to defend the home; that is why we are called Ojim Nnu Egbe. Nnu is 400 in Igbo, it means that we were able to muster 400 soldiers with 400 guns both at the warfront and home front to defend us. There were other artifacts discovered through study that man had lived in Uturu, between 300,000 years ago to 500,000. We have where we call Ekeukwu which is our own Garden of Eden, where the first man was said to have settled. Again the man Uturu was said to have migrated from the Onoafia area in Afikpo, Ebonyi state.

What is your religion?

I am a Christian, I was born into Christianity but I am a student of comparative religion. I am into Jewish studies and I can call myself a messianic Jew if one can look at it that way.

Do you have gods that you worship, and how many shrines do you have?

You know the tragedy of African gods is that if you don't worship it after some time, they will die. Since Christianity came to Uturu in 1906, the British man subdued Uturu people, which my grandfather, Ogbonnaya, was one of the traditional defenders, and introduced Christianity, we have heard that those deities are gone and even if they were anywhere, nobody will tell you this is where they are now because nobody goes there again. They are all dead, all those deities.

How did you develop interest in journalism?

When I was young, I was buying this Catholic newspaper for two pence weekly and another that was being sold for four pence; so when I eventually went to Port Harcourt, my elder brother who was working with The Voice Agency in London was buying papers like Daily Flash, Eastern Nigeria Guardian, Newsweek and Time magazines Magazine. So I started reading those papers and this made me a voracious reader. That was what made me

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

develop interest in journalism. After passing school certificate in 1971, I went to St Augustine's Gram-mar School, Nkwerre, for my Higher School Certificate (HSC). I had a won-derful result, ABB (A in Government, B in History and B in Economics). In 1975, all the five universities I applied to for admission offered me direct en-try. My first interest was to become a lawyer, so if I had been well-advised, I would have taken a degree in Law rath-er than Mass Communication. Nsukka offered me Mass Communication, UNILAG (Mass Comm), University of Ibadan (Political Science), Universi-ty of Benin (Political Science) and Uni-versity of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) offered me Law. If I had ac-cepted, I would the offer from Ife, Eme Awah, the Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and I would have been together at Ife.

Do you regret studying and practicing journalism?

I studied Mass Communication, so I don't regret it. I did my NYSC at Ondo State Radio station, Oba Ille Akure in 1978/79, and from there I joined NTA Aba, Channel 6 as Editor II, under Mazi Ukonu. In 1980, when Abiola started Concord and as a vibrant young man, I resigned from NTA Aba and joined Concord Newspapers as the first Chief Correspondent in old Imo State. In 1986, I was among the first Com-munity Concord Editors appointed by Abiola. I joined Concord the same day with **Dele Giwa**, Innocent Oparadike, Tom Borha, Doyin Abiola (was still a maiden then) and Mike Awoyinfa. They were all our contemporaries in Concord. In 1989, when the Commu-nity Concord experiment failed, I went to Lagos and was appointed Defence Correspondent with the rank of Assis-tant Editor. I covered the Gideon Orkar coup on April 22, 1990. I was in Dodan Barracks as the battle raged; I was at Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi when Gideon Orkar was captured. During the trials at Brigade of Guards on Kofo Abayomi, which Ike Nwachukwu presided over as Chairman of the Military Tribunal, I covered all those events for Concord. I almost lost my life during the coup be-cause some soldiers captured us at the airport and thoroughly beat us. Eventu-ally, we covered the trial and execution of Gideon Orkar. In 1990 after 10 years in Concord I left to be the Editor of Arthur Nzeribe's Spectator newspaper in Owerri. The paper folded up and I went into private public relations/advertising practice. In 1996, I joined Iwuanyan-wu's National Post as the first Deputy Editor. I left in 2000 as Managing Edi-tor of National Post and we floated An-nouncer Express in Owerri which is still publishing, myself, Joe Anyama and Victor Alozie, who is now the Head of Mass Communication, Fed-eral Polytechnic, Nekede. I was the Executive Director, Publications when my people said I should come home to be the Eze.

As the traditional ruler, do you still engage in private business?

The issue of traditional rulership in Igbo land is a different ballgame from what you have in Yorubaland and Northern states. Any Eze in Igbo land who is not sufficiently buoyant cannot survive on the throne, no matter what the government gives you; you must have what you are doing and that is why you see some our traditional rulers resident in Lagos. How many of us are in our communities? Any Eze in Igbo land who stays put in his community will find it difficult to feed himself, not to talk of his family. That is why you must have something that you are do-ing.

As an Eze, can you participate in politics?

That one is completely out of it. From day one you know that you have nothing to do in politics. In fact, if some of us who are traditional rulers in Igbo land had gone into politics, politics in Igbo land would have been hotter than what we are having. Most of us who are traditional rulers are born politi-cians and if not that we are not free like other people, politics would have been hotter.

How many wives do you have, and where and when did you meet your first wife?

(He laughs first and said) Polygamy is out of the way, I have one wife, who is the mother of my children and I have never contemplated taking a second wife. She has not been found wanting in her duties, both in the palace and in my bedroom, so I don't need a substi-tute. My wife is from Imo State. We were all in old Imo State. She was posted to Uturu as a teacher after her Grade II Teachers Certificate Course in 1978 and I came home from NTA Aba, around January 30, 1980. We met when she was teaching in Uturu and one thing led to another and we have been together for the past 35 years.

What actually attracted you to her?

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

Her simplicity and honesty was what attracted me to her. There were no pretences when we met unlike others who play this hide and seek game. Again, her elder brother had been a friend of mine and I never knew that, so when she mentioned his name, I asked if she was a sister to this my friend and she said yes, and from there, we started talking and that was it.

You said that you don't have a second wife and that you have no plans of marrying another. Why?

It is in Yoruba land, where you have Yoruba Obas, like the late Olateru-Olagbegi of Owo, who was said to have over 100 children, even in his old age of 90s, he still had a younger wife. It is part of their own culture, but with Christianity in Igbo land, and from the way we were brought up, one wife is a burden so there is no point. It has never occurred to me any day to take a second wife.

A lot of people have the view that royalty has to do with a lot of wives and children, what do you think?

In Yoruba land, in the North, and even Islam permits them to have more than one wife or as much as you can control, and in most of the Yoruba land you find Muslims marrying more than one wife. Yoruba people by nature are polygamous and you see some of them under the guise of Islam taking many wives. But it is not like that in Igbo land. I doubt if there is any Eze in Uturu, where we have 24 autonomous communities, who has a second wife.

Does this mean that no lady has ever attracted your attention and you decided to commandeer her or take her as a wife?

That reminds me of the story of one Oba at Akure where I did my national youth service, a former Deji of Akure, who was said to be very fond of moving around the palace in the evening and any time he saw any young lady would marry her whether she liked it or not.

You have only one queen who has been with you for the past 35 years. Does she perform her duties to your satisfaction?

Yes, she is an educationist and she is of a school principal in the Abia State school system and she would retire next year. She has never been found wanting in her duties, she makes room for every other job that concerns the palace and it doesn't affect her professional calling. That is why I have been progressing.

What kind of food is your favorite?

From infancy, I have always loved eating yams because we produce yams; people come to our market, Nkwo Achara to buy yams. I like 'swallow', no day passes without my having swallow. These days, I take wheat, but in those days, it could be garri, akpu or even pounded yam.

Do you drink alcohol?

You may be surprised to hear that for the past 34 years I have never tasted beer, not even as a practicing **journalist**, the reason being that when I came into journalism, a bottle of beer was 80 kobo. During my youth service in Akure there was one place called Motor Motel, near Adeyemi College of Education, I think beer was sold there at 60 kobo. The general impression was that journalists drink and that journalists could take 10 bottles of beer in a day without paying kobo. When I came to Owerri, I was still taking beer, but I felt insulted one day that somebody came to my office, weeping that he wanted to see the late Governor Sam Mbakwe. I made it possible for him to see the governor, and the next time we met in a friend's office, the first thing he did was to tell them to get me beer to drink and I felt insulted and from that day I vowed not to drink beer again – that was in February 1981. I know that I write better when I am tipsy, but I don't want alcohol to control me. As an Eze, they are all in my palace, but I don't like them to control me.

What attire do you feel most comfortable wearing?

As a **journalist**, I used to dress in very formal manner. There was a time I had up to 10 suits, because you don't know where you can meet any personality that you may want to interview. I was noted for wearing suit, particularly

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

when I was at NTA Aba. I used to run a programme called Behind the News, so I could meet people and interview them anywhere, but since I became Eze, it became a different style of dressing; all those my suits, I don't wear them again, I don't wear tie again. At least while appearing in public, you have to wear something that distinguishes you as a traditional ruler, it is already part of us. But when am relaxing, I wear simple clothes like jumper as an elder; in the house I wear simple things within the palace, but while going outside I have to dress formally as an Eze.

Tell us about your happiest moment.

The day my wife had our first child who is now married, I was happy that very day having seen myself as a father. Again, the day my people made me the Eze on a platter of gold, I felt very happy that I had been recognized; recently, when my second daughter was called to the Bar at the Nigerian Law School, Abuja, on November 26, 2014.

Looking back, which day would say was your most embarrassing moment?

It happened during my days as a journalist, when I was detained under Decree 4, in 1984, when Ike Nwachukwu, who was the then military governor of Imo State. I wrote a story with the headline, '5000 Teachers lose jobs in Imo.' And Ike Nwachukwu ordered that I should be arrested. I was detained for one month. Our General Manager in Concord, M.C. Ajuluchukwu, who was coming from Enugu to seek my release was involved in an accident and had to go back. My wife had to write a letter through Dr Okereke, the then Attorney General in Imo State, and it was read at the State Executive Council meeting. In fact, Ike Nwachukwu had ordered that I should be charged under Decree 4 when Dr. Okereke reminded him that Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon had imprisoned Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor in Lagos, and argued that it would be unfortunate to have another journalist from Imo State imprisoned. The Decree 4 said that even if you wrote the truth and it was embarrassing to the government, the journalist must be jailed. So I remained in detention for one month.

Where would say is your favorite holiday spot?

Before the Boko Haram insurgency started, I always considered the Yankari Games Reserve in Bauchi State as my favourite holiday spot, followed by Obudu Ranch in Cross River State and the Ba-guada Lake in the North. I had opportunities to travel to those places.

And your favourite quotes?

I have a lot of quotes, but what I normally tell people is that they should do unto others as they will want others to do unto them. Then because of this mad rush for wealth in Nigeria, I came across a quote in the Bible and since I came across it, it has tailored my life. It says: "A man sitting over ill-acquired wealth is like a hen trying to hatch an egg it never laid. At the end the wealth disappears and it becomes stupid." Since I came across that quotation in the Bible, it has been guiding my life. So that is why when you see some people, they will be so wealthy while alive, immediately they die, the wealth disappears. If you have stolen public property, because you have public office, you are sitting over ill-acquired wealth. At the end the wealth will disappear and you will not have the opportunity for repentance or even making restitution. I live a very simple life. I am not bothered with whatever as long as I can take care of my family and meet the basic necessities of life, nature will take care of itself.

Do you wear designer clothes?

I don't, but I have a tailor in Okigwe who sews for me. I don't go to the market to buy, but I have someone who sews all my clothes.

Can you remember any of the funny things you did since ascending the throne?

Yes, some of the people who shouted Hosanna! yesterday eventually turned out to say crucify him. Not that I used to take people for granted but all that glitters is not gold, and then when people come with different ideas, you have to be careful in being able to see which is which. The counsel of Ahithophel is what many people will bring to you.

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

That advice they are bringing to you is to destroy you so you have to be careful. I know what I have passed through since I ascended the throne.

Are there any sporting activities you cannot do with-out?

I try to exercise within the compound, I cannot be seen outside now trying to jog or something like that, because as the traditional ruler I cannot do things like that. I have to maintain some privacy. Whatever exercise I do, I do it within my compound to maintain some privacy.

How much time do you spend with your children?

When they are around, I spend quality time with them. Inciden-tally, journalism is the type of job that keeps you working without finding time for yourself. That was one of the things that made me to leave Lagos. In 1989, when I was transferred to Lagos, my fam-ily was in Owerri and every month, I would drive to Owerri to be with my family and then come back to Lagos. So immediately I saw the opportunity to go and edit Nzeribe's paper along Okigwe Road, Owerri, I resigned and came back to Owerri, even while in Owerri , it was not long before Abia State was created and my wife and children had to move to Umuahia. Even when my family was in Umuahia, I was still working in Owerri up to the time that this Eze-ship came and I went back home. Anytime I was around, I ensured that I spent time with them, but I think that journalism took me too far. Even my daughter who is now a lawyer, I was the one that influ-enced her to go and read Law – the Law that I missed. I wanted her to read Law particularly because we are close.

How old is your last child?

I don't have too many children; I have two girls and a boy. The girls are both graduates now and the young man is still in second-ary school. After our first two issues, we spent fourteen years before having him. My daughter who is a lawyer now was already in Uturu Secondary School in Class 1, when the mother conceived and had him. So you can see the gap between them, the boy is just 17 and he is in SS 3 now.

What do you despise as a person?

I hate people telling lies, pretending to be what they are not. I also don't like people who are not straightforward. People who try to cut corners put me off. The people who boast and create the impression that they are what they are not.

If you could change one thing about your life, what would that be?

Trusting people so much; I trusted people so much and they dis-appointed me. If I had to live my life again, I would be very careful in trusting people and the type of people to trust.

What virtue do you admire most in people?

I like people who work hard, who don't expect manna to fall from heaven; whatever you get out of your efforts, you admire it. But if you think you can get things to drop on your laps every day of your life without working for them, it is your business. I hate people be-ing lazy. I worked in the private sector and it helped me so much, I didn't work in the civil service, the private sector made me to put in extra hours of duty.

How would you describe yourself?

I can describe myself as a very simple man, a typical Uturu man who was brought up to be honest in all he does. I was brought up as a typical Catholic child who if he tells lies must go for confession. That molded our lives. Today it is no longer the same.

How would you like to be remembered?

I would want to be remembered as the man who came, saw and conquered.

All the deities in my domain are now dead –Eze Ogbonnaya, Abia State

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## How Secure is the Nation? [analysis]

This Day (Lagos)

October 10, 2010 Sunday

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**Length:** 2643 words

**Byline:** Kingsley Nwezeh

### **Body**

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Nigerians and indeed residents of the Federal Capital Territory, woke up on October 1, still basking in the euphoria of the nation's 50th independence anniversary celebrations that was unfolding. Many residents had no premonition that they would be confronted with two deadly bomb blasts that would kill 12 people including civilians and security operatives even as several people were also injured.

This unprecedented terrorist attack took place 500 meters away from the Eagle Square venue of the independence celebrations, where more than 15 heads of government and representatives of other world leaders were seated. President Goodluck Jonathan and his deputy, Namadi Sambo, as well as other top government functionaries were also in attendance.

The questions on everybody's lips have been: who masterminded this dastardly act against Nigeria on the very day it celebrated 50 years of nationhood? Why would anybody detonate bombs on Shehu Shagari Way, a route passed that morning by even foreign leaders who came to celebrate with Nigeria? Was it politically motivated? Was it a terrorist attack? Why now, some months to the 2011 general elections. Are there people in the presidential race with bombing antecedents that we need to watch out for? What were the security agencies doing? Questions, questions and questions.

Outraged by the killing of innocent Nigerians, President Goodluck Jonathan described the developmet as "a low, wicked and dastardly act of desperation by criminals and murderers who do not wish Nigeria well".

The explosions, which appeared to have been planted in a parked car tore to shreds about 26 vehicles parked opposite the Ministry of Justice on Shehu Shagari Way. The incident occurred between 11:15am and 12: 24pm killing about 12 people on the spot while some of the victims died in the hospitals.

"These bomb attacks are the worst anniversary gifts any nation can get," so declared Jonathan. Describing the incident as "sad and unfortunate", Jonathan said the purpose was to ensure that the celebration going on at the nearby Eagle Square was cancelled by all means.

A statement issued by presidential spokesman, Ima Niboro, expressed President Jonathan's grief and sympathy with the families of the victims of the blast, saying, "The president shares their consternation and understands their confoundment, as they mourn while the nation celebrates".

## How Secure is the Nation? [analysis]

"The president wants these families to know that their loved ones have not died in vain. Rather they have paid the supreme price for our unity; and in their death, they have watered the tree of our freedom," he added.

The government assured that those behind the "vicious acts" would be found and would "pay dearly for this heinous crime". Speaking to journalists at the scene of the blasts which was littered with automobile parts, clothes worn by the victims, sandals, slippers, shoes, human parts, blood and other shrapnels, the Minister of Police Affairs, Alhaji Maina Waziri, said eight persons were confirmed dead and described the incident as an act of terrorism.

"I want to begin by thanking the Almighty for this 50th anniversary and also express my profound unhappiness with this incident that is a blight on this momentous day for all Nigerians but in this time of adversity, it is desirable of all Nigerians on this very good day to pray that these irritations that occur in this country is indeed brought to an end.

"The information I have is that there were two explosions which we can say the first explosion apparently planted in a taxi where the bomb exploded. Initial report indicate that there were no casualties, then there was another explosion within the space of ten minutes and that hurt a couple of citizens both members of the uniform cadre and civilians. The resultant effect is that about eight people are confirmed dead and 18 are injured. The casualty of both dead and the injured involve both members of the police and other security agencies as well as very innocent Nigerians," he said.

The minister further said: "I will also plead with them not to blow it out of proportion and allow the security agencies time to conduct their investigations. They should not be put under siege. They should be allowed to display the expertise for which government had spent a lot of money".

According to him, "I have done what I consider the non security interaction with members of the press. You will allow them to do their job. However, bomb blast is not a tea party, it is an act of terrorism".

Prior to the blasts, a group which claimed to be the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta Region (MEND) had issued an alert warning members of the public to avoid parked cars and dustbins. Immediately after the bombings, the same organisation said the high casualty figure should be blamed on the security agencies for failing to carry out their constitutional roles even after it had warned of the impending bomb blasts. This obviously raised the issue of preparedness of the nation's security network.

The first bomb, which had detonated at about 11: 15 am did not record any casualty. Probably because of Nigeria's lack of experience in managing crisis situations such as bomb blasts, stunned passers-by and security operatives massed around the site of the first blast when the second one exploded killing more than 12 persons.

There were also conflicting reports about another bomb which was poorly detonated inside the Eagle Square while some claimed it was accidental discharge which allegedly felled two mobile policemen. But the police said there was no such explosion inside the Eagle Square.

After the incident, the South African authorities promptly arrested Henry Okah, an alleged leader of the group. He had previously been questioned by the South African police and has since appeared in a South African court in connection with the bomb blasts.

Did the nation's security agencies receive intelligence alert before the twin bombings? If they did, what did they do with it? At a news conference in Abuja, Assistant Director, Public Relations of the State Security Service (SSS), Marilyn Ogar, did confirm that the service received intelligence information before the blast.

According to her, the bombing was planned for Wednesday September 29, 2010 but was foiled as soon as the information was received during the early hours of September 28. The overriding objective of the group, she said, was to scare foreign visitors from attending the 50th anniversary celebration.

According to her, about 0130 hours on Tuesday, September 28, information was received that the three arms zone (Presidential Villa, National Assembly and the Supreme Court) was to be bombed and six vehicles had already being prepared for the purpose. At this point, she said, the service contacted the military which provided three

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towing trucks which were added to that of the service thus kick-starting a joint operation. During the joint operation, a total of nine abandoned vehicles were towed away.

"Of these, two were near the SSS headquarters, two facing the villa gate and the National Assembly and two close to police headquarters while one was stationed at the Eagle Square and two at the Apo Legislative Quarters. They were all towed away", she said.

Following the development, the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and the Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO) were co-opted into the operations to move around the capital towing away abandoned vehicles. The measure, she said, lasted till the morning of October 1, during which 65 abandoned vehicles were removed.

"It is worthy of note that out of the seven vehicles removed from the three arms zone, four are yet to be collected", she said.

According to her, when the plan A failed, they resorted to the penetration of the Eagle Square in an attempt to plant explosive devices but was countered by hi-tech equipment in and around the Eagle Square which jammed the detonation of any such explosives.

On October 1, she said, Eagle Square and surrounding areas were cordoned off and appropriate measures put in place while joint efforts by the security agencies were put in place.

"However, the rain showers of that morning provided the leeway for double parking by motorists. In the process, the perpetrators apparently gained access to park on the road side as well," she said.

"We got the information. After the 9/11 incidents in the US, it dawned on all nations that no singular nation can go it alone when it comes to security issue so there was enhanced collaboration with each nation so we share intelligence and information at that level so definitely we had advanced information that Nigeria was going to come under some form of attack.

"After the 9/11 terrorist bombings in the United States, we share intelligence. Intelligence is no longer the exclusive preserve of any nation. If you assess other people's country and you keep quiet when it is about to affect your country, the other people who have such information will keep quiet. We share intelligence with other foreign nationals concerning our own internal security", she said.

The issue of inter-agency collaboration was also an issue in carrying out investigations by security agencies. Recently, President Jonathan berated security agencies for running parallel investigations and making claims of superiority against each other.

"Our security agencies need to work in harmony to craft effective strategies for containing these challenges. Unfortunately, the glaring disconnect and lack of synergy as well as claims and counter claims over superiority among security agencies have diminished the effectiveness of government's efforts towards combating crime in the society", he said.

The lack of synergy between the security agencies also played out with the Police declaring two suspects wanted while the State Security Service (SSS) said it arrested nine suspects in connection with the incident whom it said had direct links with Henry Okah and other prominent Nigerians.

The SSS spokesperson had said in response to a question raised on the issue of collaboration that: "our mode of investigation is totally different from that of the police. Like I said, I would not know whether the two suspects the police is declaring wanted are on our list. With the ongoing investigations, I might not want to reveal the status of the suspects in our custody".

As expected, Henry Okah's claims in an interview with Al-Jazeera Television that a presidential aide called him to implicate northern politicians in the bomb blasts has generated a lot of controversy.

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"On Saturday morning, just a day after the attack, a very close associate of President Jonathan called me and explained to me that there had been a bombing in Nigeria and that President Jonathan wanted me to reach out to the group, MEND and get them to retract the earlier statement they had issued claiming the attacks.

"They wanted me to blame the attack on Northerners who are trying to fight against him to come back as president and if this was done, I was not going to have any problems with South African government. I declined to do this and a few hours later, I was arrested. It was based on their belief that I was going to do that that Jonathan issued a statement that MEND did not carry out the attack", he said.

Okah's claim instantly triggered a bedlam. Other presidential aspirants accused government of complicity while the Northern Political Leaders Forum went one notch further by calling on President Jonathan to resign or be impeached.

The president instantly described the claims as outright lies and asked Okah to name the official that spoke to him and further described his action as that of a "drowning man determined to pull others down with him".

A joint statement signed by the campaign groups of Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Aliyu Gusau and Bukola Saraki, all presidential aspirants, said Okah's allegations were weighty and sobering and if true, required independent judicial investigation. They expressed dismay with the manner government was handling issues of national security and the respect of the rights of law abiding citizens.

As the fireworks continued, Director General of the Ibrahim Babangida Campaign Organisation, Dr. Raymond Dokpesi, was arrested by the SSS in connection with the bomb blasts. The SSS claimed that it established exchange of two text messages between the suspects in its custody and Dokpesi, one claiming to have asked them to come and collect the "balance" of an unspecified amount while the second asked them to come for a meeting at the IBB campaign office.

The IBB campaign organisation also condemned the arrest and described the trend "as the growing politics of intolerance, intimidation, coercion, persecution and harassment". Dokpesi has since been released and is expected to report back to the SSS.

Accusing fingers were also pointed at former military President, Ibrahim Babangida, who is also in the presidential race apparently on the grounds that the first case of bomb explosion, parcel bomb, that killed renowned **journalist, Dele Giwa**, took place under his watch as military leader.

He said "it will be idiotic for anyone to link me to that bomb blast because I know what the unity of this country means and that was why we fought to keep it together. So why should I get involved in such a mess?

"Naturally, when things like this happen, people will cast their imaginative and fertile minds into action and as we all know, Nigerians have very fertile minds but this is the price we pay for the love of our country and as politicians."

The former military president, who spoke in Minna, blamed the bomb blasts on lapses on the part of securitymen, adding that the security forces were given prior notice before the disaster yet nothing was done to avert the situation.

True to character, Nigerian politicians especially the presidential aspirants had maximally exploited the situation by making huge political capital out of a national tragedy. The Adamu Ciroma led-Northern Elders' position on the matter had been roundly condemned as hasty and capable of inflaming passions as the natural position would have been to call for an inquiry instead of calling for the resignation or impeachment of the President.

President Jonathan has also reiterated his administration's resolve to get to the root of the matter and called the bluff of those using blackmail tactics to intimidate his government. "Blackmail and intimidation will not stop the Federal Government from doing the right thing. Whoever is found culpable will face the full weight of the law. We would be failing the past, present and future generations of Nigerians if we do not get to the root of this dastardly act and seek justice the way it should be done in a civilised society such as ours," the president said.

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He said further: "Dear friends, if the aim of the attackers is to create a sense of insecurity and panic across the nation in order to advance their narrow interests, Nigerians will stand up to them and make it clear that they cannot be intimidated."

From all indications, there is the need for caution by all parties to this debacle. The situation has also called to question the refusal by government to equip security agencies with the state- of- the- art technology as regards bombings and kidnappings.

When will Nigeria embrace forensic investigation? When will the Police bomb detection and disposal units be adequately equipped to work efficiently and effectively? When will CCTVs be installed in the nation's capital like other parts of the world? When will security agencies work in harmony and act fast on intelligence reports and most importantly, when will Nigerian politicians stop playing politics with the lives of innocent Nigerians? These are the questions begging for answers from the political class in and out of government.

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2010

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## **Dwindling Sales - a Looming Media Challenge [analysis]**

Daily Trust (Abuja)

April 6, 2010 Tuesday

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**Length:** 2572 words

**Byline:** Tosin Omoniyi

### **Body**

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In the 80s one Nigerian newspaper sold 500,0000 copies on a daily basis. Today, these figures, in a general sense, have fallen considerably. Our reporter investigates what went wrong.

For most newspaper proprietors, no topic creates concern than the rate at which sales of their products is dropping on a daily basis. Adequate circulation for virtually all print media companies appears to be transiting into a major source of worry for those concerned.

Kola Martins, circulation officer for the Nigerian Newsworld magazine, an Abuja based tabloid, believes that any media organization which handles the issue of circulation with levity, is bound to go under much sooner than envisaged, going by the central position circulation business holds in the media. He enthuses: 'nowadays the in thing appears to be advert placements by organizations and government establishments. Most newspapers simply solicit for these adverts to sustain their operations, but the reality on ground is that if there is a strong circulation policy on ground, and this is enhanced by real public oriented relationship by the management of media organizations, then the reliance on adverts will be greatly reduced. The point I am making is not actually to discountenance the primary role of adverts in media business, but simply to assert the fact that good circulation can actually work side by side with advert placements for fluent revenue drive for media operators.'

The centrality of adverts for the sustenance of media operations is no doubt a given decimal but to many pundits, the less emphasis some of the media outfits appear to have given to circulation of their products seems not to be a good omen for the industry. Presently the stockpile of unsold copies of newspapers and magazines in the circulation departments of most print media organizations is a vivid sign of this challenge. In the golden era of the print media, leading publications such as the Daily Times sold as much as 500,000 copies per day. Obviously these days are gone! Recently figures in an audit conducted by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) showed that all the current newspapers put together cannot boast of a daily publishing of newspaper copies that reach that of the Daily Times in its heydays. The cumulative national sales figure from the industry was put at a little over 300,000 copies on a daily basis. A peep into the report reveals that even the major print outfits have not been finding it easy to survive on sales given ADVAN 2009 Report on newspaper sales, which puts daily circulation figures in this order: Punch 34,264; Sun newspapers, 25,632; Vanguard 25,241; Guardian 25,222; Thisday 21,703 and Tribune, the oldest surviving newspaper in Nigeria, managing to sell 8,314 copies per day. The report also shows that other newspapers including Compass, Daily Independent, Leadership, National Life, New Nigeria, Mirror and could barely make 1,600 copies in daily sales. Many believe that the sales plummeting is as a result of more

## Dwindling Sales - a Looming Media Challenge [analysis]

people getting access to free news reports from the Internet. Also the newspaper market is already saturated leading to some unsteady publications dropping out, after only a few years of hitting the news stands.

ADVAN's research ostensibly came as a result of the refusal of the NPAN (Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria) to sign on to the establishment of an Audit Bureau of Circulation. An independent survey of the circulation figures of the top ten Nigerian Newspapers was conducted.

The research results which commenced on the 22nd of July 2009, at a stake holder's forum; identified the total daily circulation figures of Nigerian Newspapers on a state by state analysis. It also includes the top ten Newspapers in circulation and a comprehensive analysis on newspaper circulation trends since 1999. The study, which serves as the first phase of continuous quarterly research, is meant to assist advertisers on clear basis for the future advertising spent on print media.

Strong debate has expectedly followed the release of the research results, as Newspaper houses claim that the figures are less than accurate, but ADVAN has challenged any Newspaper publisher to open their books and prove the research results inaccurate. The associations media spokesman, Mr. Demola Adedoyin had described the project as "... part of measures to encourage transparency, accountability and prudence in the communications sector, key players in the industry have revealed new circulation figures for newspapers operating in key media centers of the nation. Interestingly most of the media outfits involved in the study have rejected the results saying they are not a true reflection of their sales capabilities. However findings reveal that it is indeed a fact that sales for most media outfits is challenge.

Veterans in the industry appear to be concerned about the trend and have been identifying the causes of the constant slump in sales. Interestingly there seems to be a consensus about the causes and possible solutions going by the contributions of these professionals many of which have had a stint one time or the other in most of these national newspapers.

Ogbuagu Anikwe, consulting editor of the Dawn newspapers, Force Headquarters, Abuja, says that the days when dependence was solely on sales are gone forever. According to him, the emphasis today is on quality product, that will attract prominent adverts that would place the medium on a sound financial pedestal. 'A good product will no doubt attract advertisers who will contribute to the financial growth of the medium. Advertisers will always flock around a newspaper outfit which produces quality materials that attract readers to patronize. Sales from circulation can never sustain a new outfit. Maybe for the first 6 months or so it may serve to pay the bills of the news medium but after this unless the medium attracts patronage in form of adverts and advertorials the medium will die off automatically. Today circulation should not be depended upon by news outfits if they want to survive in the already saturated market,' he notes.

Another veteran *journalist*, Femi Kusa who was crucial to the growth of the Comet newspapers, says that a multiplicity of factors was the reason behind the unsavory trend. He states inter alia, 'many factors are contributory. For one, many people are not brought up from childhood to appreciate the reading of newspapers. It is not just a part of them. So as adults they do not even read books , not to talk of newspapers. The activities of vendors are not also helping matters. Many of them encourage this free readers syndrome, where you can read as many newspapers as possible, for a token which goes into the vendors pocket. These vendors at the end of the day return the excess as unsold copies. Why would you want to buy a paper when you can read as many as possible for as low as N20? That is what these vendors encourage subtly. Also most editors do not connect to the reading public through their publications which in most cases lacks depth and quality content. That needs to be looked into. The managers of most news outfits also need to be proactive in the way they handle the concerns of the company, they need to do more in reaching out to the public, as well known outfits like Coca Cola and Toyota do.' He adds also: 'editors need to know that we are indeed in the information age as the industrial age has given way so newspaper content has to be fashioned in a way that it would meet with the challenges of the present age. With collapsing oligarchies, launch of satellites into space and global trends erupting more and more information is getting into the possession of the readers outside the newspapers. In the information age it is the reader and not the editor that hold sovereignty over news. Equally , distribution channels for most newspaper houses are still archaic, and need to be reworked to meet the challenges of modernity. Also it is a known fact that some

### Dwindling Sales - a Looming Media Challenge [analysis]

unscrupulous printers steal or mismanage about 25 percent of the publications in order to resell to vendors at reduced rates. Reporters are also implicated as they convert advert materials to infomercial news, so as to get stipends from some people who would have been a source of adverts for their medium. You are also aware that newsprints is getting more expensive by the day, so it is actually a few newspaper houses that can meet up..."

Jim Pressman, consulting editor for the True National also agrees but adds: 'given the average economic conditions of most Nigerians , it is ideal to give every Nigerian a free copy to read, Nigerians like free things. That is why you have the free readers club blossoming. You simply buy one and you can read 4 other papers. There are some who do not even buy. That is why circulation is a problem. That is why newspapers should know that they can never survive on what they sell. That is why emphasis should be made on advert, advertorials and special feature drives that will yield money. Once you get enough of these then you can actually jettison reliance on sales. Now papers are sold for N150. How many Nigerians can afford that given their economic state? But for me the end justifies the means, as the aim of newspaper owners is that the papers should get to as much people as possible. Once this is achieved and monies from adverts are rolling in, I do not see this as a problem. The content, of course, has to be improved upon. We have good columnists in papers like the Guardian, the Nation, Daily Trust, Compass, People's Daily but they can still be improved upon. These always attract rejoinders and rich opinions which will make the paper a must read. And then there is this dwindling fortune of reading and writing. People don't read. Like Eugenia Abu will tell you, if you want to write well then you must equally read well. The more you read the more you write. People don't have the time or stamina anymore. They prefer to look at pictures. It's all complex, a vicious circle' Tim Elerewe, chairman, Correspondents chapel of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Abuja chapter, also believes that consumers are getting wiser by the day , so the owners of newspapers need to be more creative in the crafting of their headlines and lead stories. 'For me if you want to make headway in this industry you must find a way to stand out from the pack. For instance, you find out that nowadays most newspapers always carry the same headlines with little or no modifications. If not that we know better , one would say that all the editors always decide on which news to make lead on a daily basis. Creativity is lacking. Why would I decide to buy a particular newspaper when others are carrying the similar headline? That is why creativity is lacking. The era of exclusive leads appear to have died,' he opines.

Osedebamen Isibor, head, Northern operations for the National Mirror, while toeing the line of his colleagues however opines, 'there was a time when newspapers like the old Daily Times, Punch, Newswatch during ***Dele Giwa*** time and Tell magazine, survived basically on circulation strength, so why the sudden slump? The facts are clear: the reading culture in Nigeria has dropped. People don't read again. Everybody is in a mad rush to make ends meet on a daily basis, and the value of take home pay has dropped significantly. The purchasing power has really reduced and not many persons can afford to buy the basic necessities like information. Even in our schools there is no deliberate attempt to encourage our students to imbibe the culture of reading newspapers. The advent of online news dissemination, has also taken over from the conventional mode. Even those that read are reducing by the day because they do not get quality news items from most newspapers.

Most papers in present day Nigeria have taken sides with sections of those they should be reporting objectively. When you look at certain lead stories, then you will not be left in doubt that such leads have been planted, to achieve certain ends for certain people. Professionalism has dropped in the media. You don't need to tell a blind man that the market has closed. Some papers have already taken sides in sensitive national issues. The moment you take sides, you may not know it , but you lose a significant section of your readership. There is certainly an encroachment of politics into media matters, and this is not helping issues.' In the midst of it all vendors who are central to sales recently enumerated some of the reasons for low sales. They say that sales and readership of newspapers and magazines have dropped by 50 per cent for quite a while. The vendors told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the development was as a result of the circulation of the publications online and poverty among the people and other reasons. The Grand Patron of Newspaper Distributors Association, Chief Elisha Akanle, said the publishing of newspapers on the Internet had contributed to the low patronage, even among the elite. He also noted that the absence of attractive stories in newspapers contributed to the low patronage. Akanle stated that most newspaper stories were political developments , and said news stories should go beyond public officers inaugurating projects and governors' wives promoting their pet projects."I tell you, very few people buy newspapers and magazines for record purposes.

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Nowadays, our customers are usually bank executives and some well-to-do in the society," he said. The patron said vendors recorded good sales only when there were news breaks or scandals involving prominent people in the society.

Dr Emman Shehu, Director, International Institute of Journalism, IIJ believes that not all newspapers need to be national newspapers. He says the urge to be national in nature by all dailies, account for why there is a rush to become the best selling medium by all outfits. He notes: 'every paper cannot be national. Under this impression they get adverts, but they are really not providing the requisite service, because if you produce 30 000 copies in a country of almost 140 million people does that make you national? How many people actually get to see a copy of the paper? My proffered solution is that publishers should get together and arrange some kind of distribution system that would be effective. We all don't have to be national newspapers even though we are competing. We must provide an enabling distribution network that would be public friendly. If the public purchases your product that enhances your continued stay in the market. I think publishers should get together and find a common and effective way of distributing their products, even if it means working as a team or employing the services of a service provider , who takes on the responsibility of distribution of papers whether regional or national while the media outfits focus on production. Distribution and circulation are critical factors in the media terrain. The government should also ensure that there is an enabling environment so that the cost of publishing goes down, so that more copies can be increased. Of course there is also the problem of the reduced purchasing power of most Nigerians. It is okay to hike the cover price but how many people can actually afford to buy them? But like I always say there is always a solution for these problems if we look inward...'

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## **Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]**

Vanguard (Lagos)

November 04, 2012

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**Length:** 3248 words

**Byline:** Clifford Ndijihe

### **Body**

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The National Assembly will give Nigerians a new constitution in nine months time, if the Senate timetable for amending the codebook is anything to go by.

According to a 16-month and 11-point timetable, of which four points have been treated, a bill for the amended constitution would be passed by the state Houses of Assembly in July 2013.

Having identified issues for the presentation round of the amendment (April 2012), requested for submission of memoranda (May/June 2012); held retreat to consider memoranda (July, 2012) and held public hearing on the issues highlighted in the submitted memoranda (October 2012), the 48-man Senate Constitution Review Committee (SCRC) will between November 15 and 16 fan out to the six geo-political zones of the country for zonal public hearings.

The event is expected to hold in the six geo-political zones namely North West (Sokoto); North East (Gombe); North Central (Makurdi), South East (Enugu); South-South (Calabar); and South West (Lagos).

Thereafter, the exercise will continue in January next year with a retreat to aggregate public views and inputs leading to drafting of the amendment bill (February 2013), meeting with state Houses of Assembly (February 2013), introduction of the bill to the Senate (March 2013) and passage of the bill (June 2013).

Since the Senate opened the window for the amendment, the SCRC has received 231 memoranda in addition to 56 other memoranda proposing the creation of additional states across the country.

Among those who have submitted memoranda to the Senate panel and proffered suggestions on how to make 1999 Constitution a people's grand norm are coalitions of women groups, youth associations, the political parties, the media and civil society organizations (CSOs).

To tap the physical and mental energies of the youths in the onerous task of nation building, Nigerian youths have asked for outright removal of age limit or in the alternative reduction of age qualification for contesting election to the office of the president from 40 years to 35 years; governors and Senate (30 years); House of Representatives and state Houses of Assembly (25 years).

This is one of the 10 demands that the youths on the banner of Youth Alliance on Constitution Review (YACOR), a coalition of 30 groups, are asking the National Assembly to include in the new constitution.

## Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]

The youths, 50,546 of them, reached agreements on the demands at a twitter conference with the theme: 'The Nigerian Constitution: 'Our right, our future,' held on August 23, 2012.

Pained by the worsening exclusion and marginalization of youths, who constitute about 60 per cent of the population, in the affairs of the nation, they said, in a memo to the SCRC: "Nigeria needs to recognize the need to broaden the space for democratic participation and provide equal opportunities for macro and micro nationalities.

The consequences of political alienation and social exclusion are so grave that if they are not curtailed, they can spell doom to any developing democracy. Furthermore, the high rate of crime and violence, youth restiveness, political apathy and unemployment are some consequences of continuous political exclusion and marginalization. It is common knowledge that effective youth engagement has potential for facilitating national growth and development

"Similarly, recent statistics also released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reveal that there are 73.5 million registered voters in Nigeria. Sixty per cent of registered voters are between the ages of 18 and 35. Therefore, it is fair, just and equitable to open the space for young people to participate in socio-economic and political ventures. The potency of youth engagement will enhance the credibility of the electoral process and deepen democracy."

Aside opening the political and economic space to accommodate younger Nigerians, YACOR asked that Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution should be made enforceable to "address the socio-economic needs of young people in Nigeria, e.g., access to free and compulsory education, employment, housing, healthcare and quality food. Enforcement of Chapter 2 should adopt a similar enforcement regime to Chapter 4 in the constitution."

Picking holes in a situation where the national youth leader of one of the leading political parties is a 60-year old, YACOR sought a constitutional provision defining the youth to comprise all males and females aged 18 to 35 years.

They also demanded 10 per cent of legislative positions for youths. "In order to create more space for democratic participation, it is recommended that Section 49 of the 1999 Constitution be amended to ensure that 30 per cent of party lists under the proposed proportional representation system are reserved for women, 10 per cent for youths and 5 per cent for physically challenged persons, without prejudice to their right to also compete for representation under the first-past-the-post system. This recommendation is made pursuant to the recommendation of the Justice Uwais committee's recommendation on electoral reform."

The youths also urged the amendment of the immunity clause under Section 308 (1) (a) to prevent its abuse by presidents, governors and their deputies. "The immunity clause should also be subject to the review of a Federal High Court in the case of governors and their deputies, and to the review of the Supreme Court in the case of the president and his deputy.

The immunity must be subject to some specific exceptions, like murder, insanity, flagrant looting of state treasury, etc. Since those kinds of conduct while in office were not, ipso facto, intended to be protected by the framers of the constitution, they should, therefore, not come under the immunity umbrella."

In a memorandum prepared from inputs made by 360 women organizations drawn from the six geo-political zones of the country, women, under the auspices of Gender and Constitution Review Network (GECORN), urged the lawmakers to address the injustices and imbalance in opportunity between men and women that exclusion of women has caused. According to them, redressing the injustice "is not just about human rights, it is smart economics."

"Inclusion - The 1999 Constitution should be re-drafted so that the word 'he or him' should be replaced with he/she and him/her..."

"Citizenship - Section 26 (2) should be amended to confer citizenship by registration to a foreign spouse of a woman just like her male counterpart. Section 29 (4) should be abrogated as it condones the incidences of child marriages and legalizes violence from early marriage contrary to the Child's Rights Act 2003."

## Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]

They urged that the following provision in the constitution: "The term 'indigene of a state' shall mean - "(i) any Nigerian born of parents, who are descendants of that state

(ii) A Nigerian citizen shall be deemed to be an indigene of the state in which that person is born and has spent the first five years of his/her life

(iii) A Nigerian is deemed to have acquired the indigeneship of any state in which he/she has continuously resided for at least 10 years

(iv) A Nigerian woman or man should have the right to enjoy the rights accrued to the indigenes of either her place of origin or that of her husband and vice versa."

They also sought law targeting violence against women because "the Nigerian constitution is silent on harmful traditional practices that affect the dignity of women and girls."

On Affirmative Action, the women recommended the implementation of a national gender policy providing that, "the state at all levels shall put in place 35 per cent affirmative action to ensure that women, minorities, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life. That the affirmative action policy herein provided shall be a temporary measure to operate for not less than 10 years after which it shall be assessed to determine its continuance."

Among other demands, the women canvassed independent candidacy, amendment of federal character principle to include women, amendment of land use act to guarantee equal access to land and adequate compensation to men, women and the poor, and devolution of power to the federating units with more powers devolved to the local councils.

Disturbed by some provisions of the constitution and absence of provisions that hinder media practice, media practitioners, in a memorandum prepared by Media Network on the Review of the 1999 Constitution, said some specific and crucial amendments in the grand norm were needed to enable the media carry out its watchdog role robustly to the betterment of the country.

Some of the amendments include constitutional recognition for media/press freedom, relocation of the media's governance monitoring function to make it enforceable, constitutional guarantee of the right of access to information, exclusion of presidential participation in the broadcast media licencing, constitutional recognition for broadcast regulatory body and repositioning the responsibility for licence fee collection and management among others.

On the right of access to information, the media urged "that a constitutional backing for the right of access to information should be included in the proposed new Constitution as a sub-section of the current Section 39. The section should be a comprehensive section containing guarantees for a range of free expression, media freedom and access to information rights."

The Media Network lamented that the rights conferred on the media by Section 22 of the Constitution were not enforceable.

Section 22 of chapter II (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy) obligates the media as follows: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people."

However, they said this right could not be enforced because the whole chapter II of the 1999 Constitution where Section 22 is located is non-justiciable.

In the memo, they lamented that, given the culture of secrecy and impunity that prevails in the country, journalists have been attacked and press freedom violated in the course of making government accountable to the people.

## Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]

"Recently, six journalists attempting to cover a police visit by a former state governor were barred from their legitimate duty by being locked up in an office in the station. From Dele Giwa in 1986 to many others in recent times, many journalists have been killed with no clue yet on the assassins.

Yet investigative journalism remains a major tool through which journalists could monitor governance and make government accountable to the people as envisaged by the constitution. Indeed, it allows them to work in accordance with the definition of their profession as a public trust with citizens to expose wrongs and promote human rights.

"State media on the other hand are often incapacitated from professionally performing their oversight functions through the mode of appointment of the managers and editors, which leaves little to desire about editorial independence, critical journalism, tenure security and compliance with code of ethics. To the extent that their deserved security is not in place, an attitude of self censorship prevails.

"Against this background, it is worrisome that the obligation by the media to freely monitor governance and make government accountable to the people as provided for in Section 22 cannot be legally enforced; a journalist whose right has been violated in the course of ensuring governance accountability cannot seek the protection of the court.

"Also, Section 22 does not impose an obligation on the state or public institutions not to initiate policies and actions that can jeopardize the ability of the media to carry out the responsibility of monitoring governance; it does not declare illegal any state action that prevents the media from acting in accordance with the provision of Section 22 and it does not provide strong protection for state media."

Noting that the foregoing makes a constitutional mechanism to strengthen the watchdog role of the media a key imperative, they canvassed that Section 22 be removed from chapter II and be made a section or subsection of Section 39 under chapter IV (Fundamental human rights) to make it possible for the right conferred on the media therein to be legally enforceable.

To ensure violence-free and credible elections in the country, 40 of the 57 political parties with leaders of the Inter-party Advisory Council (IPAC) and Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), met in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and agreed on the need to submit a joint memorandum on constitution amendment to the National Assembly.

For a start, the parties want the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to be removed from the list of federal executive bodies to guarantee its independence from executive interference and influence.

They want the INEC Board membership to be composed of chairman, deputy chairman, six persons from the geo-political zones and a nominee each from CSOs, Labour, Nigeria Bar Association, women organizations, media and youth groups.

They also want the appointment of the INEC chairman taken away from the president and handed over to the National Judicial Council, NJC, with the approval of the Senate.

Also removal of the INEC chairman and members of the Board should only be done on the recommendation of the NJC by two-third majority of the Senate, which shall include at least 10 members of the minority parties in the Senate.

The parties called for the scrapping of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) and their structures incorporated within the structure of INEC to form a single election management body for the country.

In like manner, they want the registration of political parties to be taken away from INEC and given to the Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC), which would also perform other functions like monitoring organization and operation of parties; auditing funds and accounts of parties; issue rules for and monitor political campaigns, etc.

### Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]

The parties, in an unusual demand, asked for a single date for presidential, gubernatorial, National Assembly and State Assembly elections, which should be held at least six months before the expiration of the term of the incumbent office holders.

Instead of the winner-takes-all scenario that obtains currently in electoral contests, they canvassed the introduction of proportional representation in the legislature at all levels where votes scored would count in getting legislative seats.

Among other recommendations, the parties sought the abolition of the joint state/local government account; sponsorship of candidates for election by electoral alliance; separation of the office of the Attorney General of the Federation and states from that of the Minister of Justice and Commissioner for Justice; constitutional provision for annual grant to political parties; and creation of Electoral Offences Commission, which will establish mobile courts to facilitate the prosecution of electoral offenders.

In a memorandum prepared by a coalition of 65 civil society organizations, the NGOs sought the removal of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Act and Land Use Act from the constitution. They anchored the need to remove Land Use Act from the constitution on the grounds that "land issues are related to social, cultural and economic matters, which evolve and are dynamic...The issues of gender and resource control have aspects tied to land use " and so it needs to be amended to respond to emerging trends in societal development.

They also canvassed the removal of the NYSC Act "in the light of the level of insecurity in the nation and the perception that the scheme may have become anachronistic, requiring a tinkering with the ACT, if not repealed which its present status will not allow."

Among others, the CSOs sought 11 amendments covering electoral reforms, gender and special interest groups, local government reform, citizenship and indigenship, police reform, devolution of powers, fiscal federalism, immunity clause and mayoral status for the FCT Administration.

On electoral reform, the CSOs sought autonomy and independence of the INEC through amendment of Section 153 of the constitution to remove INEC from the list of federal executive bodies; National Assembly to midwife the process of appointing INEC chair and members with input from CSOs, organized private sector, women, youth, Labour, NBA, etc; and composition of INEC Board should include representatives of CSOs, OPS, Labour, women, NBA, people with disabilities, etc.

They also want INEC unbundled with the establishment of Electoral Offences Commission (EOC), and Political Party Registration and Regulatory Agency (PPRRA) and the amendment of Section 174 (c) to exclude electoral offences from the powers of the Attorney General.

Lamenting that SIECs had been greatly compromised by most state governments and given that most SIECs have not been able to conduct local government elections in the country, the CSOs called for the amendment of Section 197 (b) and Third Schedule Part II to expunge the establishment and operation of SIECs, which they said should be subsumed under INEC.

On gender and special interest groups, the NGOs canvassed 35 per cent affirmative action for female representation for appointive and elective positions, dual citizenship for women, and removal of Sections 29 (4b) and 42 (3), which encourages child marriages and discriminates against from military and police appointment respectively.

They also sought prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, disability, ethnic or linguistic association or ties.

Noting that the constitution is currently ambiguous on the status of local government as the third tier of government, the CSOs canvassed a four-year tenure for council chairmen and councilors; elections to be conducted at the expiration of the four-year tenure and separate accounts for local and state governments.

## Constitution Amendment - What the People Want [analysis]

To address the lingering conflict between citizenship of the nation and being an indigene of a state, they sought a new section on residency rights that will allow any Nigerian citizen residing in any community of any state for a period of five years to be entitled to all rights and privileges of an indigene of that community or state.

On police reforms, the NGOs deplored the current situation where certain sections relating to the Nigeria Police are either contradictory or insufficient in dealing with lapses in the police command and structure.

Citing Section 9 (4) of the Police Act, which they argued conflicts with Section 15 (2) of the Constitution because the two sections deal with who has operational authority over the police; while the Police Act vests such power on the President, the Constitution vests it on the Inspector General of Police, hence there is need for amendment.

The CSOs also urged devolution of powers to the federating units and fiscal federalism with the relocation of the following items from exclusive list to concurrent list: Item 39 (mines and minerals including oil fields, oil mining, geological surveys ad natural gas) and Items 40, 51 and 60.

On immunity clause, they recommended that immunity should not cover civil cases but criminal cases only.

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## **Kingsley Moghalu - Watching Failure of Recycled Politicians Pushed Me to Run for President [interview]**

This Day (Lagos)

November 23, 2018

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**Length:** 4862 words

### **Body**

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In this exclusive interview with THISDAY, the Young Progressive Party Presidential Candidate,

#### **Professor Kingsley Moghalu**

, speaks about his upbringing, professional sojourn and why he decided to run for the number one job in Nigeria. Sunday Ehigotor brings excepts:

#### **Who exactly is Professor Kingsley Moghalu?**

My name is Kingsley Chiedu Ayodele Moghalu. I am currently the Presidential candidate of the Young Progressives Party (YPP). I am married to Mrs. MaryAnne Moghalu and we have four children.

#### **How was growing up like?**

Well, growing up was lovely. I had a happy childhood and I have fun memories growing up. I had parents that were lovely but very strict also, so now that I am older, I appreciate the legacy of discipline that they left in me and a sense of responsibility, and a sense of leadership and service.

Both my father and mother were civil servants and my father was originally a Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Of course, he was in Lagos after independence, and then he served in Switzerland and in Washington DC. So, my early childhood was in Switzerland and Washington DC. And then the civil war came and we returned to the crisis in the Eastern region. That was when I learnt how to speak Igbo and that part of my growing up was also very interesting because it was a very stark contrast with life over there abroad but being very young, I was very adaptable and I enjoyed it. We lived in Enugu in 1967, for the second half of 1967 when Enugu fell, we moved to our village, so I spent most of those next two to three years in the village really and so in that sense, I am also a village boy.

#### **Where exactly in Anambra State are you from?**

Yes, Nnewi North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

#### **From your profile, it is obvious that you are well learned. So how was your educational background like?**

## Kingsley Moghalu - Watching Failure of Recycled Politicians Pushed Me to Run for President [interview]

After my early childhood, I did my primary school in Enugu WUTC Primary School. I then did my secondary school education divided between three schools. I was in Ezeama High School, Abia, then in Government College Umuahia before Federal Government College, Enugu. That was of course a lot of fun because it is in those schools that you make a lot of friends for life.

From there I went to the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus where I studied Law and graduated in the mid 1980's and then did my law school. I was called to the bar in 1987 and then I did my youth service as a legal officer at Shell Petroleum Development Company.

After my youth service, I joined NewsWatch, which was at the time the leading news magazine in Nigeria in the 80's founded by **Dele Giwa**, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed. NewsWatch was fun, I was lawyering and I became a **journalist** as well, writing legal stories for the magazine and serving as a special correspondent for several international newspaper agencies.

So, it was very interesting developing a two-track career and I always loved to write and I fancy that one day i would probably be a **journalist**. So, although I became a lawyer, I ultimately still went back to the media. I was also at that time a frequent contributing opinion columnist in The Guardian in the late 80's. So, those were my three main activities - working for NewsWatch, writing for foreign news agencies and writing columns in The Guardian Newspaper. It was a full life.

**Your basic education was grounded here in Nigeria despite the level of influence your father had at that time and could have afforded to send you to school overseas. So, comparing your education then and what is obtainable now, which is better?**

Education in Nigeria at that time was better because the state governments had more resources to support educational situations effectively. The value system was still fairly strong, although it has begun to be challenged after the civil war broadly. So, we were trained with intellectual rigor in the universities especially at that time and we had professors in the universities that were really very seasoned teachers and so that helped a lot. I mean the professors in the universities at those days were very sound and it was all together a better time for education than it is today, although the 50s and 60s were better times for education than the 70s and 80s. So, it just seems as if the educational system has been deteriorating with tact and now it's at its worst level and this makes me very sad because I know that the educational system is what defines the strength of any society. People are only as prosperous or as well to do as the educational system impact knowledge and values in them.

In seeking to be president, education is going to be my number one priority. We have to invest a lot more in education and we have to undertake some very critical reforms of the educational system. We have to reform teacher's training, we have to re-train the recertified teachers. I will lead a review of the curriculum in order to move it more towards skills, vocational skills, entrepreneurship, technology innovation, and these types of things.

We will reform how children learn; there are too much emphasis on cramming rather than original thinking and research and so on. And we are going to invest a lot in educational infrastructure to create a better environment for learning, so yes, education matters.

You just made an emphasis on educational infrastructure, most of the infrastructure we have in most federal institutions are things that have been there over decades, the world is revolving but this system is static.

I am one of the biggest witnesses; the educational infrastructure today in our universities is libraries. In those days, we used to have good libraries. In Government College Umuahia as a secondary school student, I was the library prefect, so I was in charge of the library. It was a huge library, very well equipped and resourced. Today, you do not find any.

**But we now have Google library, don't we?**

If you have Google library and it is done in a systematic way and everybody have access to it, then that's different because I believe for example that every student should have a laptop. Now you should have both traditional

## Kingsley Moghalu - Watching Failure of Recycled Politicians Pushed Me to Run for President [interview]

libraries of books and electronic libraries, that's the world of today. So, you have to combine the two. There is this debate about technology doing more harm to our educational system in the sense that in the 60's and 70's as you've said. You find out that students in school then will go through the rigor of picking up a book and reading, taking their time out to make research and all that, but now all we have now is cut and paste. Though we are a society that clamors for combining technology to education.

### **What's your view about this?**

The reason why we are having this challenge is because students are left to their own devices. If the teachers regulate how technology is used in learning then you will get the best of both worlds - you will get the best of the traditional books, you will get the best of research online and so on. Abroad, there are tools to know whether you have plagiarised any text maybe you have gone to the internet, lifted it and reported it, immediately they have software that will tell them that. So you cannot abuse the use of technology, but here you don't have such things and that's the problem. So, it is about how technology is used and not the use of technology in itself. Technology of course does pose serious challenges for our youths today and there is no question about that. It has made a lot of people much more self-absolved and lacking in social skills because they are always on their internet and phones.

### **Can you give us an insight on your professional background?**

After my time at NewsWatch, I went back to the United States to study for a Master's degree and I studied at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. The school is one of the world's prestigious schools of international affairs and many of the world's leaders, military generals, businessmen and diplomats studied there for their masters degrees. From there, When I graduated with my Masters of Arts degree in 1992, I joined the United Nations service- the International Civil Service of the United Nations.I was appointed by own merit by the Secretary General at the time which was Boutros Boutros-Ghali and I spent 17years working for the UN. I served first in Cambodia as a human right and elections officer then I served in New York, the headquarters as the political affairs officer for three years, and then I served in Croatia as the political adviser to the head of the UN mission in Croatia. I wrote the head maps, the legal framework for the elections that reintegrated the subhead part of Croatia back to the mainstream Croatia. So we conducted an election that reunited them back to Croatia proper. From that assignment I went to Arusha in Tanzania as a legal adviser and spokesman to the International Tribunal for Rwanda, that's the International War Crime Tribunal that persecuted the architects of the Rwanda Genocide of 1994. My interest in Rwanda began 1994 when I was the political affairs officer at the UN headquarters and part of my job was as desk officer for Rwanda during the genocide. So I know exactly what happened, how and why. I was very involved in the International humanitarian response back stopping the UN peace keeping mission in Kigali, which then was headed by a Canadian general called Romeo. I was an officer under him.

So from New York, I went to Croatia, then to Tanzania, in Tanzania we were successful in prosecuting the architect of the Genocide including the former Rwanda prime minister, John Kambanda, and that was the first time a head of government was convicted by an International Criminal Tribunal. We were also the first International tribunal to give judgment for the crime of genocide.

From there, I spent five years in the International tribunal and after that I was appointed to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva Switzerland. It was a 20 billion dollar fund to make social investment in developing countries against malaria, tuberculosis and HIV AIDS; I was the head of global partnership and resource mobilisation at the global funding in Geneva. Again this was a very interesting post, because for the first time, because the fund was public private partnership even though I was a member of the UN in this case, the World Health Organisation, but because of the way the fund operated, we had private sector members on the board, and the civil societies.

So working for the fund opened my eyes to the wider world beyond just traditional diplomats and ambassadors and so on. We engaged with them at the fund but we engaged with a lot more.

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And so I was lobbying the US Congress. I frequently had to go to the US Congress and to the House of Commons in the UK to make case and to ambassadors at the United Nations in New York to make a case on behalf of the global fund for financial and political support for governments. While I was Geneva, I was appointed by Kofi Annan, who was now the Secretary General at that time as a member of the redesigned panel on the United Nations internal justice system. This was a high level panel as part of the UN management reform in that era overhauled the accountability and transparency system of the United Nations and its dispute resolution mechanisms between the management and the staffs. The UN was about 60,000 employees around the world so labor relations was quite an important issue and so the whole question of internal justice was important. That assignment lasted for six months in New York. I was the youngest member of the redesigned panel, it was a very high level assignment, the chairman was an Australian Supreme Court judge and other members included an Egyptian who was a former AD hoc judge of the world court and a professor of International Law, a Canadian appeal court judge, the former foreign minister of Peru, and then myself. So I was quite young, I was about 43 and the next youngest person to me was 63. When we finished this assignment, the other members of the redesigned panel secretly went behind my back and wrote a very powerful letter of commendation of my service. Kofi Annan the Secretary general said "look, without this young man who comes within the UN system, we would not have been successful", so the General Assembly adopted our proposal and the systems of regulatory compliance and internal dispute resolutions and all those things still used in the UN today is the system that I was part of designing.

This were the important impacts one made at the global level but after a while I began to feel that life in the private sector was a bit more appealing to me, by this time I had taken my doctorates in International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Shortly after that I did an international certificate program in Enterprise Risk Management at the Institute of Risk Management in London. I felt I was now equipped for life in the private sector and I ultimately resigned from the UN and started my own consultancy business in Geneva, Switzerland and it was called "Sogato Strategies". I was running this firm in 2009 when I was now invited to come to Nigeria by late President Musa Yar'Adua and Sanusi Lamido Sanusi the then Governor of CBN to come back as the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria which I did.

Again, it was a wonderful experience because we had so many successes.?Personally I led the introduction of the Bank Verification Number (BVN) into the Nigeria payment system. Many people don't know this, sometimes some people and government try to claim credit for the BVN but that's not true. I introduced the BVN into Nigeria in 2004 during our reforms of the payment system. I was also responsible for a lot of reforms in the financial system, banks, corporate governance reforms, risk management reforms and so on, making sure that no bank failed and no depositor lost a kobo unlike what happened in the failed bank crisis in Nigeria in the late 1990's. I did a lot of huge works in the CBN. Of course, I was a member of the monetary policy committee and that committee was responsible for eventually achieving an eight per cent interest rate which was low compared to previous times that people had known in Nigeria, but inflation of course has since gone back up again. I spent five years as the deputy governor of the CBN and after that when I finished my tenure I was appointed Professor of Practice in International Business and Policy, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, that was my alma mater. I was made a professor there, which was a very high honor because it was one of the elite premier universities in the US.

### **Looking at your young look, what is really your age?**

I am 55 years old, I was born in 1963.

### **So, why are you running for president?**

I am running for president because of the vision I have for Nigeria. I am pregnant with that vision and like a woman with child, you are never comfortable until that child comes out. So I am running for president to provide the kind of leadership that Nigerians need but has not had for decades. I am running for president to address the question of poverty that is really so widespread in Nigeria today and for you to fight an effective war against poverty, you have to have some intellectual depth, some understanding of what causes poverty, how does poverty come about and how it can be addressed. You have to think about job creation for the youths that are coming out from universities, are they coming out to join the long lines of unemployment as it's the case today? Or are they coming out with the kind of skills that makes them employable?

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**The reasons you just stated are pivotal to the youths today because of the challenges they go through in actualising their dreams. So again, what spurred your intention to run for president?**

Let me tell you, it is watching the continuous failure of the old recycled politicians that actually made me decide to run. There needs to be a generational shift of leadership in Nigeria to a breed of younger and more competent persons, politicians or not, but leaders certainly.

**Are you for the paradigm of youth coming into power?**

Of course, that's the whole point. I am a candidate on a platform that appeals across various demography, but I am essentially the youth candidate for the presidency. I am an experienced, knowledgeable and accomplished youth candidate.

I like the way you emphasised on experience and being knowledgeable, but that doesn't apply to most youths we see coming out for positions

Some people believe that just the fact that they are young qualifies them to be president or senator, but no, it is not by that. One of the issues with the "not too young to run" movement and eventual bill is that it does not address two aspects of youth involvement in politics and focuses only on one and that is youths having their opportunities to run for positions, but it doesn't address the question of youths involving in structural participation in politics. That is to say belonging to political parties, then perhaps most importantly voting, how many youths votes in this country compare to the numbers?. These are things we have to focus on and stop looking at the things on the surface. The fact that you are young on its own doesn't qualify you to be president because being president of Nigeria or any country requires high level experience of leadership that you must bring to the table and of course, I have this more than most of the people in the race.

**Now do you think Nigeria is going to have a youth president?**

I believe so, but the question is whether the youths themselves know exactly what they want. They seem a bit confused between candidates; confused between the old order and the new order. You hear some young people saying they will vote for Atiku, when you hear such kind of things you know such a youth has no knowledge of perception, of what needs to happen in Nigeria and the role he or she can play in making such a thing happen. So that is the problem. But my presidency will be youth friendly and would be an open door to youths who are competent and zealous to work for the state.

**Aside the not too young to run bill, there seem not to be enough policies to engage the youths in the sense of skills acquisitions, training and scholarship etc. What are you bringing on board?**

Let me tell you what I am going to do, as president of Nigeria. I intend to establish a skill training center in each of the 774 local governments. This would serve as a hub for giving young people in whichever local government area the ability and the opportunity to engage with the 21st century with skills such as welding, carpentry, IT skills and all kind of skills. It will make them more employable or equip them to be able to employ themselves and others. With this approach, you will have a more-skills based work pool. Then my government would also setup a N1trillion venture capital, which will bring them capital.

There would be a handshake between the skills that these young people have acquired and access to capital to start new businesses. The venture capital fund is not credit, it is not a bank loan. It is equity investments into new businesses that are being started and the venture capital fund will co-own the business with those that receive funding from them to operate. That is the way it is in all civilised countries of the world until the venture capital firm can exit because the firm has become mature. Now with this interventions, this N1trillion fund that would support a lot of people with good innovative ideas to create wealth in Nigeria. You will begin to see a structural shift in the economy of Nigeria. Which brings me to the question of dependence on oil and that's what has ruined Nigeria because it has made us lazy and we also react badly to the shocks in the global price market. We are sort of a ram set up for slaughter by events that we ourselves have allowed to happen.

**How do you ensure that the N1 trillion naira fund is utilised for what it is actually meant for?**

The setting up of the partnership between the investor and the investee will create checks and mechanisms to prevent people from just taking money and disappearing. The capital can be put in a type of account that the day to day owner of the business cannot just go and withdraw money anyhow.

**You talked about the youths not knowing what they want. Expatiate on this?**

Nigeria should aim for what I call the demographic dividends but what we have now is the demographic curse where you have a lot of hundred of millions of people jobless, not creating enough capital, no innovation in the economy. Now you find that what we have is a rising poverty rate, unemployment and population. This is a dangerous cocktail brew and it would increase if we don't move Nigeria to the right direction, which is again why I am seeking the mandate of the presidency so that I can move Nigeria to that right trajectory of stopping its dependence on oil and truly diversifying the economy using innovation and modern agriculture.

**On politics, the youths and Nigerians in general would want to turn to who pays higher. How do you push through that?**

I want to ask Nigerians a question, are we the children of lesser gods? Are we different from the people in America, in Britain, Brazil and in China? Who are demanding better standards of life and holding their political leaders accountable if they do not perform. Anybody that tilts to the old order based on money that they have to share is a person who is a mental slave and we should pity such a person and we should talk to a lot of persons in our society to move away from mental slavery or not to be tempted into mental slavery. When you are beginning to choose between two evils and you are calling one lesser, does the devil have angels? The devil has no angels. You are either an angel or a demon in that sphere. So, it is in the political sphere, you have those who have the innovation, the motivation to serve the people of Nigeria and have the ideas, people like myself and then you have those who are in it for themselves - the typical traditional and recycled political class of which we should be tired because their track record is a record of failure.

**Let's go to your party, what makes YPP different from other political parties like we have now in Nigeria, especially the big wigs?**

First of all the YPP was not founded around any single individual, it is a congregation of both men and women who came together under the YPP. So there is no personality cult in the YPP, it's a party by the people, of the people and for the people. That's number one. Number two, YPP is promoting the politics of service to the people, the true reason for leadership in the public sphere is to serve people and YPP has put service first.

So the party is spread all over the country, we are present in 36 states and present in all the local government wards. So even though it's young, the party has been moving very quickly to bridge whatever gap it perceives may exist and we would top it up by educating Nigerians of the YPP and what we stand for. We believe in an egalitarian society where the citizens are enthroned as the focus of governance but today in Nigeria, our politics and governance is to serve the vested and corrupt interest of politicians. So this is the big difference between YPP and say APC and PDP. One APC is fake change and PDP is Burundi change.

**Let's take for instance that you were the president of Nigeria as we speak, what would you have done differently looking at this government?**

If I were to be put into Buhari's shoes? First of all I never want to be put in Buhari's shoes because those shoes are different from my own shoes but Buhari has clearly failed the hopes that many invested in. He has left Nigeria more divided than united. He has left the economy weaker. Security is almost unavailable in Nigeria today, there is no security of lives and property. So if I were Buhari, I would regret deeply my absolute non-performance and tender an apology to Nigerians and say for my failure, I will not seek a second term.

**We know when the current government came to power, they came with about three agendas - corruption, security and economy. How would you rate the government so far from these three?**

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F! I am a professor. So 'F' is complete and total failure. We had the worst recession in the last 30 years. Look at security today, Nigeria has become a killing field. Life is cheap in Nigeria today. Look at corruption, it is even worst than it was and it still goes on and the power that be turns a blind eye to obvious cases of corruption and they persecute the obvious cases of corruption of the opposition political elite.

### **What are you bringing on board?**

Well, I am coming as a president in Nigeria in 2019 with a three-legged agenda; number one to heal Nigeria and build a nation. We are a broken country, not yet a nation. We are a nation not yet to be born, so that number one. Number two, I am coming with a vision for economic transformation, to wage war against poverty and unemployment and to take millions of Nigerians from poverty into the middle class and to create an environment, where the private sector creates jobs for millions of unemployed youths in Nigeria today. The third is to restore Nigeria standings in the world, and if you look at my background, you will find out that I am the only presidential candidate with a track record in all three - nation building around the world, economic management in Nigeria and international diplomacy. I am the only one that has that combined background and these are the top three challenges any president would face at May 30, 2019. I am ready to be president, I have the structure for a campaign and we would proceed to give our message to Nigerians that it is time for something new, different and bold.

### **Talking about structures in place, we know the structure of elections we have in Nigeria is party politics and not candidacy. Do you think that YPP stand a chance looking at the two big political party we have in Nigeria?**

I think they do, of cause they do, look how long do PDP exist? 16 years and in 2 years APC kicked it out, so there is nothing to say we cannot kick out the APC in 2019 just because they are older than us or PDP is Methuselah. We have a saying that: "he who travels and has seen the world is wiser than a man with grey hairs and has gone nowhere".

### **Is that your strength?**

Of course, it is my strength because I have the exposure, the knowledge and I have the track record which you can check of consistent performance and identification with excellence. That's my track record and that's the kind of track record Nigeria needs today. Nigeria does not need ethnic jingoists, religious chauvinists, and sectional irredentist.

### **Economically speaking now, what's your take about the minimum wage debate currently going on?**

The minimum wage debate going on, I have put out my position very clearly. N18,000 a month is a poverty wage. It should not continue, it is impoverishing the Nigeria worker at a time where there has been significant inflation. I would say that the minimum wage should be anything above N30,000 and N40,000 at this time. If it goes significantly above that, it would create inflationary effects. So you have to balance the ability to pay guiding against inflation and the sustainability of whatever you arrive at. Even in paying the new minimum wage and to sustain it, there are certain things that must happen but this government does not have the political will to do it. Number one as president, I would abolish petroleum subsidy that would save Nigeria about a trillion naira every year. Do you know what that can do? Because sometimes people ask "you how can you fund all of those things you are talking about?". But I have clear plans to fund those things. There is a lot of wastage in Nigeria that if you block it probably, you will have more than enough money to do most things, but this country gets maybe 30-40 per cent of those things due to it, while the rest goes to the hands of private robber bands.

### **Talking about fuel subsidy, what we the masses see is the pump price, don't you think removing the subsidy would further increase what we have as the pump price?**

Let me tell you how the economics of deregulation of downstream petroleum would work in my presidency. In the beginning it may look as if it may increase the price but as more people get into the market, competition will exhume

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and price will crash, that's what happened with diesel and that's exactly what will happen with petrol. It is people who do not have leadership ability who cannot see that this is what should be done, but they are looking for cheap popularity and you know leadership is not always a popularity contest.

**What's your key message to the public?**

My message to Nigerians is that it is time to retire the old recycled politicians and replace them with a competent leader as president of Nigeria in the 21st century and I submit that the person is myself.

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## We Don't Have a God in PDP Anymore - Mohammed, Newswatch Co-Founder [interview]

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### **Body**

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is a journalism icon who was part of the quartet that revolutionized the pen profession in the early eighties. He has lived in the shadows of his famous by line at least until now.

For 35 years he asked the questions in the line of duty. In his columns at both the defunct National Concord and in Newswatch, his terse analysis often unnerved the high and mighty. Mohammed, remarkably utilized the power of the pen in his hands to social service, mostly to the benefit of the kin and kindred he left back in his native Kogi State.

How he was able to navigate the chaos and sophistication of living in Lagos with the primitive simplicity of he repeatedly returned to in Kogi State reflects the suave nature of Mohammed.

It could also point to the political instincts in the Dekina, Kogi State born journalist.

Born on April 4, 2010, Mohammed was educated at St. Joseph's Primary School, Anyigba, Government Secondary School, Okenne and subsequently the University of Lagos, where he in 1975 received a B.Sc Honours degree in Mass Communication.

His rise in the profession was sharp and by 1980 he was an Associate Editor of the once powerful mouthpiece of the North, New Nigerian. In December 1980 he joined the National Concord as Deputy Editor and became the editor of the newspaper in 1982. Following the famed disagreement between that newspaper's owner, Bashorun MKO Abiola and some of his senior editors, Mohammed and the trio of the late Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu and Dan Agebse moved on to found the award winning Newswatch Magazine in 1984.

Mohammed who is presently Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Newswatch Communications has now stepped into the political terrain with his bid for the governorship of his native Kogi State.

He spoke to

, Political Editor on his , mission and vision for Kogi State among other issues. Excerpts:

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The people, service to the community, service to my people. As a matter of fact they are the ones who asked me to come and serve them in this capacity and I have no choice but to agree. We have been serving them in different capacities under different platforms.

It is one way of giving back to the people what they have given to you. They educated me from primary school all the way to the university so I think that they deserve qualitative leadership, they deserve qualitative community service, they deserve visionary leadership that is able to bring balanced development to the communities and I thought I was in a position to offer this service.

No, I am not talking like a politician.

So, in what way did your people call you.

Let me tell you the truth. I never for one day said that I want to be a Governor but I have the qualities of being a Governor. You have the qualities of being a Governor. I can tell you that journalists are better at serving the people than what we call professional politicians.

You have been helping the communities, you have been fighting social injustice, you have been fighting mismanagement, you have been fighting bad governance and if you are called upon now to come and practice what you have been preaching you will do better.

Look at the history of journalists in politics, look at our elders who have served, they did better than what you call the core politicians.

So, from that perspective you and I will do better.

We have been crying about the ills of the society and the only way we can correct it is to go into the arena and that is what has propelled me to go into it.

We want to change that. I am not going to look at white and say it is black. I am not going to look for cheap popularity, I am not going to deceive the people to vote for me, I am not going to tell lies and I am not going to tell them that I am going to build a bridge even where there is no river. If I make a promise, I am going to stand by that promise. My word would be my bond.

You lie to communities that are not sophisticated. Our communities are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Once upon a time it was easy to go and lie to them, to go and deceive them but today they will ask questions, they want to know what you have been able to do for them in the past. What you are capable of doing now and what you are capable of doing in the future.

There is no party that doesn't have internal problems.

So, it has become a very sophisticated society and governance has become very sophisticated that it cannot be left in the hands of those who are just strolling in and strolling out of office for their own selfish reasons.

They cannot hold a referendum to go and call somebody. People will sit down, group of friends will sit down and say, 'look, the direction we have been going how do we achieve our objective?' I belong to a club for example formed way back in 1982 called Club 580, we have friends, we think, look at what is going wrong and we are not in the mainstream of politics, some are in government, some are in politics, some are in business, some are in the professions but we articulate problems in the society and we proffer solutions.

But you can only proffer solutions, you cannot implement because you are not the implementer. Now there are other groups like that that have been holding such meetings and one day I got a call, they said "Yakubu," I said "yes," and they said "I am sorry I didn't inform you but we have this forum and we have been holding meetings and I nominated you," then I said 'as a member of your forum, he said no, but to contest governorship election.

I told him that he was not serious and he said that that was what he expected to hear from me.

### We Don't Have a God in PDP Anymore - Mohammed, Newswatch Co-Founder [interview]

It took him and the other groups about two months before I said yes. I was not hesitating because I was not capable, but because when such offers come to you, you have to consult other people, you have to consult your family and I had to pray.

The PDP guideline on zoning should not be mixed up. At the federal level, there was an agreement let it be in the South for eight years, let it be in the North for eight years. The PDP constitution on zoning and power sharing is very clear.

If I become Governor I am not going to be deputy Governor, the deputy Governor is not going to come from my senatorial district, the Speaker is not going to come from my senatorial district, the Secretary to the state government is not going to come from my senatorial district, most offices will be shared out. At the federal level it is called federal character. It is going to be power sharing, it is going to be participatory government. Even forget what PDP says about power sharing, I believe in equity, I believe in fairness.

That is what I am telling you. You cannot divide people. What the people in Kogi State and everywhere look for is the best person and the best person is that who is above ethnicity, who will look at everybody in the State as his own, who will not look at this project and say it should be for my people.

If you are running an all inclusive government we wont have the problem of marginalization, we wont have the problem of some people crying that they have been marginalized over the years...we have discussed this power shift for too long that it has become archaic. What we are looking for in our State is the person who can give qualitative leadership, that will bring everybody into government, that will make everybody feel a sense of belonging and they have discovered that in me! Maybe you haven't discovered that yourself.

If you go up home you will know that I was raised up there. The people have discovered that I am the man to give that change.

Number one, I was in the forefront for the creation of Kogi State. You know during democracy it is a difficult thing to create States, but during the military era our own people did not have representation at the Federal Government but as a journalist I took it upon myself to be the spokesman of the downtrodden to articulate the problems of our people.

One day in July 1991 the former President summoned me to Abuja and we sat in Aguda House face to face for two hours and we sat down all the modalities for the creation of Kogi State and there and then it was created and two months later, the Armed Forces Ruling Council announced it. Everybody knows that in Kogi State. Everybody played a role for the creation of Kogi State, it was like a football team but I was the striker that hit the ball in.

Yes, it is being realized, it is not a vision that can be realized overnight. Those who were there from day one started realizing the vision for Kogi State, but I will tell you that at the stage where we are now, we have to fast track development.

Today, if you go to Lokoja you will not realsie that it is Lokoja because it was less than a provincial capital and it was becoming a ghost town before the State was created. We didn't have a university before, but we have now. The kind of roads we have now we didn't have them before. But that is not sufficient, we are in a hurry to develop, we have to fast track development.

My determination is to raise the social status of the State and the living standard of the people.

In my own small enclave there in Kogi State, I want to make it a model of development.

That is what I am saying, government is a continuous process. He took over from somebody some eight years ago, and he built on what that man left.

He has done very well.

Can you cite examples of how he has done well.

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His humility, his sense of justice, his sense of fairness, his modesty and these are qualities you need in leadership. Leadership is not supposed to be a terror. You shouldn't be terrorizing people, leadership is not like being an emperor and he is known for his sense of equity.

He is known for sharing amenities in all the local governments of the State. But don't forget that it is a state that is not endowed with much especially in terms of federal allocations but internally generated revenue is the key.

We have a lot of resources that need to be tapped and he has governed the State to the best of his ability and one thing you can say for him is that he is not a pretender. He is just himself, natural and an embodiment of justice and equity.

You don't go looking for shortcomings. You go looking for 'what do I do now to build on' what he has achieved.

No, this interview is not about the man who is there, it is about Yakubu Mohammed who wants to be Governor of Kogi State.

As one man who brought all the people of Kogi State together as brothers and sisters. Today, what is the problem of Kogi State is that people found themselves together as strange bed fellows and because they believe that the only way that they can have access to power is to play ethnic politics and that is not good.

Without unity there cannot be development. So, first you must unite these people. Kogi State was the former Kabba province and we were living like brothers and sisters. We schooled in that State and in secondary school we were living like brothers we didn't know that somebody was an Okun man or somebody was an Igalla man or an Igbira man.

We were eating from the same bowl, we were in the same dorm, we were in the same class, we were not even speaking our native languages and today those friends we made when we were in secondary school are our best friends. So, we should not be living like cat and dog.

So, without unity there cannot be purposeful development. Development is not an artificial thing, it has to come naturally to people, people must be able to sit down and have common aspirations, common values, common goals and say all of us must agree on what we want to do.

Where do we want to go as a people today and somebody inspire them and I want to do that. I should be able to go to Okenne and say, oh I am in Igbira land. When I went there something that has never happened to any politician happened. I went on a tour of all the local governments in Igbira land and do you know that it was paid for by my brothers from that place. I didn't spend any kobo there.

But you don't get that from any other politician. Politicians give, they don't receive but in my own case, people are contributing to make sure that I become Governor and this thing cuts across all the ethnic groups in that place.

Yes, I do it is laid first on qualitative education. Without education you cannot even discuss the economy, you cannot discuss anything else. Then qualitative health delivery system. Health is said to be wealth.

If you have poor people who are struggling and are poor and dejected they cannot contribute meaningfully to the economy and then integrated rural development that will empower people to earn a living for themselves in the rural areas.

Kogi is mostly a rural community and the only way you can develop the State is to bring development to every community in the rural area and turn the rural areas into urban centres. People must go to farm and earn a decent living from farming. Youths must be empowered. When they go to school and they come out, they must have jobs.

If you go to hospital, you should go to receive treatment and not to go there and die. If they prescribe drugs for you it should be drugs that should cure.

### We Don't Have a God in PDP Anymore - Mohammed, Newswatch Co-Founder [interview]

Part of integrated rural development is that we are going to have cottage industries in rural areas that utilize the agrarian products. It is a rural community, it is a farming community. We are going to revive agriculture, we are not going to pay lip service to it.

We will equally pay attention to decayed infrastructure and some of the roads are not in the best condition, the rural areas need to be opened up so that the farmers who are there would have incentive to get their goods to the nearest market. They can sell and have a living. If you go there now, you will see food products that are just decaying and they cant move them because there are no roads.

Then they have no potable water. Try as government has done, it cannot reach all the villages and if you are not having potable water, what you will get is illness.

We will liaise with the Federal Government, we will liaise with foreign investors and we will promote the potentials of Kogi State. I know I have tentacles, I have connections within the country and outside the country.

I know what development is all about, I know where things are happening. Even our own people who are abroad are desirous of coming home but they want a conducive environment that will make them come home.

Do you know that our people abroad are phoning me that they want to contribute money and they have never met me, but they have been reading about me and they want to be part of it.

The party is going through self reform and a party that is going through such reforms must have internal crises, it can only come out well through some internal bickering and so on.

There is no party that doesn't have internal problems. But a party that is dynamic that wants to do self reform and wants to continue to capture power must do self examination, where are we right and where are we wrong and it must be realistic enough to realize that you can also go wrong and when you go wrong you have to make sure that you correct it so that you don't repeat your mistakes.

We have had problems in the past when they were imposing candidates, we have had the problem in the past when somebody would win a primary and they would substitute him. We have had a problem of one person sitting down and playing god, that is not happening anymore and that is not going to happen anymore.

If a party is going through self\_reform, look at the other parties they have almost disappeared because of power tussle, because of one problem or the other and because they believe that they cannot remain in opposition. That is one problem we have in our society.

Some people prefer to remain where they are. Chief Obafemi Awolowo didn't cross to NPN from UPN because he wanted power. You stay where you are and cast a name for yourselves

The problem is that most of our politicians don't have principles and that is why nobody has qualms moving from one party to the other and in a year, a politician would have gone to four parties. Nobody wants to sit down and develop a party, to bring it to a position where it can articulate the problems of the society and seek the mandate of the people to come to power.

They will gravitate towards the one that has already won election and when they get there what you have there is an amalgam of all kinds of characters, so it is a potential for crises.

I will be too busy governing the State to worry about who becomes secretary of the party in one ward or the other. I will be interested in people electing a very strong and capable chairman of the party in all the local governments and at the state level so that he can handle the affairs of the party.

I don't understand that a Governor should be the leader of the party, a Governor is handling a major assignment, good governance. So, he shouldn't have time to worry about who becomes the ward chairman, who is contesting for councilor in one obscure area. Why should I be saddled with that responsibility? I am not saying it because I want to be Governor, I am saying it because that is the right position.

We Don't Have a God in PDP Anymore - Mohammed, Newswatch Co-Founder [interview]

In 1979 Shehu Shagari was the President of the country and Chief Adisa Akinloye was the chairman of NPN. When it was NPN matter it is Akinloye, when it is government it is Shagari and when they are holding party meetings Shagari had to defer to Akinloye. Shagari did not arrogate to himself as the leader of the party, so the line was divided and they were doing very well.

Military people getting into politics and they cannot remember that they have left uniform and they still think that they are in the barracks and cannot defer to the civil populace.

This mindset it will take sometime to correct it but I think we will still get there. For how can you combine leader of the party with governance. This man in Lagos is not bothered about who is the chairman of the party and he is doing very well. When party matters come he refers them elsewhere.

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## Men who control Nigeria

News Chronicle (Nigeria)

October 9, 2016 Sunday

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### **Body**

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The battlefield is a scene of constant chaos. The winner will be the one who controls that chaos, both his own and the enemy's." – Napoleon Bonaparte.

They are men of power, means, influence and authority. They understand the landscape; the intricacies, uses and gains of wielding and dispensing from their vast and rich tanks. On the turf of business, in politics, the military or civil service, their names draw awe, love, inspiration, admiration, hatred and spite, depending on the viewer's side-view. They, in good essence, exemplify and live out the true meaning of power espoused in Robert Greene's

48 Laws of Power, which states that "Timidity is dangerous. Better to enter with boldness. Any mistakes you commit with audacity are easily corrected with more audacity".

Some attained the height by discovering and exploiting the people's thumbscrew, recreating themselves or even assuming formlessness. Some others got round the bend by being subtle, congenial yet cunning, democratic yet devious. For as the great Renaissance diplomat and philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli, writes, "Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good".

Take, for instance, former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (OBJ) and Ibrahim Babangida (IBB). They cultivated the game of extended duplicity, which is akin to the power dynamics that existed in the scheming world of the old aristocratic court. In All Progressives Congress (APC) leader Bola Ahmed Tinubu, we find tenacity, the perfect courtier through seduction, charm and subtle strategy – always planning several moves ahead. In the world of the spymaster Aliyu Gusau and business icon Aliko Dangote, we locate the intrinsic values of tactical thinking, cunning and life as a never-ending game. Indeed, ex-president Goodluck Jonathan was so enthralled by Dangote's charm and wit that he bestowed on him a national honour reserved for past presidents. In Muhammadu Buhari and Abdulsalam Abubakar a combination of straightforwardness, honesty and some traces of naiveté (for Abubakar), has worked to convince the populace of their noble and selflessness.

## Men who control Nigeria

As forms of persuasion, these strategies coalesce into subtle coercion and ultimately captures the hearts of people and the soul of the nation. The tactics are many, variegated and wears many masks. According to Greene, "All human interaction requires deception on many levels, and in some ways what separates humans from animals is our ability to lie and deceive". In Greek mythology, Odysseus for instance, was judged by his ability to rival the craftiness of the gods, stealing some of their divine power by matching them in wits and deception. In Nigeria, several power contraptions have been on the scene. In the 1970's, the Kaduna Mafia laid siege to its path. It was a loose amalgam of northern intellectuals, civil servants, military officers and businessmen residing or doing business in Kaduna. The group was said to have determined Nigeria's political and economic climate at the time. Their influence and power waned when the nation's political capital moved to Abuja from Lagos, and in came the Langtang Mafia. It comprised all army generals who operated from the inner kitchen of IBB.

Successive presidents have always kept stately men and women of power around them who run and throw things around. In doing so, Napoleon Bonaparte's eternal words that "Ten people who speak, make more noise than ten thousand who are silent", come alive, loud and clear.

These men, who metaphorically own Nigeria, are in more ways like a billiard ball that caroms several times before hitting target. They groveled in the modern court, resplendent in decency, while reveling in manipulation. This is the law of power, the canons of power.

### MUHAMMADU BUHARI

In profiling those who wield enormous power and influence in Nigeria, it would be preposterous to exclude President Muhammadu Buhari. Whether in or out of power, he has remained a major force in the country and an opinion moulder. Though particularly not popular in the Southern part of the country, he is like a movement in the northern part of the country where he comes from. Since 1984 when he first emerged as the Head of State during the military era, his image continued to loom large until last year when he defeated his predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), which was then the main opposition party. The Katsina-born army officer had his military training in Kaduna as well as in Great Britain, India, and the United States. He was involved in the military coup that ousted Yakubu Gowon in 1975 and was appointed military governor of North Eastern State (now Borno) that same year. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, who became military Head of state when Gowon's successor, Murtala Mohammed was assassinated in 1976, appointed him federal commissioner for petroleum resources. By 1977, Buhari had become the military secretary at the Supreme Military Headquarters, which was the seat of government. By September 1979, he returned to regular army duties and commanded a division based in Kaduna.

He became the military Head of State in 1984 after the civilian government headed by Shehu Shagari was overthrown in a coup d'etat following mounting dissatisfaction with the government. His regime launched the "War Against Indiscipline," a programme that sought to promote positive values in Nigerian society. The programme made Buhari very popular with many voting for him in the last general election because of what his short-lived government was able to achieve.

### Olusegun OBASANJO

He is not photogenic. So? You may not like his face. But you will only be toying with your political career and destiny, if, on account of that, you ignore him in the game of political gerrymandering in our country. Ask Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's former Vice President, under his administration, for whom he swore that he would never be President of Nigeria, as long as he lives.

Times without number, he met him and practically knelt down and begged him in the name of God Almighty he worships and serves to forgive him his political trespasses, whatever they were, even as his heavenly Father, in whose name he was baptized and called Matthew, had forgiven his. The hunger for forgiveness was such that

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some years after they left the seat of power, Atiku went visiting him, all the way from his home state, Adamawa, to his hometown in Abeokuta.

They dined together, drank together, laughed together, discussed together, and even issued a press statement together. Atiku left feeling good with himself that all is now forgiven, all is now at rest. But hardly had he stepped on the staircase of the airplane that brought him to Abeokuta than Obasanjo announced to the whole world that Atiku was not his political son in whom he was well pleased, contrary to the impression they had created before all of us, some days earlier, about their awakening 'chummy' relationship.

With Obasanjo, Nigeria's former military head of state (1976-1979) and, later, civilian President (1999 – 2007), the more you look, the less you see. The one you know, the gospel according to Matthew, may have ended on the 28th chapter. But this Matthew known to many Nigerians as OBJ has several unknown chapters added to it.

Ask Chief Peter Odili, former governor of Rivers State, whom he deceived into thinking that he was being groomed as the next Vice President of Nigeria, as the next best thing to happen to Nigeria after Major General Musa Yar'Adua, his second-in-command during his days as our country's military head of state.

But Odili later got the shock of his life when Obasanjo dramatically dropped him at a political rally in which his candidacy as a running mate to 'the Lord's Chosen', Umaru Yar'Adua, was to be announced to the whole world. And, out of the shadows created around the incident by Obasanjo, stepped in a humble-looking near political neophyte called Goodluck Jonathan. He was to later break ranks with the two politically 'wayward' sons.

So, they told you that OBJ is as simple as ABC and you believed? That should be OBJ of question paper, not OBJ the human form! He foisted on us Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Chukwuma Soludo, Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan, whose reign and brinkmanship brought us nothing but political and economic disasters and thereby placing a big question mark on his political sagacity. People say he is selfish, mean and mischievous. The truth of it depends on who is assessing him. But love him or hate him, even at 79, you cannot ignore OBJ as an inimitable power broker in today's Nigeria. Or, do you think it was for nothing that he was bestowed with that all-encompassing title: Grand Commander of the Federal Republic (GCFR)?

### ABDULSALAMI ABUBAKAR

For anybody who has followed the course of events in Nigeria since the emergence of General Abdulsalam Abubakar as the nation's eighth military Head of State, there is no gainsaying that the Niger State born retired army officer has been a major factor in the country. On June 9, 1998, Abubakar became Nigeria's military Head of State after being persuaded to accept the position when General Sani Abacha died.

Despite his taciturn disposition, he is one of those who, since the death of Abacha, have determined the fate of the nation. He became one of the leading statesmen in Nigeria since May 29, 1999 when he transferred power to the civilian government in keeping with an early promise he made when he took over power.

From records, he was instrumental to the emergence of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 and more recently the transition from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general elections. Many believe that he was one of those that ensured a smooth transition from former President Goodluck Jonathan to President Muhammadu Buhari.

As fate would have it, Abdulsalami became the last out of eight soldiers of northern extraction to have ruled Nigeria.

He is one of the few generals in the Nigerian army who rose to the top without holding political office. Before he retired, he held only command and military positions, and in general, stayed out of the political limelight.

## Men who control Nigeria

He was born on June 13, 1942 in Minna, Niger State in Northern Nigeria and had his earlier education at the Native Authority Primary School in Minna.

Between 1957 and 1962, he attended the Provincial Secondary School, Bida. He also attended the Technical Institute, Kaduna.

He enlisted first into the Air force but quickly switched to the army.

### **THEOPHILUS DANJUMA**

That Gen Theophilus Danjuma is a power broker in Nigeria is not contestable and it is for obvious reasons. He is a successful career military officer, strategist, consummate industrialist and one of the leading investors in the nation's oil industry.

Even though many see him as a serial coup plotter and opportunist, there is no doubt that in the nation's chequered political history, he is one man that could be said to have seen it all. Many are sure to agree that it would be impossible to take any major political decision on the future of Nigeria without the contribution of the retired Taraba State-born army officer. He has participated in virtually every political era in the last five decades.

Since the 1966 counter coup, which changed the nation's power equation and history, Danjuma has remained very prominent in the affairs of the country.

Born in Takum, Theophilus Danjuma's earliest education was at St Bartholomew's Primary School Wusasa, from where he moved to Benue Provincial Secondary School in Katsina-Ala. He obtained his Higher School Certificate in 1958. In 1959 Theophilus Danjuma got enrolled into the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology in Zaria (now Ahmadu Bello University). Danjuma later left the school and joined the Nigerian Army by the end of 1960.

He became a lieutenant in the Nigerian Army and was elevated to the rank of a Captain when he joined a UN Peace-keeping force in Sante, Kataga Province of Congo.

In 1971, he earned the rank of a Colonel and in 1975; he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and the position of General Officer Commanding (GOC). His military career had a leap in 1976 when he was appointed the Chief of Army Staff in the regime of the military Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo. In the year 1979, Theophilus Danjuma retired from the Nigerian army.

### **Ibrahim Babangida**

"I am not the evil that quite a lot of people consider me to be," the man, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB), told journalists when he celebrated his 75th birthday sometime in August this year.

Truly, he may not be as evil as many of us think and believe, but a man who, by his political deeds or misdeeds, were able to inspire such an overweening thought in the minds of many Nigerians cannot be said to be a mean man.

"By virtue of the job I was doing, I was bound to be misconstrued," he said in the interview. "As long as I am not what you think I was, I feel satisfied... I hope the younger generation will carry out a research about leadership, people, individual and what role they played in the development of the nation and come up with a different conclusion from what is on the ground now."

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As for that, the jury and its verdict of history is already out: IBB, Nigeria's military President, August, 1985 to August, 1993, when, according to him, he voluntarily stepped down from power, is a political enigma, a tactician of the first order.

He showed the sign much earlier, when upon his ascendance to the throne as military head of state, he discarded the military title associated with the post and opted for "President" instead. Everybody cheered. Unlike the military governments before and after him, he brought a kind of consultative aura to governance by subjecting issues to public debate, after which he took the final decision. When he asked Nigerians to debate whether we should take the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan or not, which he did later, leading to SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme), we all gladly did.

When he formed a 17-man "Political Bureau" (Politburo), and asked us to freely say our minds on what should constitute our political structures and ideologies, we all did. At the end, he allowed us to form our political parties. We did and came up with 13, which as you well know, is an unlucky number.

He dissolved them and came up with two centrist political parties: Social Democratic Party (SDP), led Chief MKO Abiola and National Republic Convention (NRC), led by Alhaji Bashir Tofa and Option A4, as mode of voting. But after Abiola won, on June 12, 1993, in what is widely acclaimed as the most transparent election in the history of Nigeria, and he refused to hand over, blaming the development on forces beyond his power, Nigerians came to lose faith in his promises.

It was this loss of trust that led to the misunderstanding he was talking about. Nigerians, having seen through his chicanery on many issues, learnt not to believe him, from the tragic death of Dele Giwa, Nigeria's foremost journalist, through a letter bomb, Nigeria's membership of OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference), SAP and the alleged missing, from our national treasure under his watch, 12 billion naira windfall from oil sale, during the Gulf War, IBB had some great but inglorious crosses to bear. But make no mistake about it: many years after IBB left power, power has refused to leave IBB. Hence, the overarching influence he wields from Minna, Niger State, his hometown, on Nigeria's reins of power. Recall, for instance, the noble role he played in the installation of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, as Nigeria's civilian President, from 1999 to 2007. At 75, and 23 years after leaving power, he still remains a kingmaker, in fact, unarguably, Nigeria's topmost political landlord.

And, if you insist on contesting this fact, when next he is going to celebrate his birthday, or do something nationally remarkable, take a good look at how many people that are going to place for him, congratulatory messages either in newspapers, TV or radio. After you have done that, take another look at the part of Nigeria they come from and that is going to show you the kind of political clout that the man has and wields across our political landscape.

### ALIYU GUSAU

God is the Head of this House, says the old religious poster hung on the wall. "The unseen Guest at every meal. The silent Listener to every conversation."

While millions of Nigerians agree with this observation, there are millions more who are prepared to swear with those dark goggles that security and intelligence men wear, that the last part talking about "the silent listener to every conversation" is an attribute that the gods share in common with a man called General (rtd.) Aliyu Mohammed Gusau.

The onus lies on you to prove that a man who has served his country in various military capacities as one-time Chief of Army Staff, National Security Adviser to two different presidents, Commandant of the Nigerian Defence Academy, and most recently, Minister of Defence, a man who had headed different intelligence agencies, is anything but someone next to God in terms of carrying out security oversight functions.

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Chief Obafemi Awolowo, of blessed memory, was once said to have boasted that his car knew Nigeria more than Shehu Shagari. As a security intelligence chief and political bridge-builder, Gusau definitely knows Nigeria more than Awo's car.

As Director of Military Intelligence (1979–1983), he played a key role in the coup that ousted President Shehu Shagari on December 31, 1983 and brought in General Muhammadu Buhari into power as a military head of state (Dec. 1983 to August, 1985). After the coup he was said to have been proposed as overall head of Intelligence, by the then Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Babangida, but this was rejected by Buhari, who proceeded to appoint, in his stead, Lawal Rafindadi, as Director of the National Security Organization (NSO). Thereafter, he was sent on a training course at the Royal College of Defence Studies, United Kingdom.

All the same, he was to play another key role in the overthrow of Buhari's military government, after returning from the course, despite being placed under close security watch in the days leading up to the coup. After the coup, he was appointed Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Acting Director-General of the NSO (September 1985 to August 1986), and later Coordinator on National Security from August 1986 to December 1989.

It was under this capacity that he reorganised the security and intelligence apparatuses, by breaking up the NSO into three organisations: State Security Services (SSS, now Department of State Security, DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI). Apart from serving under IBB, first as National Security Adviser, and later, Chief of Army Staff, other Presidents that came after the military handed over power to civilians had seen the need, at one time or the other, to ask him to come and serve as National Security Adviser, to them. They include Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan. That shows you the kind of power he wields in the loops of political power in Nigeria.

As a powerbroker, he's had a few shots at power, by trying to play an active role in it, as evidenced in his decision to contest in the 2006 People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries for the party's presidential candidates. But he lost out to Umaru Yar'Adua. In 2010, he also tried to do the same but later conceded his place to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

An inscription at the back of one of these trucks that supplies cellophane-packaged water ("pure water") to water-thirsty Nigerians claims to "walk humbly like a sheep but acts bravely like a lion." You could say the same of the man called Aliyu Mohammed Gusau. So? In the rush for political power in Nigeria, you can only underrate him to your own detriment!

### Bola Tinubu

Bola Ahmed Tinubu was born on 29 March 1952 in the city of Lagos Nigeria. He was elected Senator for the Lagos West constituency just before a military take-over in December 1993. After the return to democracy, he was elected governor of Lagos State, holding office from 29 May 1999 to 29 May 2007. One of his traditional titles, Jagaban, [leader of warriors] given him by the Emir of Bogu, in Niger state, seem to have dwarfed his numerous other titles. Tinubu has emerged as one of the finest political strategists in the land. He had been in the trenches since the days of the National Democratic Coalition [NADECO], one of the platforms that put pressure on the Military dictator, Sani Abacha. Tinubu rode on the crest of his role in that era, into Lagos government house. He has since emerged, perhaps, the strongest political force in the South West.

His political influence has exceeded Lagos, where he literally lifted his successor, Babatunde Fashola, from the booth strap and made him governor. Against all odds , Tinubu has again made another protege, Akinwumi Ambode, the governor, after Fashola. But his greatest political feat is the ascendancy of the Buhari regime. He was the arrowhead of the coalition of four political parties that coalesced into All Progressives Congress [APC] and brought the Buhari government to power in May, 2015. Tinubu has had a hand in the making of many governors in the Southwest region. His foray into states outside the zone, has not yielded fruits and he has not given up. It would be

## Men who control Nigeria

fool hardy for anyone to make political permutations in Nigeria and ignore the Tinubu factor. He does not shy from a fight even as he understands that political affinity is not permanent.

His critics say Tinubu has his hands in many pies and would want to determine occupants of even the least of political offices in his domain, including ward councilors. They say he is so overbearing that those he put in office, dare not make decisions without his input. The views of his critics do not detract from his political prowess. Tinubu remains one of the most powerful political figures in the land.

### Aliko Dangote

59-year-old Aliko Dangote [GCON] has grown from a small trading firm he began in 1977 into one of the largest conglomerates in the African continent. He followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Alhaji Alhassan Dantata, reputed to be Africa's richest man when he passed away in 1955. Aliko Dangote, whose net worth stood at 15.1 billion dollars in June 2016, has surpassed his grandfather, not just in the size and scope of his wealth, but in the influence he wields. He is, perhaps, the largest employer of labour in the Nigeria's private sector. Dangote Group owns Cement, salt factories and flour mills in Nigeria and many African nations. The company exports cotton, cashew nuts, cocoa, sesame seed and ginger to several countries. It also has major investments in real estate, transport, textiles and oil and gas. The company employs over 11,000 people .

Dangote has diversified into telecommunications and has started building 14,000 kilometres of fibre optic cables to supply the whole of Nigeria. As a result, Dangote was honoured in January 2009 as the leading provider of employment in the Nigerian construction industry. His refinery and fertilizer project at Lekki Lagos, billed to come on stream in 2019, would take over 200,000 people off the unemployment lines.

Dangote's influence is not limited to the business arena, where Forbes Magazine, has ranked him as the 30th richest man in the world. He is a silent but influential player in the political arena. He funds many presidential candidates and has the ears of political leaders. He influences policies and thus ranks high in the league of those who decide policy and political direction.

However, Dangote's critics say he thrives in monopolistic ventures and would edge out competition from the business arena. He would hardly venture into a business and fail to be the leader in that line. He would muzzle out others in that line. Some people say he bullies them out of the way. They say he is one of the largest beneficiaries from the Nigerian system and has thus grown from the proceeds of policies he vicariously brought to be.

Whatever anyone says, the reality is that Alhaji Aliko Dangote is in the class of people who shape and determine policy, business and political direction of Nigeria. He is in the league of those who control Nigeria.

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## Men who control Nigeria

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### **Body**

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...And the reaches of their influence By CHIDI OBINECHE, Chika Abanobi, Alvan Ewuzie, Willy Eya, Vincent

...And the reaches of their influence

By CHIDI OBINECHE, Chika Abanobi, Alvan Ewuzie, Willy Eya, Vincent Kalu, Oluseye Ojo and Jerry Obidike

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### MUHAMMADU BUHARI

In profiling those who wield enormous power and influence in Nigeria, it would be preposterous to exclude President Muhammadu Buhari. Whether in or out of power, he has remained a major force in the country and an opinion moulder. Though particularly not popular in the Southern part of the country, he is like a movement in the northern part of the country where he comes from. Since 1984 when he first emerged as the Head of State during the military era, his image continued to loom large until last year when he defeated his predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), which was then the main opposition party.

The Katsina-born army officer had his military training in Kaduna as well as in Great Britain, India, and the United States. He was involved in the military coup that ousted Yakubu Gowon in 1975 and was appointed military governor of North Eastern State (now Borno) that same year. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, who became military Head of state when Gowon's successor, Murtala Mohammed was assassinated in 1976, appointed him federal commissioner for petroleum resources. By 1977, Buhari had become the military secretary at the Supreme Military Headquarters, which was the seat of government. By September 1979, he returned to regular army duties and commanded a division based in Kaduna. He became the military Head of State in 1984 after the civilian government headed by Shehu Shagari was overthrown in a coup d'etat following mounting dissatisfaction with the government. His regime launched the "War Against Indiscipline," a programme that sought to promote positive values in Nigerian society. The programme made Buhari very popular with many voting for him in the last general election because of what his short-lived government was able to achieve.

### Olusegun OBASANJO

He is not photogenic. So? You may not like his face. But you will only be toying with your political career and destiny, if, on account of that, you ignore him in the game of political gerrymandering in our country. Ask Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's former Vice President, under his administration, for whom he swore that he would never be President of Nigeria, as long as he lives.

Times without number, he met him and practically knelt down and begged him in the name of God Almighty he worships and serves to forgive him his political trespasses, whatever they were, even as his heavenly Father, in whose name he was baptized and called Matthew, had forgiven his. The hunger for forgiveness was such that

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some years after they left the seat of power, Atiku went visiting him, all the way from his home state, Adamawa, to his hometown in Abeokuta.

They dined together, drank together, laughed together, discussed together, and even issued a press statement together. Atiku left feeling good with himself that all is now forgiven, all is now at rest. But hardly had he stepped on the staircase of the airplane that brought him to Abeokuta than Obasanjo announced to the whole world that Atiku was not his political son in whom he was well pleased, contrary to the impression they had created before all of us, some days earlier, about their awakening 'chummy' relationship.

With Obasanjo, Nigeria's former military head of state (1976-1979) and, later, civilian President (1999 – 2007), the more you look, the less you see. The one you know, the gospel according to Matthew, may have ended on the 28th chapter. But this Matthew known to many Nigerians as OBJ has several unknown chapters added to it.

Ask Chief Peter Odili, former governor of Rivers State, whom he deceived into thinking that he was being groomed as the next Vice President of Nigeria, as the next best thing to happen to Nigeria after Major General Musa Yar'Adua, his second-in-command during his days as our country's military head of state.

But Odili later got the shock of his life when Obasanjo dramatically dropped him at a political rally in which his candidacy as a running mate to 'the Lord's Chosen', Umaru Yar'Adua, was to be announced to the whole world. And, out of the shadows created around the incident by Obasanjo, stepped in a humble-looking near political neophyte called Goodluck Jonathan. He was to later break ranks with the two politically 'wayward' sons.

So, they told you that OBJ is as simple as ABC and you believed? That should be OBJ of question paper, not OBJ the human form! He foisted on us Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Chukwuma Soludo, Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan, whose reign and brinkmanship brought us nothing but political and economic disasters and thereby placing a big question mark on his political sagacity. People say he is selfish, mean and mischievous. The truth of it depends on who is assessing him. But love him or hate him, even at 79, you cannot ignore OBJ as an inimitable power broker in today's Nigeria. Or, do you think it was for nothing that he was bestowed with that all-encompassing title: Grand Commander of the Federal Republic (GCFR)?

### **ABDULSALAMI ABUBAKAR**

For anybody who has followed the course of events in Nigeria since the emergence of General Abdulsalam Abubakar as the nation's eighth military Head of State, there is no gainsaying that the Niger State born retired army officer has been a major factor in the country. On June 9, 1998, Abubakar became Nigeria's military Head of State after being persuaded to accept the position when General Sani Abacha died.

Despite his taciturn disposition, he is one of those who, since the death of Abacha, have determined the fate of the nation. He became one of the leading statesmen in Nigeria since May 29, 1999 when he transferred power to the civilian government in keeping with an early promise he made when he took over power.

From records, he was instrumental to the emergence of former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 and more recently the transition from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general elections. Many believe that he was one of those that ensured a smooth transition from former President Goodluck Jonathan to President Muhammadu Buhari.

As fate would have it, Abdulsalami became the last out of eight soldiers of northern extraction to have ruled Nigeria.

He is one of the few generals in the Nigerian army who rose to the top without holding political office. Before he retired, he held only command and military positions, and in general, stayed out of the political limelight.

He was born on June 13, 1942 in Minna, Niger State in Northern Nigeria and had his earlier education at the Native Authority Primary School in Minna.

Between 1957 and 1962, he attended the Provincial Secondary School, Bida. He also attended the Technical Institute, Kaduna.

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He enlisted first into the Air force but quickly switched to the army.

### THEOPHILUS DANJUMA

That Gen Theophilus Danjuma is a power broker in Nigeria is not contestable and it is for obvious reasons. He is a successful career military officer, strategist, consummate industrialist and one of the leading investors in the nation's oil industry.

Even though many see him as a serial coup plotter and opportunist, there is no doubt that in the nation's chequered political history, he is one man that could be said to have seen it all. Many are sure to agree that it would be impossible to take any major political decision on the future of Nigeria without the contribution of the retired Taraba State-born army officer. He has participated in virtually every political era in the last five decades.

Since the 1966 counter coup, which changed the nation's power equation and history, Danjuma has remained very prominent in the affairs of the country.

Born in Takum, Theophilus Danjuma's earliest education was at St Bartholomew's Primary School Wusasa, from where he moved to Benue Provincial Secondary School in Katsina-Ala. He obtained his Higher School Certificate in 1958. In 1959 Theophilus Danjuma got enrolled into the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology in Zaria (now Ahmadu Bello University). Danjuma later left the school and joined the Nigerian Army by the end of 1960.

He became a lieutenant in the Nigerian Army and was elevated to the rank of a Captain when he joined a UN Peace-keeping force in Sante, Kataga Province of Congo.

In 1971, he earned the rank of a Colonel and in 1975; he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and the position of General Officer Commanding (GOC). His military career had a leap in 1976 when he was appointed the Chief of Army Staff in the regime of the military Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo. In the year 1979, Theophilus Danjuma retired from the Nigerian army.

### Ibrahim Babangida

"I am not the evil that quite a lot of people consider me to be," the man, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB), told journalists when he celebrated his 75th birthday sometime in August this year.

Truly, he may not be as evil as many of us think and believe, but a man who, by his political deeds or misdeeds, were able to inspire such an overweening thought in the minds of many Nigerians cannot be said to be a mean man.

"By virtue of the job I was doing, I was bound to be misconstrued," he said in the interview. "As long as I am not what you think I was, I feel satisfied... I hope the younger generation will carry out a research about leadership, people, individual and what role they played in the development of the nation and come up with a different conclusion from what is on the ground now."

As for that, the jury and its verdict of history is already out: IBB, Nigeria's military President, August, 1985 to August, 1993, when, according to him, he voluntarily stepped down from power, is a political enigma, a tactician of the first order.

He showed the sign much earlier, when upon his ascendance to the throne as military head of state, he discarded the military title associated with the post and opted for "President" instead. Everybody cheered. Unlike the military governments before and after him, he brought a kind of consultative aura to governance by subjecting issues to public debate, after which he took the final decision. When he asked Nigerians to debate whether we should take the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan or not, which he did later, leading to SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme), we all gladly did.

When he formed a 17-man "Political Bureau" (Politburo), and asked us to freely say our minds on what should constitute our political structures and ideologies, we all did. At the end, he allowed us to form our political parties. We did and came up with 13, which as you well know, is an unlucky number.

He dissolved them and came up with two centrist political parties: Social Democratic Party (SDP), led Chief MKO Abiola and National Republic Convention (NRC), led by Alhaji Bashir Tofa and Option A4, as mode of voting. But

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after Abiola won, on June 12, 1993, in what is widely acclaimed as the most transparent election in the history of Nigeria, and he refused to hand over, blaming the development on forces beyond his power, Nigerians came to lose faith in his promises. It was this loss of trust that led to the misunderstanding he was talking about. Nigerians, having seen through his chicanery on many issues, learnt not to believe him, from the tragic death of Dele Giwa, Nigeria's foremost journalist, through a letter bomb, Nigeria's membership of OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference), SAP and the alleged missing, from our national treasure under his watch, 12 billion naira windfall from oil sale, during the Gulf War, IBB had some great but inglorious crosses to bear.

But make no mistake about it: many years after IBB left power, power has refused to leave IBB. Hence, the overarching influence he wields from Minna, Niger State, his hometown, on Nigeria's reins of power. Recall, for instance, the noble role he played in the installation of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, as Nigeria's civilian President, from 1999 to 2007. At 75, and 23 years after leaving power, he still remains a kingmaker, in fact, unarguably, Nigeria's topmost political landlord.

And, if you insist on contesting this fact, when next he is going to celebrate his birthday, or do something nationally remarkable, take a good look at how many people that are going to place for him, congratulatory messages either in newspapers, TV or radio. After you have done that, take another look at the part of Nigeria they come from and that is going to show you the kind of political clout that the man has and wields across our political landscape.

### ALIYU GUSAU

God is the Head of this House, says the old religious poster hung on the wall. "The unseen Guest at every meal. The silent Listener to every conversation."

While millions of Nigerians agree with this observation, there are millions more who are prepared to swear with those dark goggles that security and intelligence men wear, that the last part talking about "the silent listener to every conversation" is an attribute that the gods share in common with a man called General (rtd.) Aliyu Mohammed Gusau.

The onus lies on you to prove that a man who has served his country in various military capacities as one-time Chief of Army Staff, National Security Adviser to two different presidents, Commandant of the Nigerian Defence Academy, and most recently, Minister of Defence, a man who had headed different intelligence agencies, is anything but someone next to God in terms of carrying out security oversight functions.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, of blessed memory, was once said to have boasted that his car knew Nigeria more than Shehu Shagari. As a security intelligence chief and political bridge-builder, Gusau definitely knows Nigeria more than Awo's car.

As Director of Military Intelligence (1979–1983), he played a key role in the coup that ousted President Shehu Shagari on December 31, 1983 and brought in General Muhammadu Buhari into power as a military head of state (Dec. 1983 to August, 1985). After the coup he was said to have been proposed as overall head of Intelligence, by the then Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Babangida, but this was rejected by Buhari, who proceeded to appoint, in his stead, Lawal Rafindadi, as Director of the National Security Organization (NSO). Thereafter, he was sent on a training course at the Royal College of Defence Studies, United Kingdom.

All the same, he was to play another key role in the overthrow of Buhari's military government, after returning from the course, despite being placed under close security watch in the days leading up to the coup. After the coup, he was appointed Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Acting Director-General of the NSO (September 1985 to August 1986), and later Coordinator on National Security from August 1986 to December 1989.

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It was under this capacity that he reorganised the security and intelligence apparatuses, by breaking up the NSO into three organisations: State Security Services (SSS, now Department of State Security, DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI).

Apart from serving under IBB, first as National Security Adviser, and later, Chief of Army Staff, other Presidents that came after the military handed over power to civilians had seen the need, at one time or the other, to ask him to come and serve as National Security Adviser, to them. They include Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan. That shows you the kind of power he wields in the loops of political power in Nigeria.

As a powerbroker, he's had a few shots at power, by trying to play an active role in it, as evidenced in his decision to contest in the 2006 People's Democratic Party (PDP) primaries for the party's presidential candidates. But he lost out to Umaru Yar'Adua. In 2010, he also tried to do the same but later conceded his place to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

An inscription at the back of one of these trucks that supplies cellophane-packaged water ("pure water") to water-thirsty Nigerians claims to "walk humbly like a sheep but acts bravely like a lion." You could say the same of the man called Aliyu Mohammed Gusau. So? In the rush for political power in Nigeria, you can only underrated him to your own detriment!

**Bola Tinubu**      Bola Ahmed Tinubu was born on 29 March 1952 in the city of Lagos Nigeria. He was elected Senator for the Lagos West constituency just before a military take-over in December 1993. After the return to democracy, he was elected governor of Lagos State, holding office from 29 May 1999 to 29 May 2007. One of his traditional titles, Jagaban, [leader of warriors] given him by the Emir of Bogu, in Niger state, seem to have dwarfed his numerous other titles. Tinubu has emerged as one of the finest political strategists in the land. He had been in the trenches since the days of the National Democratic Coalition [NADECO], one of the platforms that put pressure on the Military dictator, Sani Abacha. Tinubu rode on the crest of his role in that era, into Lagos government house. He has since emerged, perhaps, the strongest political force in the South West.

His political influence has exceeded Lagos, where he literally lifted his successor, Babatunde Fashola, from the booth strap and made him governor. Against all odds , Tinubu has again made another protege, Akinwumi Ambode, the governor, after Fashola. But his greatest political feat is the ascendancy of the Buhari regime. He was the arrowhead of the coalition of four political parties that coalesced into All Progressives Congress [APC] and brought the Buhari government to power in May, 2015. Tinubu has had a hand in the making of many governors in the Southwest region. His foray into states outside the zone, has not yielded fruits and he has not given up. It would be fool hardy for anyone to make political permutations in Nigeria and ignore the Tinubu factor. He does not shy from a fight even as he understands that political affinity is not permanent.

His critics say Tinubu has his hands in many pies and would want to determine occupants of even the least of political offices in his domain, including ward councilors. They say he is so overbearing that those he put in office, dare not make decisions without his input. The views of his critics do not detract from his political prowess. Tinibu remains one of the most powerful political figures in the land.

### Aliko Dangote

59-year-old Aliko Dangote [GCON] has grown from a small trading firm he began in 1977 into one of the largest conglomerates in the African continent. He followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, Alhaji Alhassan Dantata, reputed to be Africa's richest man when he passed away in 1955. Aliko Dangote, whose net worth stood at 15.1 billion dollars in June 2016, has surpassed his grandfather, not just in the size and scope of his wealth, but in the influence he wields. He is, perhaps, the largest employer of labour in the Nigeria's private sector. Dangote Group owns Cement, salt factories and flour mills in Nigeria and many African nations. The company exports cotton, cashew nuts, cocoa, sesame seed and ginger to several countries. It also has major investments in real estate, transport, textiles and oil and gas. The company employs over 11,000 people .

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Dangote has diversified into telecommunications and has started building 14,000 kilometres of fibre optic cables to supply the whole of Nigeria. As a result, Dangote was honoured in January 2009 as the leading provider of employment in the Nigerian construction industry. His refinery and fertilizer project at Lekki Lagos, billed to come on stream in 2019, would take over 200,000 people off the unemployment lines.

Dangote's influence is not limited to the business arena, where Forbes Magazine, has ranked him as the 30th richest man in the world. He is a silent but influential player in the political arena. He funds many presidential candidates and has the ears of political leaders. He influences policies and thus ranks high in the league of those who decide policy and political direction.

However, Dangote's critics say he thrives in monopolistic ventures and would edge out competition from the business arena. He would hardly venture into a business and fail to be the leader in that line. He would muzzle out others in that line. Some people say he bullies them out of the way. They say he is one of the largest beneficiaries from the Nigerian system and has thus grown from the proceeds of policies he vicariously brought to be.

Whatever anyone says, the reality is that Alhaji Aliko Dangote is in the class of people who shape and determine policy, business and political direction of Nigeria. He is in the league of those who control Nigeria.

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## A Northern Candidate Against All Odds

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### **Body**

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The hunt for a Northern consensus candidate has elicited diverse comments from various quarters. Some positive, doubtful and others very damning. To its critics, the Northern Political Leaders Forum's search for a consensus candidate is a wild goose chase; the president says it is a gang-up against him. But to its proponents, it is about the last card they have to play, if the North is to wrestle the presidency from the incumbent ahead of coming PDP primaries and indeed, 2011 general elections.

In reaction to the defiance of their position that the zoning arrangement of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is honoured, the Northern Political Leaders Forum (NPLF) set up a 17-member committee with a mandate to choose a candidate from amongst the four PDP presidential aspirants from the Northern part of the country to challenge Jonathan for the party's ticket.

The aspirants are General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, General Aliyu Gusau, and Governor Bukola Saraki of Kwara State. While the idea of a consensus candidate has received the blessing of the campaign organizations of the four presidential aspirants, efforts to agree on who the consensus candidate should be have so far met a brick wall as supporters of each of the four presidential aspirants say their respective aspirants must be the anointed one.

So what formula will the 17 wise men hope to adopt in arriving at a consensus candidate? Promoter-in-chief of the Northern consensus candidature, Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, insists all the four aspirants have agreed that the Northern Elders Forum and three governors should nominate one of them. Whoever is proposed, will receive the support of the others.

But observers are not as hopeful as Ciroma.

Consensus candidate achievable?

The director-general of the Ibrahim Babangida Campaign Organisation, Chief Raymond Dokpesi, says the race to produce a consensus candidate from the North remains without a crack.

Dotun Oliyide, a Lagos based political commentator differs. He says the contestants' oversized egos, arising from the fact that their interest in the presidency in 2011 is not necessarily motivated by national interests but personal motives will make the job of choosing a consensus candidate among them a daunting one. "Overall, I do not see

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this as being in the larger interest of Nigeria. This is because the leadership challenge in Nigeria is not about the North, South, West or East. It's about Nigeria and the Nigerian people. But, inadvertently, again, because of selfish interests, it is being put out as one region versus the other. I have huge doubt that a Northern consensus candidate would emerge. For one, each of the contestants, particularly Babangida and Atiku, has ego much larger than the national stadium. Secondly, they are not necessarily motivated by larger interest but personal motives." Oliyide insists.

Opponents of the notion of consensus candidate fear that injuries are likely to be inflicted on the nation's unity. If the candidate is rejected, as will be the case when one emerges, the North may feel aggrieved and this may lead to instability, especially with the huge resources available to the contending consensus candidates.

A political scientist with the University of Abuja (prefers to be anonymous) says judging by the political antecedents of the North, arriving at a consensus candidate is impossible. "It is a wild goose chase" she says. "It is not achievable. It presupposes a politically, culturally or religiously monolithic North that anyone can order around. There is no such North. It didn't even exist during the days when Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, held sway as Premier of the Northern region. The, NEPU held its ground, as did the Middle Belt Congress.

"During the Second Republic, NPN, GNPP, PRP and NPP all had electoral fortunes in the North. Only the East (NPP) and West (UPN) were monolithic in their voting patterns. The strength of the North, ironically, has always been Southern minorities. So any attempt to forge a consensus candidature will fail. A plan by the Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) in 1983 against the NPN did not go anywhere, although one admits that the rigging on that occasion is without rival in Nigeria's voting history."

On the merit or lack of it in the idea, she says: "I don't see any merit in a consensus Northern candidature other than the selfish interest of its proponents."

### A gang-up

Jonathan sees it as a gang up against him. "Rightly so," says Iranmwinran Osemwekhae, a youth leader from Edo State. "But he (Jonathan) should expect such gang-up and be able to neutralize it the way he's doing, making friends with credible Northerners, focusing on governance and remaining committed to a clean election."

Jonathan himself says the "consensus gang-up" will fail like before. Speaking through the Director, Media and Publicity of the Goodluck/Sambo Presidential Campaign Organisation, Sully Abu, he said it will fail because "it is not based on any principle or programme." Abu says the idea of consensus candidacy for the position of the President of Nigeria is not in the interest of Nigerians "who have seen that such gang-ups in the past came to nothing in spite of the unnecessary dust raised. The consensus arrangement being pursued is based on sheer opportunism and driven by an undemocratic and illiberal spirit. That is why they have continued to be at pains to explain that they are at work, irrevocably committed to the success of the arrangement. They have continued feverishly with their individual campaigns.

"The Goodluck/Sambo Presidential Campaign Organisation believes in the ballot box as the only viable means through which Nigerians would determine who their next President would be.

"The consensus of Nigerians is that the ballot box will determine the next President of the country based on their conviction as to who best represents their hope for fundamental change against the disastrous policies and politics of the men of yesterday. "Nigerians are by overwhelming evidence rooting for the Goodluck/Sambo ticket. This is what is making our opponents desperate, so desperate indeed as to contemplate a gang-up of people, who are otherwise very strange bedfellows."

Sandra Ohimai takes it further, "President Jonathan would be wrong to see this ploy as a gang-up against him. Rather, it is a gang-up against the Nigerian people and the Nigerian nation. Even if it was someone else who is the president, they still would have come up with this scheming. At the worse, if the person was of Northern extraction, their argument would have been that he or she does not come from a particular state or zone in the north. So it is time we begin to see this for what it is; a scheming for the spoils of office."

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Is Jonathan fair to the North?

In view of the "gentleman" agreement regularly waved by Jonathan's opponents (mostly Northern), is the president really fair to the North by not sticking to it even when he was allegedly party to it?

Osemwukhae believes Jonathan's actions are in order. Hear him: "PDP's zoning is internal to the party. If Jonathan didn't want to respect zoning, he would have chosen someone from the South as Vice-President. But he chose Sambo, a Northerner. That shows he respects the federal character principle that guides appointments. That's a nobler principle than the PDP contrivance. In any case, if the constitution gives Jonathan the right to vote and be voted for, that is a superior authority to the PDP's "gentleman" agreement! I'm more interested in what the people of Nigeria, through their votes, make of the situation."

Chukwuma Iroegbu, a private business executive, takes another angle at the issue. He says, "The question is whether the North is fair to the country, and particularly the South South, for insisting on having the presidency. How come they do not consider the fact that they have produced the president for much of Nigeria's independent life, and are not concerned about the popular perception that they have not used this for the betterment of the Nigerian people and nation but for the enrichment of their collaborators and children? The result is that poverty is the lot of over 70% of Nigerians when we should be in the league of developed nations offering support and leadership to our brother African nations and beyond. Let them not deceive us it is not a question of the North as a people but a few questionable characters who have made a fortune out of government patronage and are hell bent on continuing in that direction"

If by a freak of nature, the 17 "wise men" are able to arrive at a consensus candidate, it will have its own merits in that it reduces tension and probably increases the chances that the North may make appreciable impact on the election under PDP, even winning the presidency.

But sources say whoever emerges as the choice of the North "would be an individual without a baggage."

The former President, Babangida, and former Vice President Abubakar, may have some difficulties in scaling the bar.

Maybe Gusau doesn't have such baggage, but he can hardly pass as a sellable presidential candidate. It means that PDP is short of popular candidates for the presidency bid. Bukola Saraki is brandishing himself as a fresh option, and is even touted by some as a front runner on the consensus candidates' list. But how bright are his chances?

The Saraki "factor"

Saraki's opponents always argue that Nigerians have not forgotten how he and his father presided over the collapsed Societe Generale Bank. A 2008 attempt by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to institute a corruption suit was thwarted by the immunity Bukola Saraki enjoys as a serving governor.

Most people interviewed on Saraki's chances are simply dismissive of his pretensions. Freelance commentator on political developments in Africa, Adukwe Idris, who seems to know the man from his roots, opens up on the Kwara Governor: "Bukola Saraki does not seem to realize that he is putting himself in the same position that his father did in 1997. The older Saraki saw himself as a bridge between the North and South. But he never went anywhere with this sentiment. It turned out that he had just played the pace maker for Shagari, and, as Majority Leader in the Senate of that era, understandably became one of the most powerful figures, alongside the likes of Adisa Akinloye, Joseph Wayas, Uba Ahmed, Umaru Dikko, etc.

"This time, despite having served as governor, Bukola doesn't even have his father's clout. He probably would be better sorting out issues around his father's nomination of his sister, Gbemisola as his successor in Kwara."

Saraki's claim that he should be the consensus candidate (considering his age) had also received knocks. "This reason is puerile," says Kwara resident, Jimoh Mahmud. "Saraki is a joker in my view. I expect him to base his case on achievements he has made governing Kwara these past 7 and a half years and not on the puerile reason that he

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is much younger than other contestants from the North. But I can understand why he would not make that argument because his stay in Government House has been years of the locust for the state and he has nothing on ground to showcase."

### IBB

In Babangida's case, no one is wondering what he forgot in the presidential villa after his years as military head of state, in view of allegations that he wasn't exactly accountable and transparent in the way he handled the public treasury during his first tenure. One critic, with unhidden sarcasm, believes Babangida "wants to finish what he started."

IBB has many issues with the Nigerian public, irrespective of political leaning such as the unresolved issues around the murder of ace *journalist, Dele Giwa*; the execution of Vatsa on what many people saw as a result of sibling rivalry; his ill-fated Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); his annulment of arguably Nigeria's freest and fairest election, among others which are still fresh in the memories of Nigerians.

Although Babangida insists he has experience and should be given four more years, people wonder why he has not shown remorse for the alleged sins he committed against the people of this country. Asks a critic: "What impudence to brandish failed experience as his credential before us with such arrogance."

Another critic says: "Where people expect to stake his claim on the pedestal of achievements, he is taking refuge under zoning. Even if we were to stick with zoning, is Babangida the right person to represent the North of today?"

### Atiku

On Atiku, critics are just as harsh, accusing him of personal instability. He left and denounced the PDP, but made a controversial return. Jonas Dickson, a Benue teacher says, "Alhaji Atiku counts among his achievement his contribution to the creation of a robust opposition to the monster PDP, culminating in the forming of Action Congress (AC), which gave him the platform to take on Obasanja, his old boss. But he cannot account for his achievements for all of eight years as Vice President beyond acquiring chieftaincy titles and wives across the country. Atiku says he was locked out of the government and was more a passenger than a co-driver. Where did he get all the resources he has used in setting up all of Yola University, radio, television, bottled water, you name it."

The deluge of embezzlement allegations hanging on Alhaji Atiku's head is indeed frightening. This makes him less of an option as a consensus candidate. "The truth is that one can only pass off dirt in the soup as ingredients to a blind person, but certainly not when it is a case of too much salt."

Whether or not he gets the ticket to take on Jonathan as the consensus candidate of the "North", Atiku has listed the things he would not have. "I am not against a consensus candidate," he says. "I am fully in support of it. What I don't like is undemocratic terminologies as 'automatic ticket', 'voting by acclamation', 'right of first refusal', and 'caucus voting'."

### Gusau

For General Gusau, he has indeed come a long way in his quest for presidency. He tried to contest for the PDP's ticket in December 2006, but was forced, like other candidates, to give way for Yar'Adua by Obasanjo. Among the quartet Northern PDP presidential aspirants, Gusau has stayed longest in the corridors of power.

### PDP Zoning: The Legal Angle

In contention is Article 7.2 (c) of the constitution of the PDP which states that: "in pursuance of the principle of equity, justice and fairness, the party shall adhere to the policy of rotation and zoning of the party and public elective offices and it shall be enforced by the appropriate executive committee at all levels."

Dr. Ted Iseghoni-Edward analyses the contested portion thus: "This particular provision has become the bone of contention and the interpretation and enforceability of this provision is at the heart of the cohesion in the PDP. It

## A Northern Candidate Against All Odds

questions the veracity of the Northern consensus and raises questions in the mind of all Nigerians as to why a clause such as this in a party manifesto/constitution should now determine the nation's political destiny.

"Quite simply, application of this provision to the current facts on ground, being eligibility of President Goodluck Jonathan who hails from the South-South to run for the presidency in 2011, while the PDP zoning formula appears to suggest that rotation must be strictly adhered to, thereby restricting eligibility to run for the presidency to candidates from the North is what is at the crux of the matter.

"... given the fact that late President Yar'Adua was a northern candidate in compliance with the rotation and zoning formula of the PDP after the departure of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, and given the fact that the PDP manifesto/Constitution has no written tenure requiring that a candidate must serve for a specified time; and also given the fact that even if there was such tenure, it will only be applicable to PDP party members and probably only to the extent of the ability to win the office of the president, Goodluck Jonathan who meets the eligibility requirement for the 2011 election should be allowed to contest.

"The fact that President Goodluck Jonathan had to serve out the balance tenure of late President Umar Yar'Adua was a constitutional obligation and should not abrogate his own constitutional rights.

### Politicking or Charity?

As contestants perfect underground moves to emerge as the Northern consensus candidate, strangely, the flood-affected states have presented a 'preferred' platform for the PDP's Northern quartet for articulating why they should be the candidate for 2011.

Babangida was recently in Sokoto to distribute relief materials to victims of massive floods that ravaged the state. The retired general did not forget to remind his audiences of his intention to rule them again come 2011.

"I know the problem of the country and Insha Allah, I will find permanent solutions to them", he said.

Turning the occasion into a campaign opportunity, Babangida regaled his disaster-stricken audience on his plan to give security special consideration. Other sectors like education, health and agriculture he says will remain top priority.

Fellow aspirant and Governor of Kwara State, Dr. Bukola Saraki, who was also in Sokoto that day, donated the sum of 10 million naira in addition to blankets and mats. Not to be outdone in utilizing the campaign opportunity, he met with party members and intimated them on his ambition to be president in 2011.

Atiku Abubakar donated 600 bags of rice, 300 bags of maize, 3,200 blankets and 2,500 rubber mats

Gusau, presenting a cheque of and N5 million to Governor Sule Lamido, and said he was in Jigawa to sympathize with victims of the disaster. He urged the victims to consider the disaster as their destiny.

Coming after, President Goodluck Jonathan flew into Sokoto and Kebbi States to assess the damage caused by the flood disaster in the two states. He was also in Ogun and Lagos states which were also affected by floods. He promised that the Federal Government would come to the aid of victims of the recent flood, but with a warning that the incident is a natural disaster, which could not get permanent solution.

Jonathan has since approved more than \$11 million in federal grants to help states ravaged by floods.

The North Will Scuttle Jonathan's Presidential Bid- CiromaMeanwhile, Ciroma, on Wednesday said the North would use every legal and democratic means to scuttle the presidential ambition of Jonathan, who jettisoned the PDP zoning arrangement at the expense of the North.

Speaking in an interview with the Hausa service of Voice of America (VOA), Ciroma said: "Jonathan's ambition is dishonorable because he is pursuing it at the expense of the North, which was entitled to eight years under the zoning agreement for power sharing between the North and the South."

## A Northern Candidate Against All Odds

He warned that since Jonathan and his instigator, former President Obasanjo, did not want to see reason, the North was not leaving things to chances. He said, "Even if President Jonathan manipulates the party primaries and eventually emerges as PDP Presidential candidate in 2011, the North would deploy other options, including a consensus candidate to command popular support.

According to the leaders of the Northern Political Forum, the electorate would ultimately decide between a candidate of honour and one that elevates and pursues dishonour.

Other options open to the North, warned Ciroma, were that "Jonathan could face a mass protest votes from the electorate who may feel short-changed by the current scheme to abandon zoning."

He categorically accused former President Obasanjo of being "responsible for the current political polarisation in the country caused by Dr. Jonathan's insistence to run at the instigation of General Obasanjo," he said, adding, "It is unfair to deny the North the right to complete its own turn of eight years after the South did its own under President Obasanjo."

Jonathan to Ciroma- "Don't Play God" It is Almighty God speaking through the people who will determine the future of Nigeria and President Jonathan and not the arrogant few who seek to play God". Jonathan said in a swift reaction to scathing attacks by Ciroma on the former's presidential comeback bid.

Jonathan on Thursday, accused Alhaji Ciroma of playing a "divisive role" in the nation's polity.

He was speaking through the Goodluck/Sambo Presidential Campaign Organisation.

A press release issued by the campaign spokesman, Mr., Sully Abu, reads, "...Ciroma has taken on a rather divisive role. Insisting that he is speaking for the North he has been playing the politics of division and in a way which would not edify the country's unity."

The statement added, "Indeed, every available indication is that our people are sick to death with the divisive politics of yesterday and those who have been responsible for the country's underdevelopment and regression. No one should delude himself that he is speaking for the North or any other part of the country for that matter unless they are willing to go along with the people's yearning for change, fundamental change."

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**The Sun is not partisan, but on the side of Nigerians –Eric Osagie, MD/EIC,  
The Sun Publishing Limited**

The Sun (Nigeria)

January 10, 2016 Sunday

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**Length:** 4395 words

**Byline:** Our Reporter

## **Body**

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The Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of The Sun Publishing Limited, Mr. Eric Osa-gie in this interview with Abeokuta-based Rock City 101.9 FM speaks on the travails of the media in a developing democracy like Ni-geria, the involvement of the media in the NSA Dassuki arms fund scandal and other issues. Excerpts: Can you compare what the pen [...]

The Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief of The Sun Publishing Limited, Mr. Eric Osa-gie in this interview with Abeokuta-based Rock City 101.9 FM speaks on the travails of the media in a developing democracy like Ni-geria, the involvement of the media in the NSA Dassuki arms fund scandal and other issues.

Excerpts:

Can you compare what the pen profes-sion was and what it is now?

The profession has been growing with technol-ogy, at least cut and paste is a thing of the past. Today, we have the ipads, computers, and the midget is even fading out. Things have really im-proved and you can Google everything out as far as technology allows. But in terms of the real hard work in the business, with technology, laziness has also crept in, because, everything is at your beck and call now, but in those days, even as recent as two decades ago, you pounded the street, you dug deeper for information, it was more painstaking. As a reporter, if you are in a bus and the man sit-ting next to you in the molute is reading your story, you are excited. I don't know how many reporters feel excited anymore about people reading their stories, how many reporters want to go the extra mile, how many reporters want to dig deeper for features or for investigations, so what we now find is that newspapers are basically looking the same because there is no depth as it used to be. Then you also have the problem of poor

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remuneration, which has eroded what reporters and other journalists use to hold very sacrosanct. Today, you have people who just go in believing that it's a meal ticket and not just for the love and passion of it, but in comparative terms, technology has grown, but the human element of it hasn't.

Some people are of the opinion that the media in Nigeria, particularly the print is aligned with one political group or the other. Therefore, this has affected their news and editorial judgment. What do you say about that?

I cannot talk generally on the media but for The Sun where I have been for a long time and privi-leged to be the chief executive officer, we have no political alignment whatsoever. News is news for us; we have no friend, we have no foe, we report it the way it is, we go back to the finest tradition of journalism, that fact is sacred while comments are free. You will find out that even during the election, we reported PDP the same way we reported APC, our chairman/publisher's political affiliation does not affect our editorial judgment, but of course, ev-erybody is free to air his views, to take a position, but the newspaper is not allowed to do that, but I can't say the same for others. I can only speak for The Sun and we're not partisan. It's forbidden. The chairman of this newspaper always drums it in that the newspaper is a public trust and does not nec-essarily belong to the man who owns it. You can own a newspaper but when you have established it, you look for the bottom line and after looking out for that, you then let the newspaper run as a public trust and that's why you have right of reply. We are totally non-aligned, we are not partisan, if we are ever partisan, we are partisan to the extent that we defend the views of ordinary Nigerians, their views and opinions.

The press is said to be the Fourth Estate of the realm and defender of the masses. As an experienced media person, this is the business you do. Let's look at it broadly, outside The Sun, will you say the media and especially, the print media has played that role of defender of the people, particularly in this dispensation?

We have to look at the evolution of the media from colonial times. They stood still, because they could identify one enemy, then we went into the military era, the press was very vibrant, uncom-promising and then defending the people against the tyranny of the military. The military exited and we came to democracy. During the early period of the Obasanjo era, don't forget that it was also there exposing the ills, the PTDF scandal, the fight be-tween the president and his vice, corruption and don't forget the EFCC that was established then did all it did with the aid of the media. The media has always been there defending the people against every government that is there, but the tactics in democracy is different from tactics in a military era, because there is plurality of views. The gov-ernment you say is not doing well, don't forget they also have their mandate, people can interpret to mean that you, the media, appear compromised and all that, you are expressing views of others, so you will not expect the kind of onslaught and even at this, the media has also been very active. There are people complaining about jumbo sala-ries of public office holders, about the National As-semby, about executive excesses and even what is happening now, is it not the media they are using to expose the corruption of the past governments? So, those who say the media has not done these are mistaken. We should isolate maybe one or two media houses but we cannot condemn the media as a whole, and when we talk about corruption in the media, the percentage is low. I know corruption is corruption, but because the media is not visible but anything they do is, they now say the media is corrupt, but those general sweeping statements don't really go down well with me. In the larger Nigerian society, you have bad doctors, bad law-yers and bad legislators. You cannot say the whole National Assembly is bad. I don't belong to the school of thought that just generalizes.

Why did Nigeria media have to be men-tioned in what some people tagged the most worrisome scandal that is going on in the country?

Let me say quite honestly, it's very unfortunate. It was avoidable and it's something that is not good for the image and the integrity of Nigerian media. For me, it's some kind of communication gap or misinformation as it were. Maybe the media has mishandled the issue, because if you recollect, if you go back to the genesis of it, sometime in June 2014, the military woke up one morning under the administration of Jonathan and began to impound and disrupt operations of newspaper houses in some parts of the country. What were they look-ing for? They said arms and we know that what we distribute in the media is newspaper and not arms. Newspaper owners were so angry and they thought of instituting a class action suit against the military authority to make them account for the disruption of business in a democratic setting. That was it! And the leadership then said, look, compute your losses,

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let's see what it is, and then it was taken to the Presidency under Jonathan and because it was a collective decision, let's seek compensation! Some people kicked against it and all that, and at the end of it all, maybe because elections were coming or whatever I don't know, but Jonathan government didn't want a class action suit. You know if the whole media takes him to court, one media house is one trouble, but when you have so many media houses saying "no you disrupted our operations and we are going to take you to court for billions," the Jonathan-led government then said no "we are willing to settle out of court, we will compensate them and the compensation that was then worked out with the leadership of NPAN was about N120million for 12 newspaper houses that it claimed submitted their compensation bid and after that, of course it was then paid. N1million was deducted for secretarial purpose and then nine million was paid to some people. It's now known that not all collected compensation, but NPAN is saying, look, your cheques are there, that they did not come to collect them. Some say they didn't contact us but let me quickly add that if a newspaper like The Sun was really going out for compensation it wouldn't be N9 million. With the way things are going in the country, they say, "oh look it was part of Dasukigate money, armsgate" and it has become very unfortunate. Ordinarily, when you decide to settle out of court, compensations are paid, but now with how things have been muddled up every earning, legitimate or otherwise, is now being lumped together and this is not good for the collective integrity of the media especially when the new government says, "we are fishing out all crooked things that happened." That is why I said it was avoidable maybe from my side and that NPAN could have gone to court and let the court award costs because I'm sure they just felt that look, since the leadership of the country says we don't want trouble, they said they are willing, it was just symbolism if you ask. A newspaper operation is a very wide thing. Many efforts are involved, everybody is talking about armsgate, blood money, you know Nigerians, anything that happens will be sensationalized.

How exactly did it happen?

I can't give you the exact detail, because as at that time, I was not managing director. I think we made our own decision and just felt this is not something we wanted to talk about, so if you say it is armsgate, take, blood money, we don't want anything hanging in the cloud. Yes, we decided at the management meeting to refund the money and possibly seek legal remedy, some damages were inflicted on us, but be that as it may, like I said, it's something that was totally avoidable with the way things have gone now and N9 million can't compensate us effectively.

Are you saying that your intuition and feeling is that this money may not be part of the so-called armsgate allegation?

I don't work in the Presidency. I don't work in the office of any legislator, I don't know where it came from, I am not part of NPAN leadership. I'm not a newspaper proprietor, I only represent the organization, so, I am not going to be able to tell you where they got it from. But if they are saying it could have come from them, because we are a media house and we trade in integrity and once you remove integrity, you can't function, so we want to remove the toga of "oh you partook in the sharing of the nation's commonwealth, which was hanging over us, so that's what we have just done. I do not know where it came from, but they said it came from there, and others say from here, and we say whatever controversy it is, it's needless, we don't want to be a part of it, we are a newspaper, and we want to remain focused on contributing our quota to development agenda of Nigeria. We are a pro-people newspaper, we don't want the man in Abeokuta, or the man in Lagos or Edo to begin to look at us as if we are thieves or people who feasted on what was illegal. We never did anything illegal, we have always supported the Nigerian people, we do not know where the money came from, maybe we should have asked but we did not ask just like the other newspapers.

Why did the others who you said rejected it reject it?

I don't know how many rejected it, it's only one newspaper that I know rejected it, the others didn't pay their annual dues. I don't know what happened but like I said, I'm not in the leadership, some were paid, some said they were paid, some were not paid. We were paid and we said we didn't need this kind of money to add to our business because we are straight, so we just decided that the proper thing was to return the money. Of course, there are people who believed that we should not have returned the money and end all controversy surrounding what we didn't take. There are people who believed that we should not have returned it because it was not illegal money and our returning it means that we knew we were wrong, but we say no, we have a right to decide corporately and how

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to react to such controversy and we said look, we don't want to be involved at all whether it came from the office of the NSA, it came from here, it came from there, please go with all your troubles so we can function. So, that is what we have just done corporately and the NPAN has the right to react the way it wants to react. It has the right to say what it wants to say, but don't forget this is an association of members, it is a voluntary association. It's not compulsory for you to join, you are admitted into it but that does not remove your independence as a newspaper (...cuts in).

So, it's not that the presidency or government then called each media house and say okay for what happened to you, this is what we decided to do, so it was on the floor and on the strength of the NPAN that the whole thing was worked out?

Oh yea, NPAN said no, we are going to sue to make a point that never again should we have one government use the military to clamp down on legitimate business. So, to drive home that point I'm sure NPAN decided to institute a class action suit. So, when they got there and they said, "oh gentle-men, you do not need all this fight, you understand, we will pay some compensation, and that compensation is a token." Quite honestly, because N9million to us can't buy anything, it's not even enough for our operations but the symbolism of our say is that we do not want to be part of this, so that we are not tempted because we thrive on credibility. We are the voice of the nation and we do not want anything to hurt Nigerian people. The money doesn't even matter whether it's N1million, N100,000 or whatever, but once it's beginning to emerge that this money could have been here, the controversies could have been there, we then decided to opt out of the whole thing.

What would you say to some Nigerians who strongly believe in the ability of the Nigerian reporter to sniff or scoop exclusive report, that particularly, those covering the Presidency/Aso Villa, missed it... that this money is coming from a wrong source?

It's not about missing anything, national security budget in the past are not what people pry into, even in advanced countries. So, I don't think they missed anything and government on its part is not that transparent as we want it to be. Be that as it may, the FOI Act gives journalists power as it were to begin to dig into resources of government and scoop as you said. Journalists are not as investigative as they used to be and so many factors are also responsible. Nigeria is now in a state of decline. The economy is in the doldrums but it should not be an excuse but it is also a reality. There are many media houses that are not paying their workers their dues, which is a problem. You know, in the midst of all this, integrity is in short supply, so that becomes a problem and so when integrity is gone, you are going to interview a man and your organization can't spend the money, the man you are supposed to investigate has given you break-fast or lunch, it waters down your report, so the whole media has lots of work to do in terms of remuneration, other incentives, in terms of enabling environment to practice. The media can't regulate itself such that if you do not have money to go into media business, you then establish a media house and you cannot pay workers, it is like giving a policeman a gun at the checkpoint and he has no ammunition to fire. If you pay peanuts, you also get monkeys as workers. That's what they say. So, if you do not pay a man you have given a recorder, the recorder becomes his whole instrument to attack people, many people cook-up stories but all those are things we have experienced here, that's why I felt extremely embarrassed. We are not a beggarly organization.

Obviously, you are an experienced media manager. Do you foresee or will you advocate for a cleansing like the type that happened in the banking sector or a merger of weak and strong media houses?

Well, the banking environment is a bit different from the media. There are different reasons people set up a media business, banking is for business, strictly business, but some people go into media because of ego. Some want to use it for other means, either to protect their political career or whatever. Chapter 4 of the Nigerian Constitution gives everybody freedom to own any media of your choice. It would not be a bad idea if other newspapers simply say, look, we can't do it alone. There can be cooperation in terms of distribution, but what we find now, for ego reasons, people are buying their own press, even those printing very few copies now buy their own printing press. This one will say I have my printing press, that one will say I have my own printing press, those are areas there could be synergy, but mergers could be difficult. Banking is a bit different but I regret to say there are few newspapers that are running the way they should. So, when they fail, you then say, "oh journalists are not good managers." It's not so true and, of course, not every law firm is successful, not every medical centre is successful.

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There are different businesses that do not succeed but that should not make you stigmatize them. Newspaper people are like other managers, the good, the bad, the ugly.

Next time the aforementioned issue occurs, what step do you think NPAN and managers of media houses should take?

Well, I think fundamental mistakes were made, fundamental mistakes in the sense that, just maybe when the money was paid, it should have been publicized that, gentlemen, because newspapers were seized, it was done in the open. From what we understand, it was not done that way, it was paid to a separate company for some consultancy business, so, the unnecessary way it was done gave it a toga that there was something foolish about it. Even if it was not foolish, the way it went could give rise to suspicion of something shady. So, in future, maybe we could have gone to court, to sue the government and the military for the abuse of our business and the tyranny of the military searching for weapons that did not exist in newspaper vans, just maybe we could have sued them, just maybe we could have let the court take its processes to run its course, so at the end of it all, we then say the court awarded the cost, just maybe. I am sure it's a lesson for the future.

Dimgba Igwe's death has not been resolved, so, what's the update on police investigation about his killing?

Well, Dimgba Igwe was the founding deputy managing director and the late vice chairman of The Sun Publishing Company's board. It's one sad incident we can't even get over. He was very hard working and, all of a sudden, they said he was run over while jogging in the morning. One year after, nothing much has been heard. I'm not aware that any investigation has identified his killers. We wish his killers were found even though that would not bring him back to life. We also wish that security of citizens of this country was taken more seriously, that while you are jogging to stay alive, that death is not waiting for you on the street. We have no street cameras. Maybe we could have caught the crazy driver. The healthcare system in this country is something I'm also sad about. I understand it took 2-4 hours before he could be treated as he was taken from one hospital to another. Abroad, when you get to the hospital alive, you have a chance but here, when they rush you to the hospital, the likelihood of dying is even higher. Now, back to the question, nothing concrete has been done, his killers have not been found. We don't know, we still keep wondering who the crazy driver is or was it a case of assassination? And if it was not a case of assassination, where is the driver? Either way, the more questions we ask, the more confusing it is for us to unravel.

Dimgba Igwe was an influential Nigerian whose death has not been resolved, what does that say about the Nigerian Police?

Well, Nigeria is littered with unsolved murders and killings. A whole attorney general of the federation was murdered in his bedroom. Nothing happened. **Dele Giwa** was killed in 1986. Nothing happened. Agbroko, a **journalist** was also killed. Nothing happened. Bayo Ohu of The Guardian also died in questionable circumstance. Nothing happened. Nigeria is one big yard of unresolved murders.

We can only hope and pray to God that we don't experience such thing again. Security agencies tell you they would leave no stone unturned to fish out the killers, no stone is turned and no killer is fished out, and the drama or dilemma continues. We pray not to be victims. Nigeria does not protect its citizens as it ought to. We do not have a record of bursting crimes, not to talk of violent and sophisticated crimes and it shows that we are gradually returning to the obnoxious state of nature, where life is short, nasty and brutish, that's what it means. Somebody can wake up in the morning and get blown to death and nothing is done. So, we need to review our security architecture to make the life of the Nigerian more valuable than it is.

If you ask your citizens to sacrifice, the government must be seen sacrificing for its citizens. Unemployment is high, inflation is high, and the only thing that is probably low now is the remuneration for Nigerians. So, until we get our acts together, things would continue that way, crime wave is high in this country today for two reasons, one is social and the other is economic. We have graduates who want to work and yet, no work for them. What do you expect them to do? I'm not justifying what they do. If you do not keep your young people busy during the day, they will keep you awake at night and that's the reality we are facing now everywhere. In major cities in the country, you drive exotic cars, you can't drive because somebody is hungry. He wants to crack the windscreen. I was robbed by

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gun-totting men in the traffic hold up and I looked at them, they were young people. Maybe they wouldn't steal if there were things to do, who knows? Fighting crime has two components – either you tackle the economic side or the social side because whether you provide jobs for everybody or not, some people are just deviant, you can still manage that. But Nigeria is one huge theatre for the unemployed, and most of them have gone through schools, coupled with the dwindling economy, this is what you have. We build houses as if we are in prisons, we buy dogs, feed them with money we can't use to pay workers, we have exotic cars, we can't drive, you want to go somewhere, you need police protection. At the end of it all, we have a dysfunctional society, that's why we are where we are today.

Will you say Nigeria should let the people of the South-east or Biafrans go?

He who wears his shoes, knows where it pinches. I cannot sit down here and prescribe a formula for you and tell you that they are wrong to take to the street that they are going. We do not know what they are going through. Those who are there say they are going through a lot of deprivation and all kinds of things are happening to them. How do you preach to them to calm down or cool their temper? There are those who say look, whatever is happening to them can be discussed within, discussed on a roundtable, so if you ask me what I want, I do not justify killings in the name of protest or whatever, even when people go to war or when they are resolving it, they still have to be on the table to sign documents that the war has ended or it has not. After the fight on the field, I would want a peaceful resolution of the conflict at hand. I would also want a situation where you can hold a dialogue with them. Let's hear them out first, find out what's making them angry.

It's possible they are not the only angry people within the Nigerian federation. It's possible that there are other equally angry people, until you push them further to the wall. Nigeria to me is the federation of the angry. Ndigo are angry and believe the nation has not been fair to them. Why not talk to them, what's wrong in talking? What's wrong in dialogue? What's wrong in having a reasonable dialogue with your citizens? Even if you crush the rebellion now, do you crush it from their minds? How do you remove the aggression or how they see it from their mind? In the past, there was Oodua People's Congress also feeling angry, the Egbesu, the Ijaw have been angry in the past. Some people say Boko Haram is an offspring of anger.

I don't know, we need to dialogue with the citizens, we need to engage the citizens, we cannot afford to dismiss their agitation, it's a component of democracy, people have a right to be angry. What we are witnessing in the country today is all anger. People are feeling neglected in the Nigerian union, there is hunger, hunger has given rise to anger, people are feeling that look, what are we getting from this union, people are saying talk to us, you see that's what's going on.

I believe that the new government should look at everything realistically. It's not about sending soldiers to crush whoever or sending police and all that. Of course, you could be right to say there is no room for secession, Nigeria's unity is not negotiable which is okay. I will rather live in a very big country because the bigger the stronger. China today, because of its population and its size is an economic giant but it's an efficient country that works for all of us, but if we are in a country where people are saying look, what are we even getting here? Then it's time to talk, we must talk, we must engage our citizens, whether from the South-west, South-east, North or wherever, you must talk. If you do not talk, you drag people underground.

Can you give us a peep into what you think will be the hallmark event of 2016?

The indices show that 2016 may not be rosy, I mean putting it mildly. The dollar keeps rising and all those things will affect a lot of jobs. It's going to affect a lot of industries and all that. I will rather ask Nigerians to look into 2016 with optimism. Even the weather we see may not be too rosy, but there is nothing God cannot do. That's how I will put it, but if you ask me to look at it, it's bad enough. I mean things are very rough in the country today and so I don't see a miracle happening to make it rosy all of a sudden and that also is the hard truth.

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## **Weak Laws Make Judges Give Semblance of Justice to Rotten Cases - Eyo [interview]**

Daily Independent (Lagos)

February 16, 2011 Wednesday

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**Length:** 4306 words

**Byline:** Nsikak Ekanem

### **Body**

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, a lawyer for over 24 years, is a man of many parts. His secondary school education was interrupted by the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, after which he got his O' Level through personal effort, which he calls "patch-patch" approach. Soon afterwards, he enrolled as one of the pioneer students of Nigerian Institute of Journalism and bagged a Diploma in 1978.

Then he obtained his LLB from University of Calabar in 1985 and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1986. A former Police Superintendent, Eyo pioneered the Legal Department of the Police in Akwa Ibom State and was a member of 1994/95 Constitutional Conference. In a chat with Special Correspondent

, Eyo highlighted what he called inherent, weak and impotent laws as responsible for Nigeria's failure to conduct free, fair, credible and transparent elections. He also condemned unilateral declaration of public holidays by the executive arm of government in contravention of Constitutional provisions to the contrary. Excerpts:

It is exposing how weak our democracy is. Our democracy is still very weak; that is why what is supposed to be done by the legislature is being done by the judiciary inadvertently. What is supposed to be done by the executive is sometimes done by the legislature inadvertently. So, there does not appear to be any clear dichotomy because of the inherent weaknesses in our democratic process. I am describing it as inherent weakness because when you talk about the rule of law, it is based on two basic principles: everybody is subject to the ordinary laws of the land. The second aspect is that things must be done according to law. But when you say things are done according to law, you find a situation where the laws based on which things are supposed to be done, are weak, their enforcement mechanism is also weak, and the laws themselves are very, very impotent. When the laws are impotent, what is supposed to be the duty of the judiciary in any government - not just in democracy? Judiciary's duty is the interpretation of the laws. But if and when the laws are weak, what the judiciary would do would not make the laws better.

Then the outcome the judiciary would get from trying to interpret and enforce weak laws would not be better than the laws they are interpreting or enforcing. Let me give you a typical example: the last general elections in Nigeria was fought upon the provisions of the Electoral Act 2006; one of the provisions of that Electoral Act 2006 is to the effect that if you had contested an election, failed in that election and then decided to challenge the election which you are supposed to have taken part in but which you failed, that law will require you first, to prove that there was

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an election; after you scale that hurdle, you must now prove that the election held was not in accordance with the Electoral Act 2006. But you and I were in this country to witness the type of election that took place in 2007. People described it as "carry go", whereby no election was held and yet people were declared to have won the election. If you were a contestant in that election, you would go to court or to the Election Tribunal set up for this purpose. Remember, the very first hurdle the Electoral Act says you should scale is that there was an election.

Now what would you prove if election did not hold to open the door for you to enter and canvass your grievances, if the election did not hold? You can well go back home and cry over your loss because you have already failed before you got to the tribunal, not because you ought to have failed, but because of the nature of the provisions of that law upon which you took part in the election. If you could succeed in proving that the election was held, it would imply that you also took part in the manipulation, but some other person outsmarted you. What you now need to prove is that the election that was held was not consistent with the Electoral Act. Then once you go there, there are provisions in the Evidence Act - our Evidence Act is still what was put down in 1962 - there is what we call presumption of regularity. Presumption of regularity is to the effect that if, for example, the result of a certain election was in issue, provisions of the Evidence Act says that the moment you see a result sheet of an election being signed and authenticated by an electoral officer, it is presumed that the result is genuine. Now, take your mind back to a situation where I said you and I witnessed that there was no election and that figures were just compiled and people were declared to have won.

Invariably, there was a result sheet and when you tender it at the tribunal, whose signature is that? It is the signature of the INEC official and the stamp is that of the INEC official. Did that mean the election was held? It does not make an election which did not hold to have held. Now from one weak provision of the law to another weak provision of the law, what is the position of the judiciary which is now saddled with the responsibility - very big responsibility - of interpreting and enforcing weak laws made by the legislature? Invariably, the judiciary will not make that law better than it is because it is not the duty of the judiciary to strengthen a weak law; and at the end of it, you see that the purported winner of the election still continues to be the winner of the election. Head or tail, he wins, not because he has won an election, which in the first place, did not take place; not because the purported loser does not have grievance over the election; but because of the nature of the law, he loses. So, when you find this type of situation, you find people occupying political offices which are supposed to be confirmed by elections, but which are not by the people's mandate. That is, the responsibility is now shifted to the court. The court is called the last hope of the common man. I am very, very skeptical about this maxim of the court being the last hope of the common man to sit over rot matters and then give them a semblance of justice because of the nature of the weak laws upon which the issues are canvassed. So, instead of casting votes in elections, the whole process is corrupt and now pushed to the judiciary and the judiciary dishes it out.

In fact, I would advise the judiciary to be proactive enough to advise those who are to conduct elections, that is, both the legislature and the executive, who are the key political players in democracy. The judiciary should not be made to carry this debris it is carrying because the buck appears to rest on the judiciary now. By way of advice, the judiciary should be proactive enough to let the executive and the legislature lick their wounds and not be involved in having to be deciding who has won an election or who has lost an election particularly in the unrealistic circumstances we find ourselves when credible election does not hold. If the judiciary is proactive enough to sound this type of warning, then starting from the legislators who make the laws, the legislature will see reason to make potent laws, the executive will also see reason to go about executing the laws properly. The legislative arm of government should be strengthened, whether local, state or national, to be occupied by people who have passed through credible and transparent elections so that they can have the input of their constituencies in formulating any law. Let me give you an example of one law or resolution.

I happened to have seen the Road Safety people at one time or another trying to run after people who do not wear crash helmets while riding motorcycles. I think there is a resolution to that effect. I also think there do not appear to be laws which regulate this or even if there is a law, then the enforcement mechanism is rather weak. Take the case of Akwa Ibom, for instance; at a certain time, they said they banned the use of motorcycles within Uyo, the State capital, from 6pm to 6am. The resolution (or law) died a few days after it was made. I have not seen one person being prosecuted at the Magistrate Court, or any court at all, for flouting this order of the government. Yet, the order is in force; it is flouted with impunity. Again, just recently, the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly came

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up with a resolution which gave commercial motorcyclists one week to fold up and stop the use of commercial motorcycles in Uyo. Within the period of the expiration of the resolution, the executive under the leadership of the state governor, intervened, convened the commercial motorcyclists and told them that he has interceded for them and that he would give them one more week to fold up. The governor also promised to provide buses, taxis, tricycles and so on, to make up for the inadequacies and lapses. Then he gave them one week. Weeks after that intervention by the executive, motorcyclists are having a field day.

What was manifest from the intervention of the government is that the government discovered that it ought to have done something, maybe by way of injecting some vehicles to take care of the hardship that would be occasioned both to the commercial motorcyclists and commuters. I am asking: why did the government not foresee it before the State House of Assembly came up with the resolution? Why did it now appear to be that the executive and the legislature are working on parallel lines? And why is it that even the intervention of the governor, who gave the motorcyclists one week, cannot be enforced? I am laying this foundation to say that our laws, our orders, our resolutions, are as weak as the process that put the people in position of authority. With the way the people come to the position of authority, do you expect something better? Of course not! That is why the judiciary is now made the whipping boy, is now the last hope of "the common winner," the last hope of "the purported winner." The judiciary should be proactive enough to point out the debris that is shifted to them in the name of laws to interpret and enforce.

The lesson to be learnt is very simple. If you look at the elections held in USA, which is practising a presidential system of government like Nigeria, if you look at the mid-term elections that took place in Britain, at the end of the elections, the winners were known, the losers congratulated the winners because the process was transparent and credible. If the process is credible, there is no need to go to the election tribunal. Election tribunal is a waste of time, because what the election tribunal is going to interpret is the weak laws, as weak and bad as no law at all. So the lesson to be learnt is that when we learn to have people put into political offices by election, we should take steps to conduct elections which are transparent enough, credible enough so that even the loser will see the point he lost and have no reason to complain. If that happens, he would not burden the judiciary with having to interpret who won or who lost because when the election is shrouded in secrecy, I don't mean the secret ballot, there is manipulation in the course of it. We have come of age to do our thing in a democracy transparently enough to be accepted by the universal community because the world is becoming a global village. Let us not isolate ourselves.

There is nothing like Nigerian democracy. Let us accept it that we are still experimenting with democracy; we are still crawling, but for how long? The only way out is transparent, credible and acceptable election from which clear losers and winners emerge. I would give you an example of how it starts: If you watch the PDP nomination of Obasanjo in 2003, the process of nomination made all ministers delegates; wives of ministers, cooks, ambassadors, whoever held political offices who were appointed by the incumbent President were all delegates who chose from among the many aspirants. Correspondingly, people like Dr (Alex) Ekwueme and others who were also interested could not muster these numbers of delegates and so, there is no way they could have defeated Obasanjo in that primary. So, the rigging and the corruption started from that level and then went on and on. So within the party, the national level and at all levels, we should embark on our democratisation transparently if we do not want to be misunderstood by those who may lose.

The legal profession has contributed immensely. But the legal profession is not operating in a vacuum; the legal profession is affected by all the ills inherent in the society. We talk in terms of corruption; there are certain situations where a lawyer goes to file something in court and outside the statutory fees, he may be faced with a situation that if he does not see this bailiff and a certain officer "properly," that matter would not move beyond the point it is. As far as I am concerned, such consideration is corrupt. But the legal practitioner who does not operate in a vacuum would have to dance according to the music, otherwise he would not survive. So, our problem is the inherent corruption in the whole system. But by and large, aside this corruption, I have seen a good number of legal practitioners who are crusaders, who are very brave, who are very courageous and who call a spade a spade.

But most times, you see these legal practitioners who try to challenge a situation, but before they get too far, they could be confronted by this issue of weak laws that I earlier talked about. Maybe as circumstances were, a State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) set up by the provisions of the Constitution, was wrongfully dissolved

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before the end of their tenure and some political parties decided to challenge such wrongful dissolution of the SIEC. For instance, the Constitution says the commission should last for five years. After those five years or within the period, you can remove and replace whoever is found to be incapable for whatever reason. But not total dissolution and then the political party went to court to challenge it. By the nature of our laws, they were confronted by the fact that they do not have the locus standi to challenge such action. The nature of our laws has been a hindrance to the legal profession contributing to the development that it could have done. The legal profession has a limit beyond which it can't go; as I said, it is not operating in a vacuum. It is operating within the laws made; and laws are not made by legal practitioners.

Law-making is the exclusive preserve and business of the legislative houses - whether of local, states or Federal legislature for Nigeria as a whole. And so, lawyers' functioning and effectiveness are limited to the laws which they have got to take to court and with which they have to canvass their matters in court. I have pointed out the weaknesses of our Evidence laws; I have pointed out the weaknesses of our Electoral laws - there are many others like that. So by calibre, by the nature of legal practitioners that we have, we could have done better if the laws were better than they are.

In contemporary times, let me not go too far back, at least I have seen the late Rotimi Williams' practice. Up to a point, the late Chief was going to the Supreme Court in armchair. He would be sitting down to address their Lordships at the Supreme Court. I have also seen and benefited from the services of the late Gani Fawehinmi when I had a problem while I was a Student Union President in the University of Calabar; because I led the students to agitate for their right, the university authorities purportedly dissolved the students' union executives. I went to court to challenge it, that it was wrong. Gani Fawehinmi attended a Law Students' function at University of Calabar and I whispered to him that I had a problem. He gladly came to our rescue; at least, he appeared for us in that matter when we challenged the university for dissolving the SUG executive. I am singling this out because I was a beneficiary: Gani Fawehinmi was a crusader. He went into areas which did not even concern or involve him, like the one I am talking about; how did it concern him? It did not. But because he saw the injustice and saw himself as an apostle of redress for such injustice, he selflessly decided to come to our rescue. He did that in many cases.

The late Gani Fawehinmi tried to even prosecute those people whom he (alleged) killed the late Dele Giwa. He tried to investigate the killing. Beyond that, he said the people are not hidden and he wanted to prosecute them. But of course he could not prosecute them because of the nature of our laws. I can go on and on to say what has been the impediment of brave and courageous lawyers who could have lifted this country beyond where it is, but they are incapacitated. Femi Falana is trying to get one thing or the other done rightly which were wrongly done. I remember Dr. Olu Onagoruwa. I got inspired by Onagoruwa to become a lawyer because of the incisive lectures he used to give us when I was a student of Nigeria Institute of Journalism. He used to teach us Press Laws and I made up my mind that after I had become a journalist, I would also become a lawyer. Those are very, very viable contributors. At a time, the (Nigerian Government) even said, "Dr. Onagoruwa, you are very vocal and versatile, come and be our Attorney General!" But somewhere along the line, I don't know how that worked out for him.

He did not stay long as Attorney General. But that is beside the point; I am trying to say that we have outstanding legal practitioners. But we have a problem: in that the socio-economic circumstances of any given place, such as Akwa Ibom, has not made us appreciate the industry and intelligence of the lawyers practising in our state. If you think of the intelligent quotient of lawyers, we have lawyers of Akwa Ibom origin who are Senior Advocates of Nigeria but who are practising outside Akwa Ibom. And yet, we also have people from other places doing very well in Akwa Ibom, but it is extremely difficult for them to emerge and become Senior Advocates of Nigeria. So the reason is the socio-economic circumstances in Akwa Ibom.

Yes! Yes! One of the loopholes I have seen in the judiciary's functioning is delayed determination of matters. A good number of times, a matter is adjourned because either a lawyer on the other side had sent in a letter to request for an adjournment or another lawyer had not prepared. Most pertinently, you go to court on days you expect the court to sit; but most unfortunately, the court is not sitting. Like the other day, I had a matter in Eket and the matter was regularly adjourned to a particular date. Meanwhile, I did not adjourn the matter alone - it involved me and the court officials, including the judge. In helping to fix that case on a particular date, I did not know that the court would not sit on that date.

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So, you could appreciate lawyers or litigants going to the court to see that the court is not sitting! What I am advocating is that we should do well to lessen the number of days on which courts do not sit for one reason or the other, because it delays justice. Or, I would advocate a situation at the beginning of each legal year, if the courts are to be involved in one thing or the other, those issues should be foreseeable so that one can know which days would be public holidays like Christmas Day, New Year Day. If each jurisdiction lists out the days that the court would not sit because this-and-that thing would happen, then issues of determination of cases in court should not be hung on uncertainties. One should be sure that a particular case is coming up on a certain date and it should be certain that on that day, the court would hear the matter. It is embarrassing that you go to court on a day fixed for your matter and the court does not sit. It is very, very embarrassing! We should lessen such number of days for whatever reason.

We should be able to frame up a judiciary calendar so that you do not make the mistake of fixing your case on the dates which courts will ordinarily not sit. I am also looking at a situation where some states go out of their way to declare work-free days! The issues of public holidays are supposed to be certain in a developing economy such as Nigeria. Public holidays are on the Exclusive Legislative List: item Number 51 on the Exclusive Legislative List. If public holidays are to be declared, it should be done by the National Assembly and there should be good reason to declare public holidays. Public holidays should not just come up by the whims and caprices of whoever is in power at any stage, whether it is at the national, state or local levels. That has ceased to be government by the rule of law - a unilateral declaration of work-free day and grounding of all socio-economic processes without passing proper legislative process. It is wrong in a democracy! It can be tolerable in a dictatorial government such as a military regime, but it is very inconsistent with the rights of individuals in a democracy.

I can't say whether you are talking about the judiciary or the legal profession and how much it has contributed to the development of Nigeria. But it still goes back to the nature of our laws - the impotent nature of our laws. Take, for example, the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Constitution which has to do with Economic, Cultural and Social Rights. They say the state has the obligation to give you education, house, job... and yet when the state fails to meet these obligations which it has imposed on itself by the provisions of the Constitution, if you go to court, you would be told that such rights are non-justiciable. Then of what essence, therefore, are these rights enshrined in the Constitution if they are non-justiciable? We should be able to raise such rights to Chapter 4, where the rights can be made justiciable. So that when the state imposes it on itself that it would offer jobs and yet you do not have a job, you can go to court to challenge it by saying, "I have these qualifications and experience and the state has not met its obligations in giving me jobs." So the roles of the legal profession, the role of the court are all hindered by these weak provisions of our laws.

For the Akwa Ibom State Government to declare free and compulsory education, the government is doing the obvious. The state government has moved one step forward by making such educational right - which are in Chapter 2 of the Constitution but are not justiciable - move to the level of justiciability. But then, the enforcement aspect remains. You talk of compulsory education. Yet, I have not seen one person being prosecuted in spite of the fact that we still see our children on the streets: which is to say, the enforcement mechanism is weak and, for that reason, that aspect of compulsion is not there. Again, because of the inherent nature of our freedom, which is consistent with democracy, not minding how free education may be, you still see private schools increasing in number everyday. Even the numbers of students are dwindling in public schools because the private schools are still preferred. I don't know why? If the government wants to make the free and compulsory education policy or law effective, it should be concerned with the enforcement aspect. Otherwise, the government can declare free education consistent with the provisions of the Constitution but then, forget about the compulsory aspect because the government certainly is not enforcing it and cannot enforce the compulsion of people going to school.

Yes, a good number of times! You have heard of people who stayed in prisons or police cells, their fundamental rights having been breached and they are told that the court will not sit... and it prolongs the detention, the agony or grievances of that individual? Again, this issue has extended to such an extent that there is a case which has become a scandal to me! A relation of mine was arrested by the Federal Road Safety Commission for allegedly flouting traffic rules. His vehicle, which happens to be the only means of his livelihood, was taken away from him since April, last year. The only way to challenge the matter was to go to court. After I wrote to the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) to release the bus, I went to court.

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As they say, the court is the last hope of the common man. I had thought in that respect that between the dispute involving the Road Safety and my relation, the court is going to intervene. We filed our papers and FRSC also reacted by accepting that they impounded the vehicle and gave reasons why they impounded it. So, the court wants to give a decision by way of judgment. The judgment was fixed to be heard on August 3, last year. We went to court with the owner of the vehicle, but the court did not sit. The Registrar of the court would not give me a date because it is the exclusive prerogative of the court to fix the date. The date for the judgment has not been fixed and judgment is not delivered. About three months later, I wrote that the case should be listed for judgment to be delivered, but there was no reply. I went to the extent that I had to write a reminder.

Now, the scandalous aspect is that this relation of mine is going around saying that I am incapable of handling this matter and that if he knew, he could have "settled" this matter with the FRSC without having to go to court. He is regretting going to court; and the scandal is on me, mistakenly! I cannot blame him because a good number of litigants cannot see the difference between the role of the lawyer and the judge. They think that the two work hand-in-hand. So that is an incident which I am very embarrassed about because of the scandal going about that I am not an effective lawyer; otherwise, such matter could not have lasted for that long in court!

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Kukah's bombshell! I can marry if I wish



## **Kukah's bombshell! I can marry if I wish**

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### **Body**

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•Says Nigeria never had a charismatic leader From AIDOGHIE PAULINUS, Abuja Social critic and public commentator, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah, is home to controversy and says those things many fear to. It is right to say he furthered the trend in this interview with the Daily Sun. You might not believe this but the cleric, who swore to celibacy in the call of his duty, has a shocker for you as he said in response to a question on Catholic cleric and marriage that no one compels a cleric to marry or not to and with such liberty, he declared that marriage for the Catholic clergy was a matter of choice and as such he could get married if he so wished. Kukah, a former Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria and now Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, insists that the issue of marriage is a matter of choice. Hear him: "If I want to get married today, I will get married.

The only thing is that I will no longer be a Catholic priest. And quite a good number of people, some whom I know, have made such choices." Kukah, who clocked 60 recently, also spoke on why he wrote a book on the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa panel not minding that the Nigerian government clamped down on the recommendations of the panel. Bishop Kukah, in this explosive interview, was at his best as he expressed confidence in the recent statement by President Goodluck Jonathan that he would shock Nigerians in 2013. Nigeria is 52. What type of nation did you dream of as a child? The Nigeria I dreamt of was quite modest. As a child, I didn't know Kaduna and I didn't know anywhere outside my immediate environment. So, my dreams were very modest and my ambition then was just to visit Kaduna because for me, that was like the end of the world. You are 60. How do you feel at 60? What do you mean? I feel like an old man. But you look young... I feel old. Very old? Very old (laughs). But I am sure that I can beat you on the football pitch. I am very sure of that. How was growing up like? Well, I grew up in a very small village, rather modest village and I went to Kaduna for the first time, I think in 1965 or thereabouts when we were going to the seminary. Much later in the 70s, we graduated to Jos and the journey started. But my horizon is open, of course, naturally after my ordination as a priest. How did you get your vocation? You get your vocation from God. You don't pick your vocation from the road. You get your vocation from God. But it is not everybody that is like Paul who was on his way to Damascus. There are different circumstances. Why did you join the priesthood

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instead of law profession, medicine or something else? Well, when I was growing up, there were no medical doctors around, there were no lawyers around. There were priests around? There was a priest around. Oh! What is the name of the priest? He is long dead now. But the priest we first came in contact with, I have forgotten his name. I don't remember his name again. It is such a long time because at the end, he was not the one who baptised me. Anyway, I mean, he was a white man and that was the first excitement. And we thought there weren't white people around where I was growing up. The closest I came to a white person was an albino, who was a cousin of mine and we thought she was a white person. But when we saw a white man as a priest, we naturally mystified the environment but also, made you think that when this man said he was a priest, that he probably was having breakfast with God. So, it made the ambition quite tall but also, people like my grandmother with whom I lived, couldn't understand because she said you couldn't be a priest because you were not a white man. The name, Father Kukah, Monsignor Kukah, and now Bishop Kukah, has been associated in many quarters with controversy. Are you controversial? I don't know what you mean by controversy. Every time you hear something for the first time, maybe your mind is jarred and maybe that is what you call controversy. But when you are seeking to expand the frontiers of knowledge, controversy is inevitable. But controversy is a natural phenomenon and it is about new discoveries and people hearing things for the first time. What may be controversial today is just controversial because you are hearing about the first time. I imagine that when people talked about computers and what they could do or mobile phones; if you talked about mobile phones and you can pick a phone and it is possible to talk on a phone that doesn't have a rope to call in the traditional way, people will think you are crazy. Have you ever felt bad that you are not married? If I felt bad that I wasn't married, I would not be a priest. So, you are indirectly saying you have no wife anywhere? (He laughs) If I wanted to marry, nobody has stopped me from getting married. If I want to get married today, I will get married. The only thing is that I will no longer be a Catholic priest. And quite a good number of people, some whom I know, have made those choices. In the same way that if you feel that you are going to do journalism better by becoming an electronic journalist instead of a print journalist, you move on. Nobody is held with chains to remain a priest. But how do you view sexual abuse by priests like we have witnessed in the Western world where some priests abuse children and in Nigeria, where some priests are going out with women? For me, the reason I became a priest was to be able to serve humanity. When I was thinking of the priesthood, what the priesthood finally became for me was not what I thought. The attractions then were slightly different from what the real life was. And it is like somebody getting married. The excitement of a wedding is not marriage and you realise that life is a bit more complicated. I think it is important to understand. We focus on human sexuality. Perhaps, that is understandable and we believe in our own day-to-day life that literally, you can do almost anything as long as you don't use the expression 'follow women.' I don't know where you follow them to. But people have their own scales of values. But I think that the call to be faithful is not a call that is peculiar to me as a priest. Men, who are married have the same vocation. Women, who are married have the same vocation. There are people who are celibate and their celibacy has got absolutely nothing to do with the Catholic priesthood. People have just chosen that, that is the way they want to commit their lives to serving God. But just like every other thing else in life, people, including myself, we are falling and rising, falling and rising. I measure myself against my own personal effort. I cannot live other peoples' lives for them. What do you mean by falling and rising? I mean, I am a human being. You do the things that other human beings do? I am a human being. I don't know what you mean. I write articles but I am not a journalist. And like I said, I don't think that you can define anybody purely and simply. Your sexual life is just one out of a multiplicity of things that people have to do and I think that it is important for us to appreciate the fact that creating a world that is good, creating a world in the image that God wanted, is a vocation that all of us have. And, as I said, the call to holiness, I decided that the best way I can serve God is to be a priest and God accepted me with all my failures. I didn't lose my sexuality, I didn't lose my wish to have a family, I didn't lose any of those things. It is just that from the scale of my own priorities, this is the way that I want to live my life. Priests are known not to have anything to do with worldly riches. Is Bishop Kukah a wealthy man? I don't think you can say that we have nothing to do with worldly riches. I don't know what you mean by riches. I am an extraordinarily wealthy man. I am wealthy (laughs). I may not be rich but I am very wealthy. Wealthy financially? If you have a lot of money in the bank, then you are rich. But if you invest in human capital, then you are wealthy. So, to that extent, I mean, perhaps if I set out to look for money as a medical doctor, as a lawyer, I would not be where I am today because despite my not setting out on a vocation that is money-seeking, I enjoy a lot of goodwill from people. But for me, what is even more important is not even the money. It is that I work around Nigeria from an aeroplane to trying to get a taxi to doing the normal thing that everybody else does. And it is frightening. Let me put it this way, the amount of appreciation and acknowledgment that you get from people you cannot buy with money.

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That is why if you ask me whether I am wealthy, I am wealthy. I am sure that if I want to get a brand new car now, if I pick up my phone and make two or three telephone calls, I will have a brand new car. If I want one million naira now and I pick up my phone and I call one or two people and say I am looking for one million naira, I will get one million naira. So, to that extent, I consider myself a very wealthy man. What has changed between when you were a priest and now that you are a bishop? Well, as you can see, I haven't grown taller. My complexion hasn't changed. Last week, I was talking to Justice Oputa and we haven't spoken for a while and he said something to me that was quite striking. He said you are still talking like Father Kukah despite the fact that you are a bishop. And I didn't quite understand what he was saying because we used to really crack a lot of jokes. I mean, that is my life (laughs). Then, the event I have tomorrow, my friend, Charley Boy, called and said can I bring some of my friends? I said yeah, sure, bring some of your friends. When I was in Lagos, I had some really interesting friends. I remember sometimes, people like Charley Boy would come and the gatemen would be wondering what did I have to do with these kinds of persons. But that is what I call the richness of my life and I am really eternally grateful to God for that. So, if you ask me if anything has changed, I don't know. I am still struggling, in the same way that 90 per cent of Nigerians that called me, still call me Father Kukah. They still find it difficult to call you Bishop Kukah? Yes. And it includes bishops. I mean, sometimes, I am having a long conversation with Archbishop Onaiyekan and a few others and they still call me Father Kukah until I try to say look, I am a bishop now. And if I say I am a bishop now, people just laugh. But I think a lot of people still believe that I'd rather be Father Kukah, which is a wonderful feeling because in this business, you need to have your feet on the ground. Talking about the papacy, would you say the seat is politicised? In what sense? It cannot be politicised because nobody campaigns to become a pope. To politicise anything at all presupposes that you have got platforms for competition. None of those kinds of things exists. In that case, do you foresee a Nigerian, becoming pope soon like we expected in the case of Cardinal Arinze? I don't know why people were expecting. People were saying an African pope and I said no, there is nothing like an African pope. There can never be a Nigerian pope. There may be a pope, who is from Nigeria but it doesn't make him a Nigerian pope. There may be a pope from Africa but it doesn't make him an African pope. We have only pope of the Catholic Church, who may happen to be from Brazil or he could be from Poland or he could be from Nigeria or he could be from Ghana. To narrow it down, do you foresee a Nigerian becoming pope soon? My dear, except becoming God, there is nothing that is not possible. With God all things are possible. And, in any case, this country has produced some of the most excellent, international servants whether they are serving politically, economically or spiritually. We've always excelled wherever we find ourselves. How do you feel that after the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa panel, the result was aborted? I don't know what you mean by the result was aborted. Maybe if you come to the event I have tomorrow and the book is launched and you grab a copy of my book and you read it, you will know that there was no abortion because a child was born. What do you think would have been the benefit of Nigeria's unity if the panel's recommendations were implemented? Nothing would have changed for the simple reason that Nigerians don't use information. And people like you can go to the Internet and download the entire Oputa panel report but no Nigerian ***journalist*** has done that. If you had produced that report and put it out on the streets, nobody would read it. Why is the situation like that? Because this is Nigeria. People are good at talking. People are good at talking but action is not there. Elsewhere, in more serious countries, even parts of the Oputa Report that came out should have been part of political science debate and discussion across the country and you don't need the president to release that report for you to get the information. In any case, like I told people, I just flew this afternoon with somebody from Sokoto. He held me by the hand as usual and greeted me very warmly. And he said to me, look, I have got almost every tape of Oputa panel because I listened to everything. Now, the first thing about Oputa panel is that everything is out there in the open in the sense that most of the debates, everybody has them. The critical question is to say what were the recommendations and the recommendations are there. Even if government didn't release them, Nigerians had access to what the recommendations were. And serious people in a most serious country: journalists, civil society groups, should appropriate some of those recommendations and use them to confront government. I give you a simple example. When Obasanjo appointed me to serve as a mediator to end the conflict between Shell and Ogoni, it was more or less following through some of the recommendations of Oputa panel, although he may not have been direct in that way. And it is also important for Nigerians to understand. When you talk about releasing a report, you see, if, let's say for example, something is wrong with The Sun Newspapers, staff go on strike or whatever or staff are complaining or there is a hemorrhaging of staff, your Managing Director, Tony Onyema, would probably say ok, look, let's hire a consultant to find out what has happened, why people are leaving us. They may come back and say look, the reason your staff are leaving you is because the pay is low, morale is low, other newspapers have cars for their staff, and so on and so forth. If your

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chairman collects that report, he doesn't have to call a meeting of all the journalists to say this is the report I have received. If he decides on his own, he doesn't have to say now gentlemen, I have decided to raise your salary because a commission of enquiry recommended so so so and so. If you see better changes in your condition of service, he doesn't have to tell you what the motivation is. So, similarly, if Nigerians see a change in their lives, and I am not defending government. But when government gets these reports and wants to implement, sometimes, the government doesn't necessarily have to go out, saying this is what we are going to do. But my feeling is that civil society groups, especially the media, need to be a little bit more proactive because like the late **Dele Giwa** used to say, it is the business of Nigeria to hide its information and it is our business as journalists to find that information. Not minding that the government clamped down on the Oputa panel recommendation, you still published a book on it. Why? This book is the first I am publishing. There are two more coming. I am going to publish a book on Political Reform Conference and I am also going to publish a book on my experience in Ogoni land. There wasn't much excitement in the Justice Uwais Committee that I served in. I didn't throw up a lot of excitement. It didn't have enough intrigues to create excitement. So, I am not likely to do any book on that. But for me as a public intellectual, releasing that book is one way of continuing the work of Oputa panel and I am proud to say that through my own initiative, I have encouraged people; one student in Oxford, another student in Ibadan, to work on the findings of Oputa panel. For me, that is why I said I am really saddened by the fact that the Nigerian universities communities have been a great disappointment really in terms of how the universities have reacted to matters of this nature because this is raw material for even a course in political science. I mean, traditional justice is now a course on its own. People are earning degrees in traditional justice. Do you actually think, deep in your mind, in spite of your populist position, that Nigeria's disunity can be cured? What do you mean by disunity? That people have been discussing the possible disintegration of Nigeria...My dear, let me tell you. Please, this country, nothing is going to happen to its unity. The people, who are talking about disintegration of Nigeria are just a few cowboys in the media. They don't represent anybody. They represent themselves and they probably are on the wrong end of the fence. But the fact of the matter is, don't let anybody deceive you. This country is going nowhere. This country will grow stronger and stronger. I do not take it that 99 per cent of ordinary Igbo people feel the way that those who claim to represent them talk about. Or that 95 per cent of Yoruba feel the way that people want to make us believe or that 99 per cent of ordinary people in Northern Nigeria feel the way that some cowboys want to make everybody believe. I think we have had our difficulties but let me tell you that, perhaps, the saddest thing with Nigeria is that we have not been able to have the leadership that can inspire confidence and literally mesmerise us because every country requires a leadership that has charisma. When you have a charismatic leader, even your hunger goes away. When you have a charismatic leader, you can make sacrifice. You won't see all these things. It is not because they are not there. When I went to Ghana after Rawlings came to power, you needed to queue up for about three, four or five hours to buy a loaf of bread. People were queuing up for almost a whole day to get a litre of fuel. But you could see the confidence and the courage of Ghanaians. So, these things are not about infrastructure and so on and so forth. It is that, unfortunately for us, Nigerians have not been lucky to have the kind of charismatic leader that can rouse the populace. Including Jonathan? Well, it is a point I am making. We can't talk of a Nigerian leader that has created what you might call theatre and drama. Take a simple example of somebody like Mandela. Have you ever seen a Nigerian leader dancing for example? Something as simple as that. Mandela is not a good dancer but every time he did all those things, why do you think, for example, that Bafana Bafana have never won African Cup of Nations again? But when Mandela became president, he was able to rouse up these people from nowhere. The rugby team that won the world cup, it was because of the Mandela persona. You go and watch. I keep making reference to it. There is a film called *invictus*. Go and watch it. So, it is possible when you have a leadership that can choreograph change by making people feel that this is our country, we believe in it, things will be better. When you see the passion that Nigerians express in football or whatever, you know. So, every human being has passion . Some people deploy the passion for sex, others for drugs and so on. But you have to find out what to do with your passion. And if your nation does not seize that moment, then you deplore it to something else. You were selected recently as one of those to put an end to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North. What has your committee done so far? We weren't to deal with Boko Haram as such. But you are to restore peace in the North...Yeah. We are still working. I have been terribly busy with other things but we have identified some of the issues. I have also my own feelings about what I think we need to deal with in terms of seeking healing in the North. I mean, the injuries started before Boko Haram. Before Boko Haram, more churches had been destroyed in the Northern Nigeria. All the churches destroyed in the Northern Nigeria in the last 20 or so years, what Boko Haram has done is not up to what has been done in one state in Nigeria by forces that have nothing to do with Boko Haram. So, my argument, as a

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Christian, is to say well, look, if we need peace in the North, you need to address all those things. If you need peace in the North, for me, we cannot live in a country where I have freedom to practice my religion and then, I build a church that takes me ten years to try and find the resources, somebody destroys the church and somehow, the state government doesn't seem to know what to do. And then, I am supposed to go back again and start another round of building. If you live in the Northern Nigeria, I am sure I can say without fear of contradiction that almost every central mosque in Northern Nigeria was built with government's money. Most churches in Nigeria are not state projects. So, you cannot talk about healing until you deal with some of these things. There are also other issues that people have, whether they are Christians or Moslems. Very basic issues that have been with us. And they are also about the quality of human rights, respect and protection that is available to ordinary citizens. All these things have been with us and they may be with us after Boko Haram has gone. When are you releasing the blueprint? For what? The committee has three months. We have only done about four weeks or so. You are from Kaduna State where the state has been polarised along religious lines. Do you subscribe to the division of the state along religious lines? Again, this is what the media are doing to further confuse the situation. Some crack heads say, for example, I want all Moslems to leave this part or I want all Fulanis to leave and you go ahead and carry that story. You don't even bother to find out where is this guy coming from. Is he drunk? Is he educated? And then, you now say Moslems say Christians should leave or Igbo say Yorubas should leave. You can't talk like that. Nobody has said Kaduna State should be divided along religious lines. You will start the religious lines from where? And it is our inability to appreciate how complex the web of our relationship is. Where are you going to start from? And this is why I say to my Moslem brothers, part of the reason the North is still having this whole problem is because Northern Islam has almost refused to move with speed in areas of intermarriages and so on because marriage is, perhaps, sociological. There is hardly any institution that builds and bonds communities together like marriage does. These are the things that help our prejudices to diminish. But clearly in Nigeria, there is no part of Nigeria that you can say this is for Igbo even in the heartland of Igbo, even in our own heartlands. So, we are frustrated quite all right but let us think. People who are married get frustrated. Occasionally, in my village, I used to watch men pack their wives' things and throw them outside and say no more marriage again. But tomorrow, the wife and the husband are sitting down and you are asking: Was this not the man who said no more marriage? These things happen. The important thing is for us to develop the capacity to manage our differences. Talking about Boko Haram, how long will Christians keep taking Boko Haram terror without retaliation? We Christians have no timetable because revenge is not in our vocabulary and we offer no apology. We are a religion of love. We are a religion that preaches love. We are a religion that has remained unpopular because of the kind of gospel that we preach. Nobody, who tells you not to revenge is popular and we are unequivocal to our commitment to non-violence. It is something we abhor, it is not something we are prepared to learn. We are prepared to condemn even those of our members, who under any provocation at all, decide that they want to take the law into their hands. However, that is not to say that we are prepared to be walked over. There are other methods of revenge, let me put it that way, and as you can see, the Moslems themselves should be more worried than we are about the negative advertisement that is given to their religion because increasingly, it is these people, who are giving Islam a bad name and also diminishing the possibility of people, converting to the religion because young people are going to grow up, thinking that this religion is just about violence and so on. And that is why we Christians must insist on what we have come into the world to do. Jesus Christ said the light came into the world. Light has come into the world but the world is not interested in light. But we also know that darkness cannot overcome that light. So, even if it is only one Christian that is left in Nigeria, he or she must continue to hold that flag. We are not talking about numbers, we are not talking about how many churches that have been destroyed before we revenge. When Peter asked Jesus that question, what did Jesus say? Seventy times seven. How many times must somebody slap me before I retaliate? Some texts say seventy-seven. They slap you one day, you go and write it down, they slap you another day, you go and write it down until you get seventy-seven? Do you think Northern Islamic leaders support Boko Haram? Frankly, it would be strange. For me, anybody, who has any support for Boko Haram does not qualify to be called a leader in any shape or form unless a leader of terror. But I also don't believe that this is something we should ascribe to particular individuals and we should not resort to the question of Moslems. For me, like I keep saying, you are dealing with an evil force that is in our society, who dies as a result of Boko Haram, has got nothing to do. Just whoever happens to be passing around. So, you are even crediting them with so much knowledge if you say that they have targeted Christians. The fact that they are going to churches, they may have their own ideas. But again, what all these say in a long term for Islam in Northern Nigeria in particular, is the quality of education that the non-English speaking teachers, who are teaching these young people impact on them. What names are they calling Christians because

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there must be something in the way these children are taught that is contemptuous of Christianity and contemptuous of you to make a young person believe that as it is in Nigeria, if your father slaps your mother, the next way to show your disagreement is to go and burn a church. And it is accepted. Young people in Northern Nigeria just come to believe that whatever happens to you, if you just feel angry, just go and burn a church. But again, it is not something that you will ascribe to something that is orchestrated. And, as I see, we just prayerfully hope that soon, it will be a thing of the past. The Muslim North always accuses the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) of inflammatory position over Boko Haram. Do you believe it is true? I am not the CAN President, I am not the spokesman. he CAN President has a spokesman, he can ably defend himself. Bakassi: what is your take on the issue? T I really don't know. I don't know much about Bakassi but I was listening to somebody on Channels and he was extraordinarily eloquent because he went back to the last 100 years in talking about Bakassi and in the short period of time that I listened to him, what he said was quite striking. So, it does seem to me that even we ordinary Nigerians don't seem to know what the real issues are and what the real history is. But that we should be foaming in the mouth now just a few days to the end of the deadline. I am not sure I know what to say frankly. President Goodluck Jonathan recently said he would shock Nigerians in 2013. Do you believe the president's promise? It is possible. Yep. Why shouldn't I believe him? You have confidence in him? I have confidence in him. I have confidence first of all in the fact that God did not bring us here by mistake and that God has demonstrated very clearly that He uses some of the instruments that are humanly uninspiring. And that His choices are not our choices because his ways are not our ways. I don't think that Jonathan, whether he has the eloquence or doesn't have eloquence, and that if it is in God's plans that somehow, within this period of time, this is what is going to happen, I don't have a problem. I mean, like Hausa man says if a blind man threatens to stone you, he must be standing on a stone. I think that Jonathan must have a reason to be confident. And if he can make that statement, I think it is a measure of his own commitment. But also, I think it is something that I think I will admire and I also say well, if you don't deliver in 2013, then we tell you to pack your bags and go. So, if a man has given you that promise, I think he is putting himself up for something that is quite risky. If he has made that commitment, I think we can only hold him by his promise. Taking a cursory look at the president's speech on independence day that he can't rule Nigeria alone, how do you feel that such statement was coming from the president? You can read whatever you want to read. I think what the man said, of course, is true. Nigerians have a mindset. And perhaps, after 30 years of the military, destroying our collective psyche and the dictators, taking decisions about what will happen in Bayelsa, what will happen in Calabar, what will happen in Kano, what will happen in Sokoto and that all it required was for a dictator to wake up whether he has had one or two glasses of Brandy, and he says the man in Calabar, you are now governor, please, come and it happens, go and he goes, it is understandable. Now, after over twenty-something years, Nigerians have gotten used to everything. We still believe President Jonathan or a president in a democracy is an imperial president, who is running this country on his own. If we have light, it is because of Jonathan. If we have no road, it is because of Jonathan. If children are not in school, it is because of Jonathan. If people have been killed somewhere, it is because of Jonathan. And Jonathan is not a policeman, Jonathan is not a governor, Jonathan is not a legislator. So, clearly, when he made the point, I can understand what he is saying but I think Nigerians are taking it as if the man is saying look, please don't blame me. Of course, the truth of the matter is that the president, in the final analysis, he doesn't have a checkbook. If the president says there is going to be road from here to Kano or that there will be 500 airports in Nigeria, the president cannot make that happen. He has to use the instrumentality of the public service, the bureaucracy, the ministries and it depends on the character and calibre of bureaucrats that you have. And that is why part of the biggest problem we face in Nigeria, is the quality and calibre of the bureaucracy that is running this country. So, when Jonathan made that point, I think I can see the point he is making. But it is also important that he takes full responsibility because he is the one that has assembled his team. No minister was selected. He is the one, who has chosen the people and if he has chosen a team, it is like Stephen Keshi. Stephen Keshi boasts that he is going to win the World Cup and chooses a team. He has to have an idea about the kind of team he is taking to the World Cup before he makes the promise. That is why if the guy makes a promise and fails, just like what they did with the other guy before Stephen Keshi, you fail to deliver, you go. In the same way, I think we can come to a point in which politicians fail to deliver and they go whether it is mid-term or even before the end of the term because if nobody forced you to make a commitment, if you make a commitment, then you live by that commitment. If you were to advise the president on three issues, what would they be? I am not a presidential adviser. Supposing President Goodluck Jonathan calls you and says, Bishop Kukah, advise me on three issues, what would be your advice? First of all, I would like to

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have light 24 hours a day. Two, I want to see a massive layout of railway lines across this country. Three, I have forgotten the third. But even those two are enough because if we had r

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## **Nigerian ex-ruler lists conditions to appear before rights panel**

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Nigeria's military ruler between 1985 and 1993 who annulled the country's 1993 election, General Ibrahim Babangida, has listed conditions under which he would answer summons by the country's human rights violations commission.

Babangida had been invited by the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa to respond to a petition filed against him over the killing of a journalist, Dele Giwa.

Babangida's lawyer, Mustapha Wali, told a news conference in Abuja Tuesday that the former military ruler would not appear before the commission until it "created a conducive atmosphere" for his client to appear before it.

He said that "the present environment is not only unconducive for Babangida, but also for the commission."

Wali recalled that rowdy crowd behaviour at the commission's sittings in Lagos created prospects of indignities and prejudicial conduct.

The slain journalist was killed in his home by a parcel bomb in October 1986. Giwa was a vocal critic of Babangida.

Also still expected to appear before the commission are former military rulers General Muhammadu Buhari and General Abdulsalami Abubakar. dpa aa vc

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## Volksadvocaat van Nigeria; Gani Fawehinmi (1938-2009), mensenrechtenactivist

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### **Body**

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#### **SAMENVATTING**

Gani Fawehinmi werd een volksheld in Nigeria met zijn strijd tegen corruptie, machtsmisbruik en milieuverontreiniging.

#### **VOLLEDIGE TEKST:**

Gani Oyesala Fawehinmi, de onvermoeibare volksadvocaat van Nigeria, is zaterdag op 71-jarige leeftijd aan kanker overleden. Nigerianen prezen hem gisteren als een legende, een vrijheidsstrijder, een hoofdrolspeler op het politieke toneel gedurende tientallen jaren. Fawehinmi spande tijdens zijn loopbaan rechtszaken aan tegen vrijwel alle Nigeriaanse presidenten wegens machtsmisbruik, tegen Shell wegens milieuverontreiniging in het land en tegen corrupte ambtenaren. „Als er een Nobelprijs voor de mensenrechten zou bestaan, is deze voor Fawehinmi”, zei enkele jaren terug Walter Carrington, Amerika’s toenmalige ambassadeur in Nigeria.

Met gewetenloze en uiterst corrupte machthebbers had Nigeria na de onafhankelijkheid in de jaren zestig behoefte aan een onbevreesde strijder voor mensenrechten. Fawehinmi vormde een éénpersoons actiebrigade en werd door zijn werk tegen de autoriteiten tussen 1966 en 1999 35 keer gearresteerd. Hij droeg altijd een toilettas bij zich. „Dat is mijn detentietas”, zei hij in 1995 tegen deze krant. „In deze tas zitten een schone onderbroek, een tandenborstel, een handdoek en mijn slippers voor in de cel. Want ieder moment kan ik worden gearresteerd.”

De in 1938 in de deelstaat Ondo geboren Fawehinmi studeerde rechten in Engeland. Zijn eerste grote zaak was in 1969 in Nigeria. Het betrof een hoge militair die sliep met de echtgenote van een arme ambtenaar en hem uitdaagde daar iets tegen te doen. Hij verdedigde de ambtenaar en won. Sindsdien heeft zijn advocatenkantoor in

Volksadvocaat van Nigeria Gani Fawehinmi (1938-2009), mensenrechtenactivist

Lagos 5.700 zaken tegen machtsmisbruik aanhangig gemaakt. Hij procedeerde tegen de presidenten Gowon, Shagari, Babangida, Abacha en Obasanjo.

Zijn beroemdste zaak betrof de nooit opgehelderde moord op de prominente ***journalist Dele Giwa*** die in 1986 door een bombrief overleed. ***Dele Giwa*** werkte aan een verhaal over drugsmokkel waarbij de familie van president Babangida zou zijn betrokken.

In 1985 begon hij de Weekly Law Reports, waarin hij uitspraken van de Hoge Raad onder de loep nam. Volgens collega-advocaten maakte hij de Nigeriaanse rechtspraak begrijpelijk voor de gewone man. In 1994, toen politieke partijen verboden waren, richtte hij de Nationale Partij van het Geweten op. Hij werd dat jaar voorzitter van een bundeling van 55 actiegroepen voor democratisering.

## Graphic

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Fawehinmi in 2002.

Foto AFP

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Smiling enigma may return to fore NIGERIAN POLITICS PRO-DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGNERS CONCERNED  
OVER LEGAL MOVE AGAINST PRESIDENT OBASANJO BY FORMER MILI:



**Smiling enigma may return to fore NIGERIAN POLITICS PRO-DEMOCRACY  
CAMPAIGNERS CONCERNED OVER LEGAL MOVE AGAINST PRESIDENT  
OBASANJO BY FORMER MILI:**

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## **Body**

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Ibrahim B. Babangida, Nigeria's enigmatic former military ruler, may be about to take an uncharacteristic and revealing step into the public gaze.

The general, who once charmed world leaders with his gap-toothed smile and talk of neo-liberal economics, has begun a lawsuit against Olusegun Obasanjo, the president, in an attempt to forestall investigation of a murder committed more than 15 years ago.

The action, due to come before the high court this month, could be one of the most high-profile and significant legal cases to take place in Nigeria since independence in 1960.

The hearing may reveal much about the country's ability to escape from the army domination that has shaped its modern history and helped institutionalise a culture of public corruption.

Pro-democracy campaigners are concerned that Mr Obasanjo may be unwilling or unable to resist Mr Babangida, who supported the president's election campaign in 1999 but has yet to declare his position on the presidential poll due next year. "It was Babangida who helped Obasanjo to come to power," said Gani Fawehinmi, a lawyer and human rights activist who turned down an offer to act for the president. "Obasanjo doesn't want to offend him."

The case centres on an unpublished report into human rights violations under military rule in Nigeria, which has had just three elected civilian presidents since independence.

The document, known as the Oputa panel report, is the product of almost three years work and is similar in the breadth of its scope to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up in South Africa after apartheid.

Smiling enigma may return to fore NIGERIAN POLITICS PRO-DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGNERS CONCERNED  
OVER LEGAL MOVE AGAINST PRESIDENT OBASANJO BY FORMER MILI:

Mr Babangida is thought to be concerned that the panel has recommended further investigation into the death of Dele Giwa, a journalist murdered in 1986 by a parcel bomb. The killing, the year after Mr Babangida took power in a coup, happened shortly after Mr Giwa was questioned by the security services.

Halilu Akilu, Mr Babangida's director of military intelligence, is a co-plaintiff in the lawsuit, whose defendants include members of both the government and the Oputa panel. Documents seen by the Financial Times suggest that Mr Babangida plans to argue that the president would be exceeding his powers if he implemented the panel's recommendations.

An affidavit deposed by Mr Babangida's lawyers says the Court of Appeal in Lagos has ruled that the president acted unconstitutionally in appointing the Oputa panel in the first place. "It will be in the interest of justice to restrain (the defendants)," it says.

Mr Babangida has made extensive efforts to protect himself since he was forced out of office in 1993 after eight years in power. His tenure ended amid outrage after he reneged on a promise to return the country to civilian rule and cancelled the results of presidential elections won by the late Moshood Abiola.

The annulment destroyed the remainder of an international credibility he had nurtured through relationships with politicians such as Lady Thatcher, the former British Conservative prime minister, who sent him a goodwill message shortly after he took power. Lady Thatcher received Mr Babangida for lunch at Downing Street during a 1989 state visit and praised the president for putting in place "courageous" economic reforms that resembled her own.

His reputation has suffered further over unanswered questions relating to the corruption that flourished during his presidency.

Nigeria has earned more than Dollars 250bn in revenues from oil over the last 40 years but much of it has been used to service official venality rather than for social development.

The United Nations Development Programme millennium human development report ranks the country as one of the world's poorest and says average incomes have declined by an average of 1.5 per cent a year over the last quarter century.

Nigerian politics still feels Mr Babangida's influence, despite his departure from office, and newspapers constantly speculate that he might try to return to power. The general is reputed to be a skilled manipulator and is referred to as the "Maradona of Nigerian politics" - he ruled in the 1980s when Argentina's football team was in its heyday - and the "evil genius".

Mr Obasanjo, a Christian southerner, could face electoral difficulties if he fails to secure the support of Mr Babangida, a Muslim from the populous and politically powerful north. Nigeria has suffered since independence from regional conflicts.

As a former military ruler, Mr Obasanjo is under pressure to show he is serious about bringing perpetrators of army violence to justice.

The president is criticised for endorsing brutal behaviour by the military, most notably when the army massacred more than 200 civilians in the state of Benue last year. The position of Mr Obasanjo and his fellow defendants, as laid out in an affidavit seen by the FT, is that they will oppose a court action they consider "speculative, academic, frivolous and vexatious".

The resolution of this argument between the current and former rulers may provide important clues as to the political future of Nigeria as well as the fate of Mr Babangida, who was the subject earlier this year of supportive newspaper advertisements placed by the "IBB 2003 movement".

The pictures showed the general wearing his familiar grin and was accompanied by the message: "Nigerians, get ready to smile."

Smiling enigma may return to fore NIGERIAN POLITICS PRO-DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGNERS CONCERNED  
OVER LEGAL MOVE AGAINST PRESIDENT OBASANJO BY FORMER MILI:

**Load-Date:** July 1, 2002

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## Ein Leben im Alptraum

taz, die tageszeitung

April 19, 1996

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**Section:** Pg. 13; TAZ-Bericht

**Length:** 1832 words

**Byline:** Frank Hayder

**Highlight:** Ken Saro-Wiwa war nicht nur ein Vorkaempfer des Ogoni-Volkes. Er stritt fuer ein Nigeria, das seine Kulturvielfalt anerkennt und Diktatoren nicht toleriert Von Frank Hayder

## **Body**

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Wenn wir die Lebensschicksale zweier weltbekannter Vertreter nigerianischer Minderheiten vergleichen, erkennen wir, wie sich ihre Geister zwischen Anpassung und Beharrung scheiden. Oberstleutnant - spaeter General - Yakubu Gowon, ein "officer and gentleman" bis in die Fingerspitzen, kommt vom kleinen nordnigerianischen Bergstamm der Angas, spricht aber seine Muttersprache nicht mehr. Gowon nahm Kultur und Sprache des grossen nordnigerianischen Haussa-Volkes an und stieg 1966 zum Staatsoberhaupt auf, das er neun Jahre blieb.

Dagegen kaempfte Ken Saro-Wiwa, der Unangepasste, ein Leben lang um die Erhaltung seiner Muttersprache, seiner Identitaet und seines Stammes. Er sei Khana, bekannte er schon in seinem ersten Semester an der Universitaet Ibadan als einziger unter nahezu 2.000 Studenten - er gehoerte einem Unterstamm der Ogoni im Nigerdelta an, zu denen man ausserdem noch die Gokona, Tai und Eleme zaehlt. Statt "Stamm" pflegte er allerdings "ethnische Nationalitaet" zu sagen.

Nicht Ogoni, sondern "einer vom Wasservolk"

Bei seinem Studium, das er 1962 begann, wurde ihm bewusst, dass auch die besten Freunde, die er dort gewann, aus welchem Landesteil auch immer, ihn niemals als Ogoni, geschweige denn als Khana akzeptierten. Sie ordneten ihn aus ihrer jeweiligen Sicht heraus ein, wogegen er die Wesensart einer jeden Volksgruppe gewahrt wissen wollte. "Fuer meinen Frund Mamman Makele war ich ein ,Suedstaatler ", sagte er, "fuer Goke Adenaji, einen anderen Freund, war ich ein ,Ibo ; fuer meinen spaeter im Sezessionskrieg gefallenen Freund Emenjo Okwuosah war ich ein ,Mbammiri einer vom Wasservolk . Mein Alptraum wollte kein Ende nehmen."

Sein Alptraum ging erst zu Ende, als man ihn haengte. Natuerlich waere Ken Saro-Wiwas "Ich bin ein Khana" ohne ernsthafte Folgen fuer ihn selbst und andere geblieben, waere er nicht ein grosser Meister des Wortes gewesen. Haette er sich wie General Gowon angepasst, waere er nicht mit seinen nigerianischen Landsleuten, denen er vorwarf, das Fremde ueber das Eigene gestellt zu haben, scharf ins Gericht gegangen:

"In anderen Laendern schiesst man aeussre Feinde tot,

bei uns schafft es die Army grad,

## Ein Leben im Alptraum

die eignen Brueder abzuknallen...

Bei euch piept's wohl?

Nicht einmal eig'ne Namen habt ihr!

Ihr nennt euch Peter, Paul

Nicodemus Isaac John Joshua Saul

Nincompoop Appolos Fred George Victoria

Sabina Pepper Excreta Letitia

Maria

Abdullahi Hussein Muhamadu.

Verdammt noch mal! Muesst ihr denn alles borgen?

Was ist bloss mit dir los, Nigeria?

Stell dich gefaelligst auf die eig'nen Beine!"

"Dis Nigeria Sef",

in Pidgin-Englisch, 1985

Dieses Gedicht ist im Grunde eine robuste, ruppige Liebeserklaerung an Nigeria, das er zur Selbstbestimmung und Laeuterung aufrief. Voellig unkompliziert war allerdings nur seine Liebe zum kleinen Ogoni-Land, fuer dessen Autonomiestatus innerhalb der nigerianischen Foederation er in Wort und Schrift kaempfte, besonders nachdem er die Agitation zur Schaffung eines Bundesstaates "Port Harcourt State", einer interethnischen Allianz zwischen Ogoni und Ikwerre unter Fuehrung seines Freundes und einstigen Kabinettskollegen in der Provinzregierung von Rivers State, Nwanodike Nwandi, hatte aufgeben muessen. Das Ogoni-Land hat er geliebt, wie er seine alte Mutter liebte, die bei seiner Hinrichtung vor dem Gefaengnistor misshandelt wurde, wie er seinen Vater liebte, einen ehemaligen Forstaufseher, der den kleinen Ken in die Geheimnisse der Natur einweichte und der jetzt, im Alter von 91 Jahren, den Toten beweinen muss.

"Fuer die Ogoni sind Fluesse und Baeche heilig", schrieb Ken Saro-Wiwa 1992 in seinem Buch "Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni tragedy". In seinem ersten Buch, das in Ogoni-Land handelt, "Tambari in Dukana" (1973), sind selbst die Namen verzaubert. Tambari heisst "Gottes Werk", und wir lauschen mit dem Knaben Tambari der Geschichte von der Meernixe, die den Fischern und Bauern der Ogoni Liebeslust und -leid bringt - der geheimnisvollen, in ganz Westafrika verehrten "mami-water".

Heute ist die "mami-water" in Ogoni-Land vor dem von Westen eingefallenen Moloch Shell ins offene Meer entfleucht oder im Oelschlick elendig verreckt. Aber draussen im Meer schiessen neue Foerdertuerme wie giftige Pilze aus dem Wasser, es werden fieberhaft neue Konzessionen erteilt, und vor allem die wahnwitzige Gasabfackelei kann weitergehen, ein gigantisches Umwelt- und Wirtschaftsverbrechen, durch das seit ueber 25 Jahren jaehrlich Milliardenwerte vernichtet werden.

Nun, da der Stoerenfried, der sich fuer so chimaerische Ziele wie Umwelt- und Minderheitenschutz einsetzte, aus dem Wege geraeumt und damit auch die potentiell gefaehrliche Sensationslust der Medien befriedigt ist, koennen die Aktien wieder steigen. Steigen werden auch die Auslandskonten der Diktatoren in der Schweiz und auf den Bahamas. Angesichts dieser Milliardenruecklagen muss man die Bemuehungen der Weltbank und des Internationalen Waehrungsfonds um Strukturprogramme, die in Wirklichkeit zur restlosen Vereitelung der Massen fuehren, als das sehen, was sie aus der Naehe betrachtet sind: eine Mischung von Kasperletheater und Totentanz.

## Ein Leben im Alptraum

So hatte es Ken Saro-Wiwa schon in seinem satirisch-allegorischen Zeitroman "Pita Dumbrok's Prison" (1991) apokalyptisch geschildert.

In diesem Roman faellt die fremde Goettin Imf (International Monetary Fund) wie eine Riesenheuschrecke ueber Nigeria her und laesst Horden hoellischer Kobilde auf das Land los. Sie heissen "saps" - die Abkuerzung fuer Strukturanpassungsprogramme. Die Sap-Kobilde sind in Kampfeinheiten eingeteilt, die strategisch in den einzelnen Landesteilen staioniert werden und je einen Sonderauftrag durchfuehren muessen. Ihre einzelnen Spezialitaeten sind Hunger, Krankheit, Intelligenzabwerbung, Raubueberfall, Aufruhr und Chaos.

Der **Journalist** Pita Dumbrok, der dies aufdeckt, faellt am Ende einer Paketbombe zum Opfer, die ihm der nigerianische Geheimdienst zustellt. In Pitas Gestalt erkennt man unschwer die des nigerianischen Starjournalisten **Dele Giwa**, der 1986 untersucht hatte, wie Nigeria zur Drehscheibe des internationalen Rauschgifthandels zwischen Europa, den USA, dem Goldenen Dreieck in Asien und Suedamerika hatte werden koennen. Dabei war **Giwa** auf die zwielichtige Rolle der damaligen Praesidentengattin Miriam Babangida gestossen, deren Mann sich 1984 an die Macht geputscht hatte, um der Verhaftung wegen Korruption zuvorzukommen. Miriams moralisches Ansehen war nicht gerade ueberdurchschnittlich. Vom Volk erhielt sie den Beinamen "the smuggler", und als sie ein Kind gebaer, stiess man in Klubs und Vorstadtkneipen augenzwinkernd auf "the little smuggler" an.

Die Bestrafung des vorwitzigen Journalisten folgte auf dem Fusse, und zwar in Form einer Paketbombe, die ein behelmer, verummelter Motorradkurier an **Dele Giwas** Haustuer in Lagos uebergab. **Giwa** wurde in Stuecke zerrissen, Frau und Kind kamen wundersamerweise mit dem Leben davon. Der als Auftraggeber des Attentats verdaechtigte Leiter des Staatssicherheitsdienstes SSS, Oberst Akilu, der in Ken Saro-Wiwas Roman als Alhaji Biga auftritt, wusste natuerlich von nichts.

Fuer jeden Dissidenten eine andere Hinrichtungsart

Diese Paketbombenexplosion, die ganz Nigeria erschuetterte, erschien als Titelbild des Kuenstlers Peregrino Brimah auf dem Einbanddeckel von Ken Saro-Wiwas Roman - eine ungeheure Provokation.

Natuerlich verbot sich eine plumpa Wiederholung dieser Attentatsvariante an dem Dissidenten, der es wagte, den Herrschenden eine lange Nase zu drehen. Es standen gewiss andere Eliminierungsvarianten zur Verfuegung, die sich wie im Falle Giwas in dezenter Anonymitaet haetten vollziehen koennen. Aber Saro-Wiwa war nicht **Giwa**, und so beschloss man, am verhassten Intellektuellen, den man schon im Mai 1994 in Hand- und Fussketten gelegt hatte und der trotz seiner drei Herzinfarkte nicht aufgab, ein Exempel zu statuieren, zumal der andere ebenso verhasste und hochqualifizierte Anwaerer auf einen Schauprozess, der Nobelpreistraeger Wole Soyinka, sich seiner Verhaftung durch die Flucht ins Ausland entzogen hatte. In der perversen, duesteren Gedankenwelt des Diktators, dem das Wasser bis zum Halse steht, war Ken Saro-Wiwas Hinrichtung ein zwanghafter kategorischer Imperativ.

Der Wahrheit zuliebe muessen wir noch eine der anonymen Liquidierungsvarianten ins Bewusstsein ruecken, die die Handschrift des nigerianischen Geheimdienstes tragen. Die Zeitschrift Time vom 23. Oktober 1995 berichtete darueber - in der Spalte fuer Todesanzeigen: "Ermordet: Alfred Rewane, 78, nigerianischer Geschaeftmagnat und ausgesprochener Kritiker von Sani Abachas Militaerregime, von fuenf Bewaffneten, die in sein Haus eindrangen, waehrend er beim Fruehstueck sass, ihn in ein Laken einwickelten und ihm aus naechster Naehe die Brust durchschossen. Chief Rewane, Besitzer mehrerer Weizengrossbetriebe in Lagos und einer der Hauptgeldgeber der oppositionellen National-Demokratischen Koalition, war vor kurzem dazu uebergegangen, in grossformatigen Zeitungsanzeigen Abacha, der bekanntgegeben hatte, er werde bis 1998 im Amt bleiben, dringend zur Uebergabe der Amtsgeschaefte an eine Zivilregierung aufzufordern. Oppositionelle Gruppen hegen den Verdacht, es handele sich um eine von der Regierung angeordnete Ermordung und bestehen auf einem unabhaengigen Untersuchungsausschuss."

Ken Saro-Wiwa wird in die Geschichte eingehen, und wo immer in der Welt Minderheiten um Freiheit und Menschenwuerde und um den Erhalt ihrer Heimat ringen, wird sein Name ein Fanal des Mutes und der Hoffnung sein. Oliver Stone will sein Leben verfilmen, waehrend die Propagandaorgane des diskreditierten Terrorregimes ihn auch nach seinem Tode noch als Terroristen diffamieren und Lady Shell, die Lady Macbeth des zwanzigsten

## Ein Leben im Alptraum

Jahrhunderts, im Rahmen einer weltweiten Schadensbegrenzungskampagne am liebsten noch seinen Namen ausloeschen wuerde. Doch nie wird sich Shell vom Verdacht der Komplizenschaft am Tode Saro-Wiwas und seiner Leidensgenossen reinwaschen koennen.

### Moerderische Schiessbudenfiguren

Auch den Diktator werden die traurigen Ueberreste seines Gewissens quaelen. Schaudernd wird er an den tollkuehnen Putschversuch der christlichen Minderheiten in der Armee aus Nord und Sued unter Major Gideon Orkan vom 22. April 1990 zurueckdenken, die das Hauptquartier des damaligen Staatschefs Babangida im Handstreich einnahmen, ohne seiner indes habhaft werden zu koennen - ein einzigartiger Vorgang in der an Militaerputschen so reichen Geschichte Nigerias.

Nicht ohne Grund hatte Saro-Wiwa die gesamte Generalitaet als einen Haufen Schiessbudenfiguren verspottet. Aber Morden geht ihnen leicht von der Hand. Die Ermordung Saro-Wiwas und seiner Mitstreiter erinnert fatal an die Erschiessung des gluecklosen Major Orkar und seiner Mannschaften, die ihren Henkern - ehemaligen Kameraden in gleicher Uniform - trotzig zuriefen: "Wartet nur! Andere von uns werden kommen und euch wegputzen!"

Der Autor ist **Journalist** und bereist seit Jahrzehnten Nigeria und andere afrikanische Laender.

**Load-Date:** January 3, 1997

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## Child protection

Financial Times (London,England)

December 17, 2001 Monday

London Edition 1

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**Section:** FT GUIDE TO THE WEEK ; Pg. 44

**Length:** 1089 words

**Byline:** By ROGER BEALE and SIMON GREAVES

### **Body**

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The second world congress against commercial sexual exploitation of children starts in Yokohama (to December 20). About 120 governments, as well as international and non-governmental organisations, are due to attend the congress, jointly organised by the Japanese government and United Nations Children's Fund.

Babangida appeal

The Nigerian supreme court in Abuja starts an accelerated hearing of an appeal that if successful will compel Ibrahim Babangida, the former military ruler, to answer charges linked to the 1986 parcel bomb killing of Dele Giwa, a journalist.

Seasonal example

The Department of Education and Skills is expected to make an announcement regarding the state of basic skills in the UK. The example of Christmas cards that fail to arrive because of the poor handwriting and spelling of their senders is expected to be used to highlight the issue.

Back in the saddle

Fox-hunting with dogs is expected to resume in England and Wales for the first time since its suspension at the start of the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. The League Against Cruel Sports expects a bill to ban hunting to be brought into the current parliamentary session.

Chainsaw trial

Robert Elmer Kleasen, who allegedly inspired the horror film Texas Chainsaw Massacre, is due before Bow Street magistrates in London for an extradition hearing brought by the US. Kleasen, 69, was convicted of the murder of a Mormon missionary and was sentenced to death in 1974 but this sentence was overturned because of a faulty search warrant. New evidence has led to a possible retrial.

Fish count

## Child protection

The European Union fisheries council meets in Brussels. The annual December meeting sets the total allowable catches for the next year.

## Science and ethics

The Unesco World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (Comest) meets in Berlin for its second session. It is expected to include discussions on ethical action in scientific research into water, energy, information technology, outer space and on youth in science. Former Icelandic president Vigdis Finnbogadottir, who chairs Comest, and Koichiro Matsuura, director-general of Unesco, will make speeches.

## FT Surveys

Kazakhstan; World's Most Respected Companies; Tanzania.

## Holidays

Bangladesh; Indonesia; Malaysia; Mali; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; South Africa; Turkey.

## TUESDAY 18

### Sulawesi solutions

Peace talks are due to begin on the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia. Violence between Christians and Muslims has continued for three years but a spate of deaths in the town of Poso has led the government to send an extra 2,000 soldiers to the area.

### Migrants' rights

International Migrants Day aims to celebrate the contribution made by millions of migrants to their host countries and their right to live in dignity and safety. The United Nations says more than 150m people - 2 per cent of the world's population - live and work in a foreign country.

### Caspian carve-up

The sixth working group meeting on the Caspian Sea is held in Moscow (to September 20). Deputy foreign ministers from countries bordering the sea - Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan - will discuss the ownership of the Caspian and, most important, the oil and gas reserves under the seabed.

### Peach problems

The dispute settlement body of the World Trade Organisation meets in Geneva to consider several disputes, including a request by Chile for a panel to examine Argentina's import restrictions on tinned peaches. The US and New Zealand are also asking for a second panel to examine Canada's milk management system.

### Looking to the stars

Jacques Chirac, the French president, opens a seminar in Paris on the future of space exploration organised by CNES, the country's space agency. The closing speech will be by Lionel Jospin, prime minister.

### Soar point

The world gliding championship is scheduled to begin in Mafeking, South Africa (to December 31).

### Monaco summit

The 12th Monaco World Summit is scheduled to take place. It is organised by the Crans Montana Forum. Topics include the management of globalisation; the influence of oil prices on the world economy; and regional economies in Russia.

## Child protection

Holidays

Bangladesh; Gambia; Malaysia; Turkey.

WEDNESDAY 19

Ecumenical meeting

Ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew, the Istanbul-based head of the Eastern Orthodox church, chairs a meeting in Brussels of Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious leaders. The discussions are part of an initiative launched by Bartholomew after the September 11 attacks to promote co-existence and co-operation among members of monotheistic faiths (to December 20).

China trading

China will today attend its first meeting of the World Trade Organisation's ruling general council in Geneva after joining the WTO on December 11. On the agenda are Iran's WTO application, blocked so far by the US, negotiating procedures for the new round of trade talks launched last month in Doha, Qatar, and Mexico's offer to host the next WTO ministerial meeting in 2003.

FT Surveys

Greece; Bahamas.

THURSDAY 20

Russian nuclear store

The first site for the storage of depleted nuclear fuel imported from abroad is scheduled to open in Russia.

Microsoft in Brussels

US software group Microsoft faces antitrust allegations before a European Commission hearing in Brussels. The commission is investigating whether Microsoft was deliberately trying to damage rivals by including its software programme Media Player in its Windows operating system and whether the Seattle-based company designed its Windows system to work better with its own servers.

Congo meeting

The World Bank holds a meeting in Brussels of international institutions and representatives of interested governments on the economic situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

FT Survey

Bosnia-Herzegovina.

FRIDAY 21

Japan's duty

Japan has said it will decide by today whether to impose trade tariffs on imported agricultural goods. The tariffs, aimed at protecting home farming, involve import duties for stone leeks, shiitake mushrooms and rushes used for mat-weaving. The proposals have sparked a row with China.

SATURDAY 22

Mont Blanc tunnel reopens

Child protection

The Mont Blanc tunnel, closed since 1999 after a crash that killed 40 people, is to reopen to car traffic.

SUNDAY 23

Comoros vote

People of the Comoros islands vote in a constitutional referendum aimed at settling a long-running crisis on the breakaway island of Anjouan by granting all three islands in the archipelago greater autonomy. Compiled by Roger Beale and Simon Greaves; Fax: 44 20 7873 3196

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2001

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## PARCEL BOMB KILLS NIGERIAN JOURNALIST ACCUSED OF PLOTTING

NEW YORK TIMES

October 20, 1986, Monday

Information Bank Abstracts

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**Section:** Section 2; Page 16, Column 4; (REU)

**Length:** 47 words

### **Body**

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Nigerian journalist Dele Giwa is killed at home in Lagos when parcel bomb explodes; Giwa had been interrogated by security police for allegedly plotting socialist revolution and importing arms; he founded weekly Newswatch and worked as news clerk for The New York Times in 1970's (S)

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