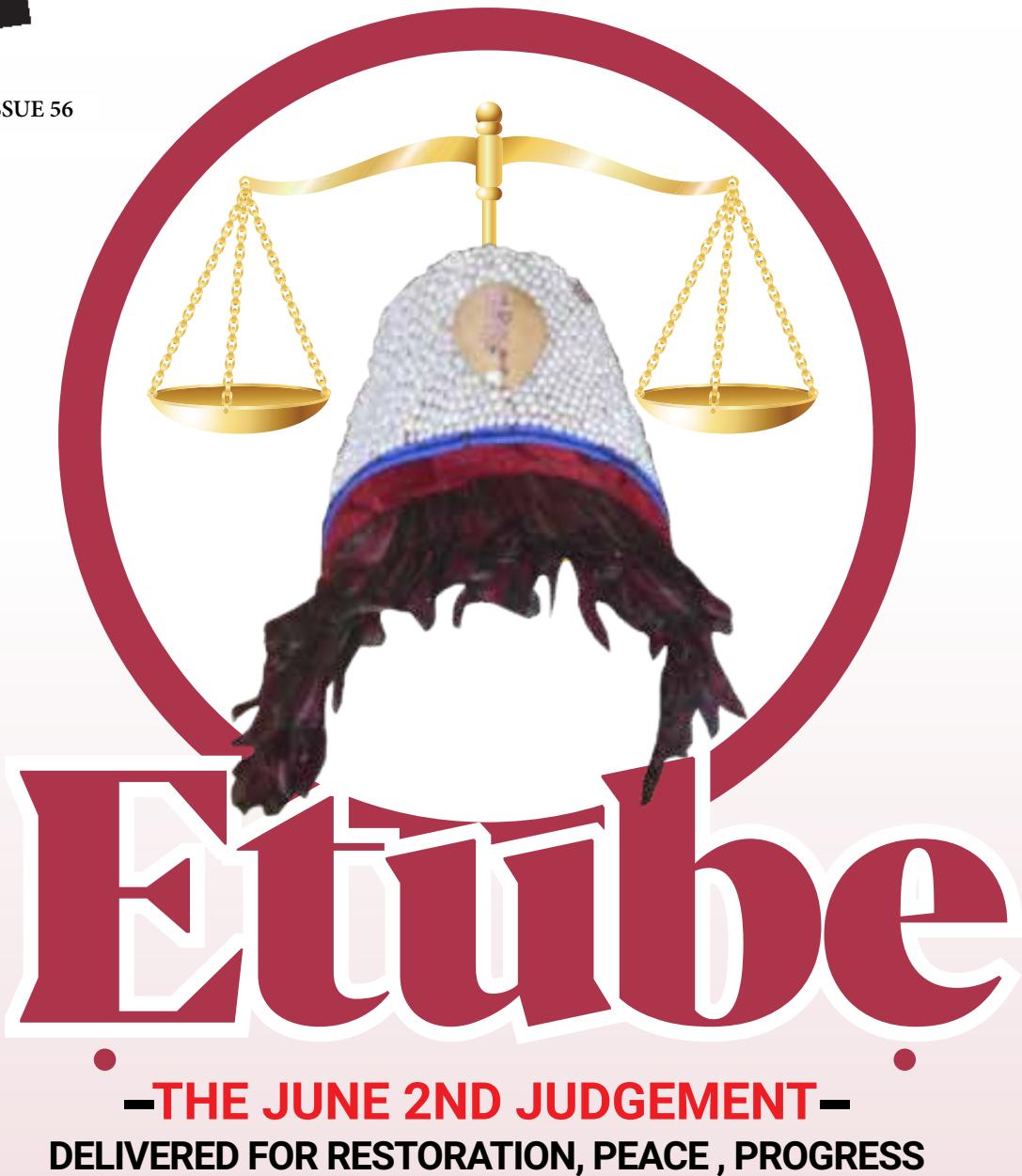




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MAY-JUNE, 2020

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BARR. MAKOLO DANIEL D.
COMR. AUSTIN OKAI
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BARR. FESTUS A. OGUCHE



AJAOKUTA
THE 1939 MEMORANDUM

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2019

PRESS RELEASE

ATTAH IGALA DEMANDS APOLOGY FROM CHANNELS TELEVISION

It was with great shock and serious embarrassment to the people that the Attah Igala Palace viewed the report on Channels Television News at 10pm on Sunday, June 14, 2020 concerning the interview granted by His Royal Majesty, Agabaidu, Attah Igala, Dr. Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni II.

The Palace which holds Channels Television in high esteem as one of the most respected News Platforms in Nigeria was terribly disappointed with the manner in which their reporter packaged and presented the interview with HRM, Attah Igala – the part of Attah Igala was chopped off only to present to the public what the reporter so desired, while leaving out the core message of HRM, Attah Igala which calls for peace, unity and proper education of our people on important aspects of history. What the Palace has done with the case and the eventual judgment, was to set the record straight and thank God the evidences tendered did the job and history is being corrected.

Again, the Palace is very disappointed at the reporter's copious cynical motive to mislead members of the public by sending out a video that suggests that Attah Igala was celebrating the court judgment when in real sense the video was not related in any way to the court judgment as pushed by the Channels Television reporter. If the Reporter needed a video clip he would have asked the Palace or at least verified any of such (in his possession) before putting it on air. Painfully, that video clip the reporter attached to that report was from a visit of HRM, Attah Igala to Lagos in 2017 – an event that is totally different from what the reporter sent out to the public via a respectable platform such as Channels Television.

For the record, what the Attah Igala has done was legal and the right way to go about issues in a civilized society. He is not the first to do this but he has to pursue this to a logical conclusion through the judicial system as the case has always been swept under the carpet. It is in pursuit of his fundamental human rights and records to be set straight – the history of Nigeria being taught in our schools is fundamental and should be revived. If it were, the noise going on about the judgment wouldn't have been as many would have long been exposed to the truth.

Even Atta Ibrahim Onoruoiza, the first Paramount Chief/Attah/Ohinoyi of Ebiraland was part of an investigation during the colonial era and it was

PRESS RELEASE

concluded that Ajaokuta was founded by an Igala and so he (Atta Ibrahim Onoruoiza) went further to propose the traditional structure be maintained by the lineage of the founder. All these records are there in the archive of the Northern Nigeria. In particular, Memos with reference No. 30631/69 (16th of February, 1939) and No. 851/19A (28TH February, 1939) from Kabba Province settled this matter of founders and owners of Ajaokuta.

Unfortunately, the Channels Television reporter, instead of staying with the key message of HRM, Attah Igala which actually originated from his own question during the interview (the recorded audio of which we have) decided to mislead members of the public through wrong video that has nothing to do with the story. We do not expect such unprofessional conduct from a reporter of a reputable news media like Channels Television.

The reporter would have stayed to the call for peace and the historical facts as stated by Attah Igala; Igala and Ebira (Igbirra) were never enemies; Igala Kingdom has always provided leadership and protection to many ethnic groups of the great Kwararafa Kingdom including Ebira; Igala Kingdom was long established before the settlement of Ebira in Okene and surroundings; Attah Igala had an Ambassador in Ihima before the arrival of Ebira from Koto after parting ways with their other brothers; The balkanization of the pre-colonial Igala State was designed intentionally to reduce the power of the revered Igala State. One of the negative impact is the continuous attempt to annex Ajaokuta because it fell into the old Kabba Province while other parts of Igala Kingdom were shared into other provinces thereby reducing the control of the Attah Igala in colonial arrangement of ‘divide and rule’.

So, in setting the record straight, our mission is restoration, peace, unity and progress of the people and the state.

On this note, the Palace demand an apology from the Channels Television and warned that henceforth, an interview with HRM, Attah Igala should not be treated like interview with any other person on the roadside.

Signed:
Onoja J. Okpanachi
President,
ARISE IGALA Grassroots Sensitization Initiative

Monday, June 15, 2020.



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**LEGAL APPROACH TO
RECOVER THE LOST DIGNITY
AND POSITION OF THE IGALA
PEOPLE IN THE SCHEME OF
NIGERIAN POLITICS**

BY FESTUS A. OGUCHE, ESQ.

46



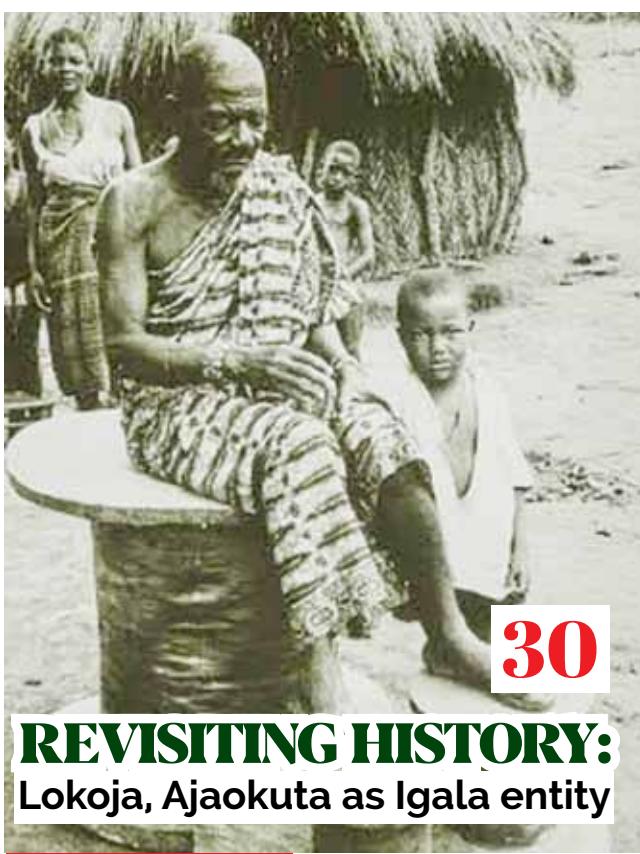
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THE JUNE 2ND JUDGMENT

Delivered For Restoration, Peace, Unity, Progress

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DR. IDAKWO MICHAEL AMEH OBONI

Agabaidu, Ata Igala & Chairman, Kogi State Council of Chiefs.

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To inspire a generational change that will give birth to a new breed of Igala people in the face of globalization thereby changing perspectives on selves as we consciously bring out the beauty in our people

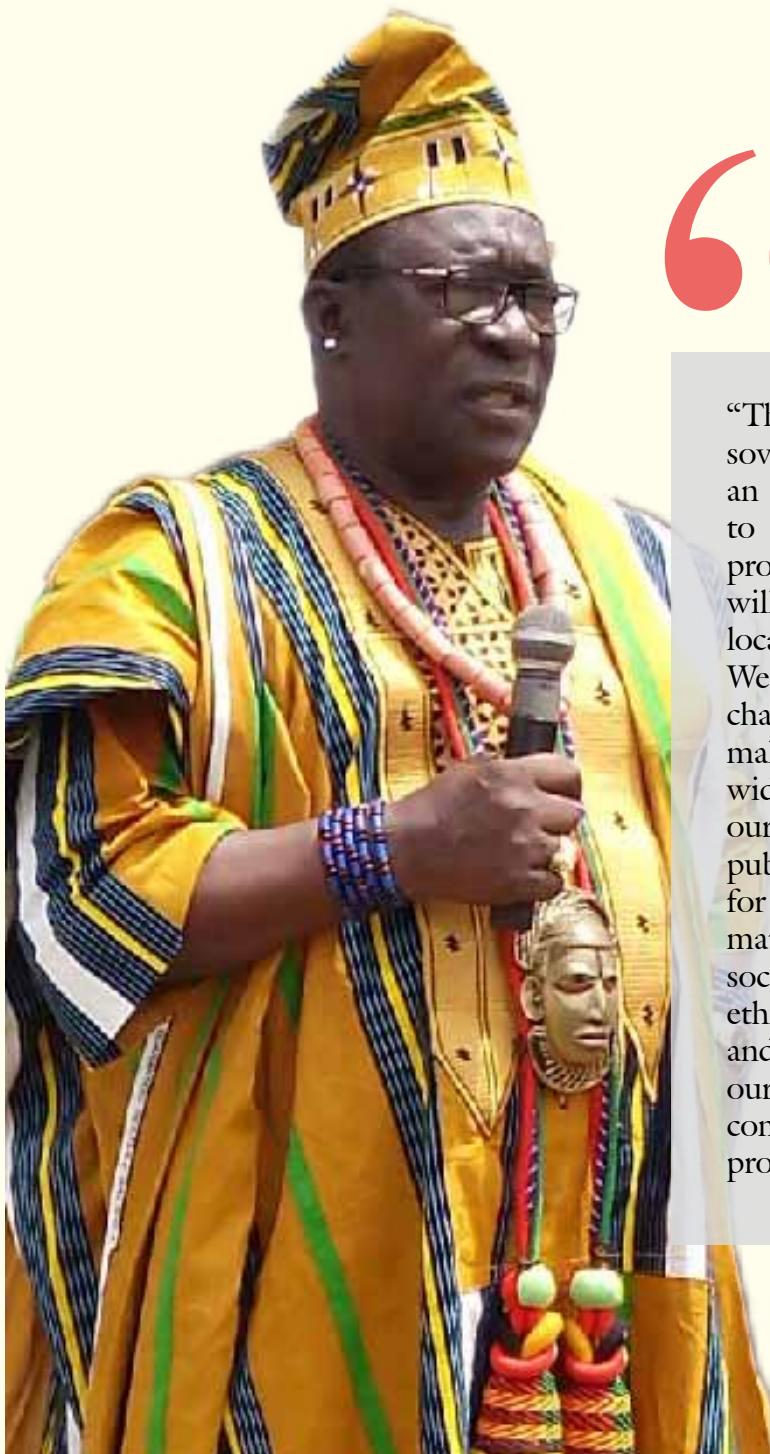
To be (and remain) the most informative, educative, entertaining, challenging, inspiring and authentic source of information on the past and current issues of Igala Kingdom and her people as the authoritative voice and image maker of Igala race via publications and media activities.

MANDATE

Our mandate is to Celebrate, Inspire and Challenge Igala sons and daughters at home and abroad into positive ventures for the benefit of mankind.

HRM, DR. IDAKWO AMEH OBONI II, JP **ATA IGALA**

Agabaidu, Ata Igala and Chairman, Kogi State Council of Chiefs.



“

“The hallmark of our royal sovereignty will be that of an eminent father, purposed to produce a principled and prosperous people. The people will play their rightful roles locally, nationally and globally. We will try to deal with the challenges at the local level and make our contributions at the wider levels by actively engaging our people on what is for the public good. We will need to care for the children – spiritually and materially, to restore family and societal values and appropriate ethics ...we call for renewed love and general forgiveness amongst our people, as an unforgiving community will not make progress.”

”

The quotation above is part of His Royal Majesty's Speech at the Third Anniversary of his ascension to the throne of his forefathers as Ata Igala in March, 2016 at Idah, Kogi State.

THROW BACK

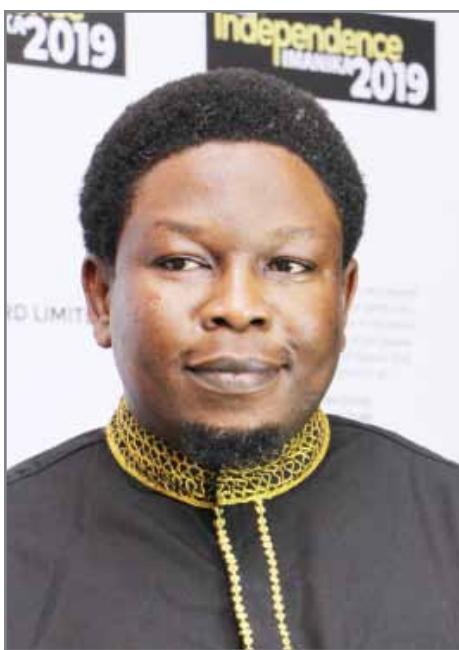
MISS IGALA 1963, 1964
AND 1965 RESPECTIVELY



Photo Source: Timothee

Something fundamental must have gone wrong in our socio-cultural system as a people in view of the giant strides attained in the past when compared to where we are today. What then should we do to get it right and be great again?

Arise!



ONOJA J. OKPANACHI

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR

DIVIDE AND RULE: THE BRUNT ON IGALA NATION MANY YEARS AFTER

The 'Divide and Rule' strategy worked "perfectly" for the British. Significantly in the balkanization of the strong pre-colonial Igala State which they (the British) felt gave them very tough time in actualizing their political and economic agenda in what eventually is today known as Nigeria. The negative impact of the 'Divide and Rule' strategy is still obvious on the Igala nation and we are yet to recover fully from the damages done many years after.

Strategically, seeds of discords were sown in the land as they know very well that the unity of the Igala nation at the time would hamper their smooth run of affairs in the country they wish to establish. So, they started out by separating the lands into various provinces – one in the South and the other in the North – they know very well that this people (Igala Nation) before their arrival have long established a political structure for themselves and the administration runs very well with the Attah Igala at the helms of affairs so one wonders why the balkanization since there exist a structure already. They didn't stop there, they tossed the people up and down and at every point, territories were lost and as result direct physical relationship with our people died along the line of boundaries of provinces and regions created for their selfish purpose. And, today, we have so many of our brothers in the Eastern flanks of the country that a journey through the Eastern states will leave one in awe. We are actually greater than these boundaries and it is for this particular reason that we (at ARISE IGALA) are calling for both traditional and economic relationships with our other relatives spread around other states of the country. It's a psychological warfare that we must consciously engage in for the good of all.

A time has come that we shouldn't be limited by these boundaries created for "smooth" administration. Having a conscious network of communication and meeting with ourselves will do us more good far more than the physical size of lands occupied. If we relate with those

in Anambra, Enugu, Delta et al in manners that will bring about strong cultural awareness and economic development, our political impact will grow and then, wherever our people are, they wouldn't be considered minority as it were being a deliberate design from the very beginning of the creation of the Nigerian state. Though the linguistics changes are there today and dialectical differences as a result, one common fact is our traditional bond – that we are one people.

The responsibility is now on us to begin to look beyond these physical boundaries so to put an end to those negative barriers that have hindered our progress so far in Nigeria. For those at home, the Idah, Ankpa, Dekina agenda have not taking us where we should be. So, why don't we break those barriers that were created for us by some people who wouldn't want to see us unite for progress? We have lost so much because of these barriers – look back and see how much we have lost – so much.

Dear Igala people home and abroad, the creators of these boundaries have long gone but they didn't go with our sense of reasoning. We still have ourselves and senses together. We can unite and be very great again. In this time we are in, synergy is key. Let's begin to make up for each other and build very strong bridges that will lead to solid economic and political front. Let's take advantage of our spread everywhere and begin to contribute from all those angles as a common front and only heavens know how much positive impact we will be making in this great nation, Nigeria.

One day, soon, the gathering will begin and the horizon will be broadening and these boundaries shall mean nothing anymore to what we can achieve as a people. This day will surely come and it will never leave us again.

Arise!

THE IMMORTALITY OF HISTORY...

“The past is never dead. In fact, it is not even past” – William Faulkner

The past, no doubt, is always with us. It will either condemn us or vindicate us. In fact, the past is immortal. People however think that the past should be erased and obliterated completely. How wrong. How ignorant. How dangerous. How foolish.

History really matters. It really does. History is a legacy. It is an inheritance. Like property, history can be bequeathed. History is like a window pane; it gives us a beautiful glimpse into the future.

Arguably, within the realm of reality, there is always a proximate and harmonious relationship between what is gone and what is to come. For what is, could be an extension of what was. Indeed, we are all products of history because all our experiences, dreams, and aspirations have connection with the past.

Igala has history, a very rich and colourful one, handed over to us by our forebears. This history, is sometimes written in blood and injustices. It is of war; it is of conquest. It is of victory and of defeat. In fact, sometimes, it is that of despair and bitterness. As a teacher, history has taught us many things, it's just that many of us are so recalcitrant, and are so unwilling to learn from the many lessons of the past.

If you have ever interacted with Ata Igala, His Royal Majesty, Dr. Idakwo Michael Ameh Oboni, the first thing you would notice about him is the fact that he has a very deep knowledge of history and geography. Agabaidu fully understands the place of Igala in history. He knows what belongs to Igala and will continue to strive through legal, civilised means, to get what is rightly ours.

Ajaokuta, Lokoja, Koton-Karfe belong to Igala Kingdom, Federal High Court has ruled. History has ceded to Igala what is rightly theirs.

In this edition, we bring to your reading pleasure the parts of history many sons and daughter are not conversant with. That history is the reason Federal High Court on June 2nd 2020, ceded Ajaokuta, Lokoja and Koton-Karfe to the Great Igala Kingdom. The Court understands history. Yes, history is immortal.

ARISE!!!

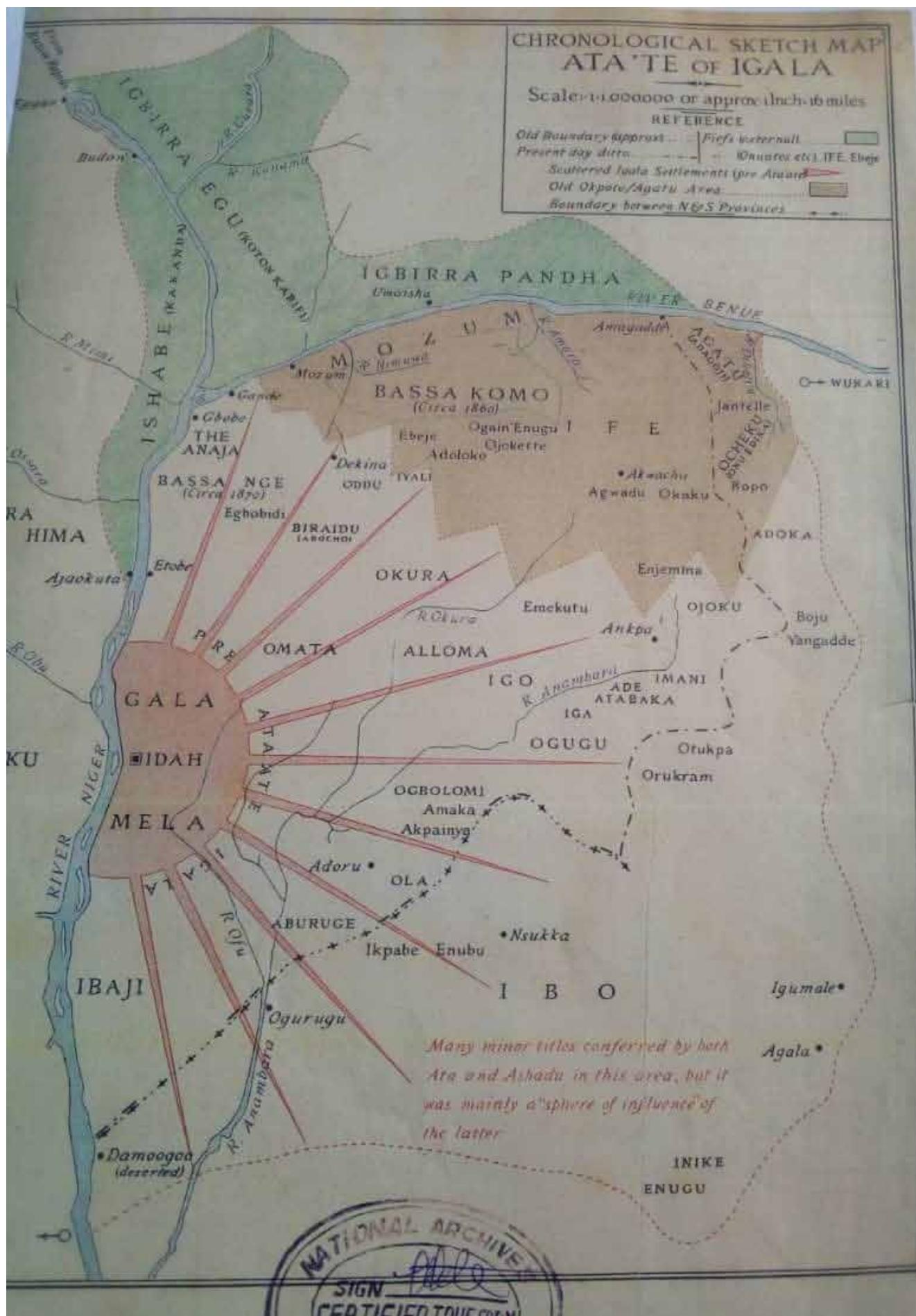
Nathan Oguche Emmanuel
Founding Managing Editor/Editor-at-Large
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• **-THE JUNE 2ND JUDGEMENT-**
DELIVERED FOR RESTORATION, PEACE , PROGRESS

The Tuesday, June 2, 2020 judgment of the Federal High Court sitting in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital was delivered for restoration, peace, unity and progress of the people and no other wise as seen or misconstrued by many with the aim of misleading and creating unnecessary wars amongst the people of the state.



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THE JUNE 2ND JUDGMENT

Delivered For Restoration, Peace, Unity, Progress

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In fact, the court ruling only confirms what is true but has been ignored for many years because of politics and in some other quarters for economic reasons. However, as it is always said, "truth will always be truth and one day, it will be made known to all". So, the court judgment just did the exposition and in revealing the suppressed truth, the reactions that follow keep exposing the poverty of knowledge of history by many whom ordinarily one would have thought know very well.

Unfortunately, the approach of some of our brothers in the state (Kogi) have shown clearly that we are not aware of one common thing that binds us together but so many that divide us – in the first place, the Igala and Ebira are of the Kwararafa Ethnic

stocks and the position and role of the Igala people as shown by history has been to always provide leadership and direction for the younger ones; the other smaller ethnic groups of the Kwararafa Kingdom and this, Igala has done for all including the Ebiras.

The journey to the current settlement of Ebiras at Okene was not a direct one - they left Idah to Koto and after some developments which was not going down well, some left Koto and relocated to their present location. At the time of this journey, there was no defined umbrella leadership for the people of Ebira who eventually settled at Okene axis. What existed then was the Clan Headship structure. Meanwhile, at Koto, Ohimege was the head and other smaller communities/groups/clans were headed by the Ohis. Until 1917, the Ebira (Okene) traditional structure was clan based.

So, it was the British Government who appointed a central figure for the Ebira for smooth representation of their interest and by so doing, they were able to manage the various autonomous villages. The first person

that was appointed was Ouda Adidi of Eika who ruled until 1903. After him, Omadivi was appointed. Omadivi was a clan head, he was in the good book of the British – he resisted the Jihadists but embraced the British trade. His authority over other clan was less, not very impactful. After Omadivi's demise, Adano was appointed but his stay in power was very short.

In 1917, a new leader was appointed for the Ebira people in the person of Ibrahim Onoruoiza. The chosen Ibrahim by the British was also called Attah of Ebiraland. He was a maternal grandson of Omadivi. During his reign, the British introduced indirect rule as a political system to govern the territories under their control. This development was very significant as it increased the authority of Attah of Ebiraland, Ibrahim Onoruoiza. With this development, he became the first paramount chief of Ebiraland and he used his position as head of the Ebira Native Authority to bring all the various autonomous villages under his political leadership.

However, this effort of Attah Ibrahim didn't go down well with some members of the community so he experienced fierce opposition from some quarters. The political intrigues that followed led to the exile of Ibrahim Onoruoiza, the Attah of Ebiraland in 1954. The location of the first primary school in the community was in his palace and for this strategic reason, many of his children were educated and some of them became significant in the regional and federal governments, holding prominent

positions. Ibrahim Onoruoiza, Attah of Ebiraland was succeeded by Sani Omolori. The later held the title of Ohinoyi of Ebiraland.

The above brief shows clearly that the Ebira (Okene) Traditional Structure was more or less a recent development and this is not unconnected to the timing of their settlement in the area unlike their brothers in Koto from where they moved to their present location. This is one of the reasons why the people of Kogi state today should begin to consider more of those things that unite us as a people than those that divide us. Again, those who are always interested in twisting history do so for their immediate ego, political or economic interests not really for the people's.

And, now, coming to the issue of the June 2nd judgment delivered by the Federal High Court in Lokoja, the Kogi state capital, what the court has done is justice because the evidences are there for all the claims made. The evidences were not just made up for the purpose of the case filed in the Federal High Court but were part of our development as a people. History has kept records of these evidences and they are there to any length and height of judicial processes. On this note, the efforts of any one contrary to what the court judgment specified are more or less what the Igala referred to as ETUBE – because it will be a waste of time to attempt and/or think otherwise.

The court will work with available evidences and for the Igala Kingdom,

the evidences are in abundance home and abroad. Also, worthy of note here is that the case was between Attah Igala Vs Federal Government of Nigeria and Kogi State Government. So, why the bickering and unnecessary worry when the Attorney General of the Federation and the Attorney General of Kogi State are the only ones that can appeal the judgment on behalf of the two governments in case they are not pleased with the outcome but I doubt if they think otherwise. So, being a judicial matter, it's nobody's business to begin to call for war or attack on persons in a civilized society – queries and worries should be channelled to appropriate quarters instead of misleading the ordinary people who may be over zealous to make wrong moves that will endanger their freedom and peace because we are in a society governed by laws.

One of the common but very funny stories that many peddle around is that the Igala people came to join them in the Kogi state from Benue – this only tells of how myopic these people are; they actually lack true knowledge of our journey in the Nigeria Project. The Igala nation has always defended their territories from both external and internal aggression and/or any form of invasion. In 1830s, they survived the British invasion and bombardment. In the 1840s, the Igala Kingdom outmaneuvered and survived the Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio. The result of the Jihad saw massive influx of the Bassa refugees to Dekina and the Abejukolo-Ife axis of the Igala Kingdom. So many instances of resistance abound

and as a result, when the British fully took over political structures of the dreamed Nigeria in 1911, they planned and consciously designed strategies to weaken the Attah Igala's power, authority and influence over his territory hence the need for them to balkanize the kingdom and distribute them into various provinces – Two major blocks were created – one to Onitsha Province in the South and the other to Kabba Province in the North. This intentional move continues even after the colonial reign that Igala Kingdom was still being tossed up and down and some of the negative impact is what we have internally today as the Ankpa, Idah and Dekina agenda amongst the people because a foundation was laid for the continuous division of the people in almost all political issues.

In the colonial process of balkanization, some Igala territories were left out in the South and some in the North during the return to Igala Kingdom as a single political entity. A kind of harmonization took place in 1918 by Sir. Richmond H. Palmer, the then governor of the Northern province who restored the Igala territory back to Attah Ogwuche Akpa eventually leading to the formation of Igala Native Authority. The Ajaokuta and Lokoja being some parts of Igala territories left out are some of the issues resurfacing today and the truth must definitely manifest someday irrespective of how long it was suppressed. Therefore, this judgment is for restoration, peace, unity and progress of the people and nothing less.

AJAOKUTA:

THE 1939 MEMORANDUM

The debate about the ownership of Ajaokuta or about the first settlers is not a new topic. It has lingered for a very long time and at a point, even the British government had to investigate alongside some locals to ascertain the true ownership of the land. This unfortunate debate keep resurfacing because of the wrong foundation earlier laid through the balkanization of Igala Kingdom into separate provinces just to weaken her. However, each time an investigation is being carried out or related cases went to court, the end results have always been in favour of the Igala Kingdom and her people.

In view of the above, one of such investigations carried out in the colonial era by the District Officer, Mr. Dewar and Atta of Igbirra, Ibrahim Onoruoiza (Head, Igbirra Native Authority) eventually led to the following findings and then the proposals. These are contained in the memorandum No. 30631/69 of the 16th of February, 1939. So, the Acting Resident officer of Kabba Province in Lokoja, in his Memo No. 851/19A on 28th February, 1939 to the leadership of Northern Provinces, Kaduna wrote that the Atta of Igbirra and the District Officer (Mr. Dewar) have completed an investigation into the question of the Village headship of Ajaokuta, and have put forward proposals, with which he (Mr. Dewar) agree, for its future administration.

Some of these findings and proposals are here below in summary:

- Ajaokuta is a cosmopolitan village founded by Igala from the opposite bank of the Niger. Its first Village Head was one, Obansa, an Igala.
- The Atta (Ibrahim Onoruoiza) propose to appoint the eldest surviving son of Obansa (The Igala man) by name Labiyo, to the Village headship and presidency of a strong council.
- ...anything in the nature of an Igbirra councillor, imported from Okene to supervise local administration is to be avoided, for it would not have the full support of the people.

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS:

- Igala and Ebira (Igbirra) were never enemies.
- Igala Kingdom has always provided leadership and protection to many ethnic groups of the great Kwararafa Kingdom including Ebira.
- Igala Kingdom was long established before the settlement of Ebira in Okene and surroundings.
- The balkanization of the pre-colonial Igala State was designed intentionally to reduce the power of the revered Igala State. One of the negative impact is the continuous attempt to annex Ajaokuta because it fell into the old Kabba Province while other parts of Igala Kingdom were shared into other provinces thereby reducing the control of the Attah Igala.

26 February, 39.

K A S B A

THE SECRETARY,
NORTHERN PROVINCES,
KADUNA.

L O K O J A.

Ajekute Village Head.

Referring to paragraph 2 of your memorandum No. 30631/69 of the 16th of February, the Atta of Igbirra and the District Officer (Mr. Dewar) have completed an investigation into the question of the village headship of Ajekute, and have put forward proposals, with which I agree, for its future administration.

2. Ajekute is a cosmopolitan village founded by Igala from the opposite bank of the Niger. Its first Village Head was one, Obansa, an Igala.

Although it is of comparatively recent foundation it is accepted by the people that the ward heads constitute a college of electors for the village headship. The attention of the District Officer was invited to a passage in the Provincial Annual report for 1935 by Mr. Rosedale, reading "The Village Head (of Ajekute) is not satisfactory and the District Officer is considering the possibility of formation of a Council instead".

3. The Atta proposes to appoint the oldest surviving son of Obansa, by name Lebiyo, to the village headship and presidency of a strong council, made up of ward heads, the leaders of the various communities. The individuals on the council

should

should be in receipt of small salaries and the Village Head's salary should be reduced from £4 to £2 a month. I consider this to be the best solution and, in such a place as Ajaokuta, more likely to be successful than a council of equal members without an acknowledged leader; anything in the nature of an Igbirra counsellor, imported from Okene to supervise local administration is to be avoided, for it would not have the full support of the people.

Lobiyo would also be President of the Ajaokuta Native Court (Grade 'D'). An appendix detailing the members of the Council is attached.

4. It should be mentioned that at the first meeting held at Ajaokuta the people seemed to prefer one Mohammudu, the Igala ward-head, to be appointed chief. The Atta, however, showed marked disapproval of such an appointment on the grounds that he was unsuitable and had no traditional claim. (It is significant that Mohammudu gave evidence against the late Village Head). Thereupon the ward-heads accepted Lobiyo as being the candidate with the best claim to the leadership, and his appointment was approved by the Atta and District Officer, subject to His Honour's confirmation.

5. As Ajaokuta is not directly affected by Igbirra law and custom I do not consider it necessary to await the completion of Mr. Frempton's investigations. It is desirable that the village should settle down as early as possible and instruction be given to the Village Head and council in the management

management of day to day affairs to effect an improvement on recent administration. I therefore ask for His Honour's approval of the proposals in paragraph 3 above.

Sgt. M.S. Zulu.

ACTING RESIDENT,
KABBA PROVINCE.

PES.

No. 851/19A

Lokoja, 28 February, 1939.

Copy to:-

D.O. Igbirra Division.

For information with reference
to my memorandum No. 851/16 of the 28th
of February.

ACTING RESIDENT,
KABBA PROVINCE.

By above:

14/3/1939
8/3/1939



From SECRETARY, NORTHERN PROVINCES
To The Resident, Kabba Province,
Lokoja.

No. 31036/12

Kaduna.

Date 10 March, 1939

W.A.R.L.D.

unlike.

Ajokuta Village Head

With reference to your memorandum No. 851/17 of the 28th of February, I am directed by the Chief Commissioner to convey His Honour's approval of the proposals in paragraph 3 thereof.

I. P. O. June

for Secretary,
Northern Provinces.

Home Copy Dr. Igbirra for necessary action

No. 851/20A
Lokoja, 16 March, 1939.

Copy to:-

D.O. Igbirra Division.

For information and necessary
action with reference to my endorsement
No. 851/19A of the 28th of February.

P. 16 A.

ACTING RESIDENT,
KABBA PROVINCE.

Per

IGALA MẸ WỌL'ỌJILE



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FEDERAL HIGH COURT VERDICT: Why aggrieved parties should seek redress in Court

Dr. D. D. Makolo Esq.

I read with dismay the speech made by the Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Bello over the judgment delivered by the Federal High Court sitting in Lokoja on the 2nd June, 2020 in the case between His Royal Majesty the Attah Igala and the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Government of Kogi State.

As a lawyer and a social critique, I am compelled to make this response in reaction to the ridiculous speech credited to the Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency, Alhaji Yahaya Bello over a clear and unambiguous judgment given by the Federal High Court sitting in Lokoja on Tuesday the 2nd of June 2020.

The governor chose to give the Judgment of the Court of Competent Jurisdiction the colouration of imperialism. This is unfortunate. Imperialism has no bearing whatsoever with the Judgment of the Court.

The Court is meant to interpret the law and enforce citizens' rights, based on incontrovertible evidence placed before it, which the Federal High Court, Sitting in Lokoja, Kogi State has done in this case. Let justice be done, though heavens fall, is a legal maxim, which dictates that, justice must be realized regardless of consequences. This, the Federal High Court sitting in Lokoja has complied with in this judgment.

Incidentally, the Kogi State Government was a party in this case, having applied on its own volition to be joined as a party. It apparently participated in all the processes and proceedings leading to this judgment.

The Kogi State Government and the Governor had the opportunity to present their case, which they did and lost.

It is unfortunate that the Governor, rather than comply with the clear and unambiguous judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction and seek ways for its enforcement/implementation or exercise his right of appeal, has resorted to name calling, blackmail and whipping up public sentiment with the sole aim of pitching the ever peace-loving citizens of our dear great state against themselves forgetting that we are all brothers and sisters in the first place.

We the Igalias are saying to all our brothers and sisters, as well as the well-meaning Nigerians and Kogites that, as democrats and law abiding citizens, we believe in the rule of law and are committed to it and not tow the path that the Governor of Kogi State has chosen.

Since the Court has spoken in favour of the Attah of Igala, we should all take necessary steps to enforce and implement the judgment given accordingly. The only option available to the aggrieved is to appeal the judgment.

God bless Kogi State. God bless Nigeria and her Judiciary.

Dr. Makolo is a Human Rights Activist and a Social Commentator and a Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

...Your Reaction, Reply, Comment, Letter to the Editor via
ariseigala.opinion@gmail.com

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Ata Igala As Chairman, Council Of Chiefs: Tom Ohikere And His Sensless Rants

Usman Okai Austin

Former Commissioner for Information, Kogi State, one Tom Ohikere, has called for the review of the status of Ata Igala as Chairman of Kogi State Council of Chiefs. The notorious loyalist to Governor Yahaya Bello made this statement through his facebook page in reaction to the judgement of the Federal High Court which ceded Ajaokuta, Lokoja and Koton-Karfe to Igala Kingdom.

The truth of the matter is Ajaokuta, Lokoja and Koton-Karfe were parts of the parcels of Igala Kingdom that were ceded to the British colonialist by the then Ata Igala, His Royal Majesty, Ameh Ocheje. No wonder, the Federal High Court ruled in favour of Agabaidu Ameh Oboni II.

Although, as expected, the Federal High Court verdict has elicited different reactions from members of the public, most of the reactions were emotion-laden and have no place in the court of law.

Ohikere was one of the first ignorant persons to jump into the public domain to spew venomous and uncouth utterances which were capable of inciting war and division among peace loving people of Kogi State. This, he did,

without bridles to his wagging tongue, amassing for himself heaps of half-witted yet calamitous gullible followership. In a saner clime, irresponsible and social misfit like Ohikere should be cooling off in police cell for inciting members of the public.

If Ohikere can think well, he should have known what the law said about the status of Ata Igala as Chairman of Kogi State Council of Chiefs. However, his laziness will not allow him to search for the truth. Schedule 2 of the Chiefs (Appointment, Deposition and Establishment of Traditional Council in Kogi State) Law 2006 which became operational on 8th June, 2006 shows that Ata Igala is the permanent President of Kogi State Council of Chiefs. This position cannot be reversed through legislative procedure.

Ohikere has displayed high level of ignorance by calling for the removal of Ata Igala. Igala people are not only civilised, they are peace-loving people who have played the big brother role since the creation of Kogi State. For approaching the court to correct all the wrongs of the past, Ata Igala has re-affirmed the well-known peaceful demeanour of Igala people.

Of a truth, reactions from those that

were affected by the court verdict were expected, but I expected an old man like Tom Ohikere to thread with decorum, civility and above all, learn from Ata Igala peaceful and civilised approach.

Ata Igala instituted the case since 2017 and it was against the Federal Government and Kogi State, not against the Ohinoyi of Ebira or Ohimege Igu (Koton-Karfe) or any group in Kogi State. Instead of vitriolic remarks to incite the good people of the state against each other, the best reaction should be to join in the suit with the Federal Government to appeal against the judgement because it is a civil matter. That Ata Igala chose not to incite people over what belong to his forebears is a good example for Ohikere and his fellow noise makers to follow. Ata should therefore be commended rather than vilified.

It is also unfortunate that the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Adoza Bello, who ought to be neutral chose to align with his kinsmen by describing the judgment as a form of "imperialism". This is not only absurd, but quite unfortunate. Perhaps, the Governor erroneously thinks he is an Alpha and Omega who should be feared even with a stolen mandate that cannot stand the test of time.

Any attempt to subvert the law of the state and blackmail the highly venerated Ata Igala, His Royal Majesty, Dr. Michael Idakwo Ameh Oboni will be resisted through civilised means. Those who made attempts to rewrite history over the years should realise that their cover

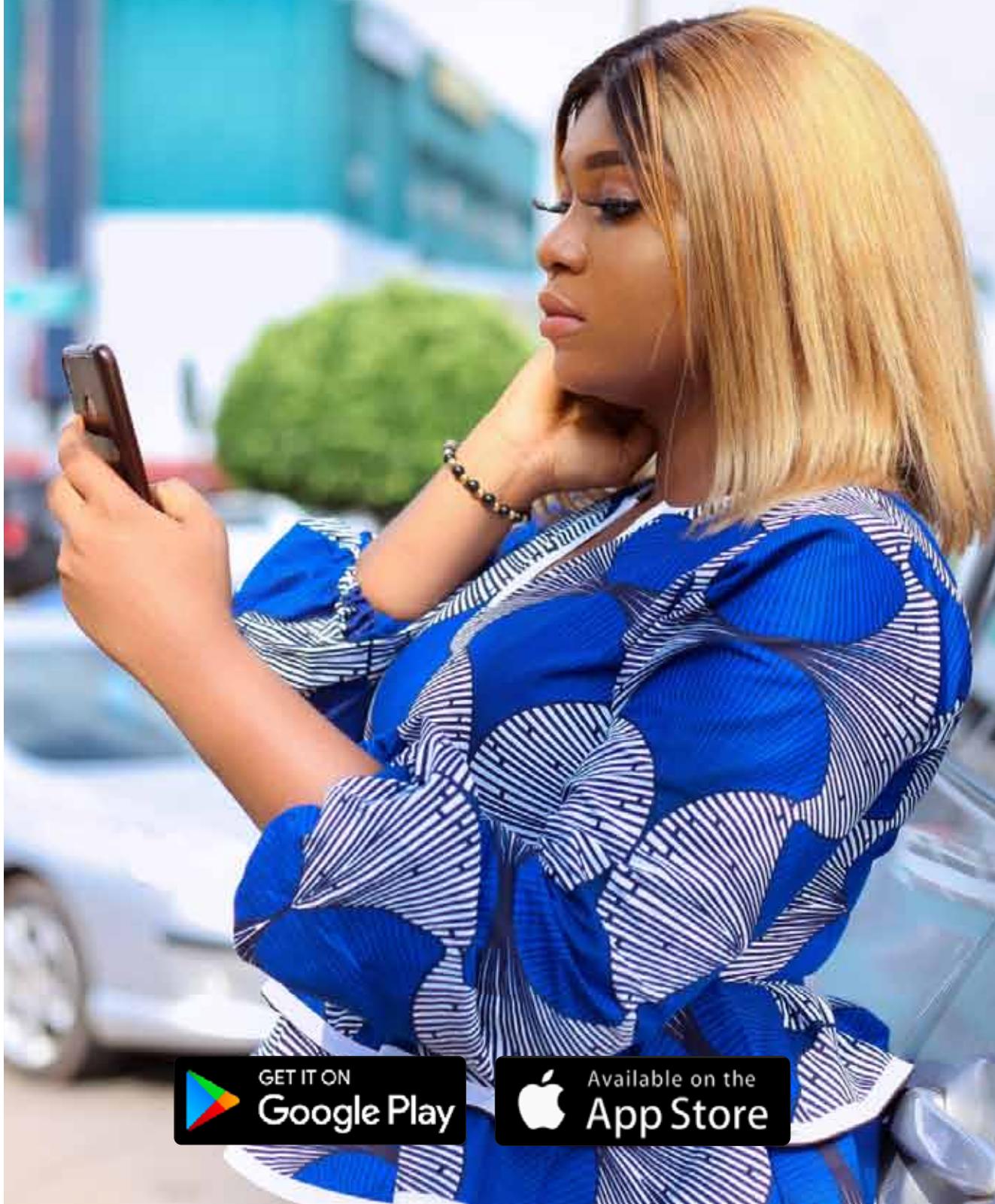
has been blown and their purported falsehood cannot stand in the court of higher jurisdiction.

I advice Ohikere and his ilk to pursue their inordinate cause through civil ways instead of inciting the people to violence. Ignorance is not an excuse and evidences supersede bragging and ranting before the court of law.

***Comrade Usman Okai Austin
Is an Abuja-based Human Rights Advocate.***

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REVISITING HISTORY: Lokoja, Ajaokuta as Igala entity

Hon. Felix Solomon Omachoko

The Igala Kingdom, also known as the Kingdom of Idah (An-Ìgàlá), is a pre-colonial West African state situated within the Middle Belt also known as the North Central Nigeria. The kingdom was founded by the Igala people, the Ata as their King, Father and Spiritual head with its capital at Idah. Igala influenced Idoma people, Ebira, Nupe, Koton Karfe, Bassa, Kakanda, Agatu, Igbos, Yoruba and the Jukun people. As handed down through oral tradition and corroborated by them, Igala is said to be the father of Idoma, Ebira Tao, Egbura Igu, Kakanda et cetera, as they are said to have descended from His Royal Majesty, Ata Idoko Aganapoje.



Archival Picture

The Igala state reached its political and commercial crescendo when it became a leading exporter of choral beads, horses, medicine, skills and of course, slaves to the coastal region.

By the late 15th century, the Igala country held socio-economic, political control of the entire Benue, Ajaokuta, Lokoja down to the northern Igbo mini-states. From Opi (archaeological site), Nskka, Nsugbe, several Igbo communities on the mambara River, the lower Niger, through Okpanam to Ahaba the Igala held sway. Trading out post with nicha and the Ij middlemen were fully established. The mythical Omeppa, Inenyi Ogugu set up garrison at Opi (archaeological site) and several Igala warlords played their part in the build-up of the Igala colonial takeover of these entire regions.

Until the decline of Igala power, the Ochidoma, Attah Ebira, Ezes of Enugu, Akpugo, Bassa, Koton Karfe, Nkpologu, Ibagwa Ani and Opi continued to receive their titles from Idah; investiture, installation and confirmation of their offices were done by the royal blessing of Ata Igala in Idah. According to legend, the kings were only validated when they returned home with Igala choral beads. The choral beads also known as staff of office is believed to be imbued with protective charms to ensure longevity and security; it also help to bolster the ego of the wearer. There were also periodic royal visits to the Ata Igala to pay tributes and to strengthen diplomatic ties

and inter-group relations, renew allegiance, and assured insurance against slave trade raids.

Technological Prowess of Igala

In terms of indigenous technology, the Igala soldiers built factories (forges) for manufacturing Dane-guns, ironworks, carving, introduced arrowheads with tips poison from sting ray; cloth knitting, terracing of Nupe, Koton and Nskka hillsides and brought in a well-developed political and social hierarchies. At this time, Igala Empire had become a cultural exchange hub for other emerging states; the influence was felt all over the middle belt.

Many of the northern Igbo and middle belt state settlements have lineages with Igala names, cultural practices with marked Igala modifications and adaptations; the use of Igala circular basket in contrast to the Igbo rectangular types persists till this day.

According to legend, when the Europeans wanted to settle down around Idah, they went to the palace of the then Ata Igala, Ata Ome Ocheje for settlement approval. During their conversation, Ata Ame Ocheje told the interpreter in Igala; "Adodo kpai -enefun emin, kawnma kuma Lo toko -Eja." Meaning, "We cannot live with the white here, tell them to go to the Fish farm area". "Lo to Oko Eja" which means "Go to Fish Farm" was later corrupted by the white, as it was slightly altered to "Lokoja." Indeed, Lokoja belongs to Igala people as far back as 7th Century.

When Ata Ame Ocheje first met with the European explorers in the early 1840s, although the contact started with the preceding Ata Ekele Aga in 1830; as recorded by G.M Clifford in his book, "the Igala Chieffdom" the Ata said; "The Rivers belong to me along way up and down on both sides and I am king. The Queen of white men have sent a friend to see me. I have also seen, just now a present that is not worthy to be offered to me for a servant. God made me after his image; I am all the same as God and he appointed me a king over the Earth."

According to history, there was a treaty signed on behalf of Ata Ame Ocheje. Ata does not sign agreement with human being. The treaty was drawn in 1831. That was the earliest treaty ever drawn in West Africa but

this was not signed until 1841 when the issue of the land around Lokoja and its environs that was requested by the queen of England was resolved.

Ata Ame Ocheje was gracious to give Lokoja to the British at the cost of 700,000 cowries (of which only about 160,000 cowries (equivalent of forty five pounds at that time) were paid. The balance was never paid before the expiration of 99 years. On the 6th September, 1841, the treaty was signed on behalf of the Queen of Great Britain by Bundus Trotter, Commander Williams Allen, Capt. Henry, Commander Bird Allen and Williams Cooks Esquire and the representative of the Attah. "The treaty between the Queen of England and Igala country", evidence is available in Arewa House, Kaduna State, British Archive and Ata's palace till date.

Lokoja eventually became the first Federal Capital of Nigeria after Lord Lugard briefly sojourned at Itobe and Ajaokuta, which was still in the heart of Igala Kingdom. Cenopaph in memory of Nigerian soldiers who fought the first and second world wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945); weapons used during Nigeria Cameroun war (1914) and East Africa (1918), are there at the Cenopaph in Lokoja) which were formerly in Itobe under Ata leadership.

The real word "Itobe" is "ETE'OBE" later corrupted ITOBE; meaning cradle of commerce, was the most vibrant market in the Niger area and beyond.

“
Many of the northern Igbo and middle belt state settlements have lineages with Igala names, cultural practices with marked Igala modifications and adaptations; the use of Igala circular basket in contrast to the Igbo rectangular types persists till this day.



Archival Picture

Ajaokuta; Aja (market), Okuta (stone), meaning; Stone-market or market where there are stones. This is because Okuta (stone) are not very common on the opposite sides of Ajaokuta. 'Aja' means market but Yoruba calls it "Oja" which means multitude of people or large group of people in Igala.

For instance, the title of Ata Oja of Oshogbo means- the father of multitude of people of Oshogbo. If Oja means market, then it is difficult to explain what Attah-Oja could mean. It can therefore be said that Ata as a title was an extension of Igala's influence over other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Till date, there are relics and artefacts to show that Ajaokuta belongs to Igala. According to legend, there was an Igala deity known as "Okuta Ihiabe

used to safeguard Ajokuta Land by Ata Ayegba Oma Idoko as far back as 15th century. The spiritual stone is located by the railway bridge across the Niger. The Deity, "Okuta Iyabe" is said to be celebrated yearly as a festival by the Igalias in Ajaokuta, and it is under the custody of the Aju Ocholi Royal family.

In 1900, Lord Lugard raised the union-jack flag in Lokoja, indicating the British indirect rule system in Nigeria. It was the wife of Lord Lugard, Flora Shaw who first described the area as "Niger area" which became Nigeria as it is till date.

According to legend, the first identified Nigerians were Igalias, the Ebiras, Idoma, the Oworo, Agatu, Bassa, Koton Karfe, Igbos, Nupe, Kakanda among others. The first Nigeria logo/flag of palm tree and hippopotamus depicts Igala environment.

When the colonial government was fully established, they recruited and used mainly Igala to move from one place to the other to convince and capture other Chiefdoms. Sometimes, they experienced stiff resistance, which resulted into fighting.

It's amazing when late Onuh (Igwe) Agbedo of Ete, the Igala speaking area of Enugu State was narrating his experiences on how they captured Ugbokolo in the present Benue state. They were not strong in the north because, the chiefs control the people and on capturing those chiefs, the subjects would not have problem of followership.

Anywhere they captured, they put their district officer. When the whole north was conquered they moved Nigeria Federal Capital to "Asaba" which was still part of Igala kingdom so that they can have access to the eastern region. The battle was so difficult in the east because the Igbos did not value or regard traditional authorities.

When they finished capturing the whole

“ Till date, there are relics and artefacts to show that Ajaokuta belongs to Igala. According to legend, there was an Igala deity known as "Okuta Ihiaibe used to safeguard Ajokuta Land by Ata Ayegba Oma Idoko as far back as 15th century.

of east using Igala and others from the north and middle belt, they once again moved the Federal Capital from Asaba to Calabar to reach out to the south-south region and finally to Lagos.

For security reason, General Murtala Mohammed moved the Federal Capital of Nigeria to Abuja. If you are following the story carefully, it is crystal clear that before colonial rule in Igala kingdom as described by G.M Clifford, "the core or proper Igala people controlled the major parts of Nigeria then". Till date, there are some landmark features at Lokojo and Koton Karfe that suggest it to be an Igala controlled areas. aside from the name "Lokoja" which meaning we have earlier explained. Another point to note is, "IGA-ANAJA".

The "Iga-Anaja" which in Igala dialect means "Anaja's Garden" later got corrupted to "GANAJA." Ganaja remains an Igala entity. Anaja is a name of

“ The real word "Itobe" is "ETE'OBE" later corrupted ITOBE; meaning cradle of commerce, was the most vibrant market in the Niger area and beyond.

an Igala Chief assigned to the area sometimes in 1831 by Ata Ekele Aga.

Likewise, the place called "Adankolo" is an Igala entity. Adankolo was a name of an Igala chief in that area before he passed on. His real name was Adah Okolo, which was shortened to Adankolo.

Igala Has a Special Place in History

Igala has a special place in history. No wonder, in the early seventies (70s), there was a seminar held in order to fashion out a Lingua Franca for Nigeria; a Yoruba professor of Linguistics defended the Igala's position. According to him, it is the Igala language that should be adopted as Lingua Franca for Nigeria. The reason is that most Igala words are found in other languages in Nigeria and beyond.

Between 9th and 17th Century, Igala had one of the best indigenous colonization in Africa; Idah became the people's Rome, the center of civilization and learning. The most important resources in Nigeria during the pre-colonial era were the two Rivers. The most cherished and strategic point to behold and even occupy was the confluence area.

"ODOGO THE FIRST STOREY BUILDING IN NIGERIA" is another historical Monument in Igala kingdom that must not be despised. Odogo is a historical edifice, a tall tower used by the Ata's security details in those days for war surveillance on the activities of the enemies around Igala kingdom.

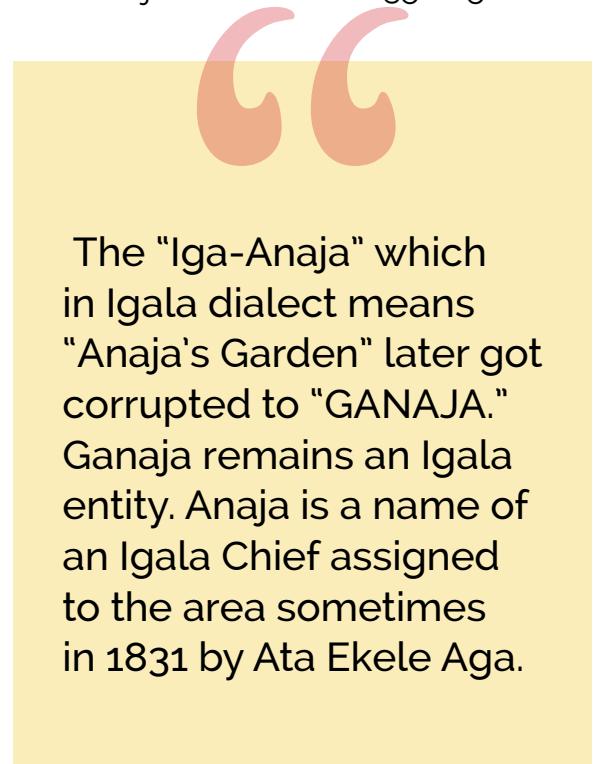
It is said that the first storey building in Nigeria was built in 1842 (about 178 years ago) in Lagos, Badagry by Reverend Henry Townsend under the supervision of Reverend C.A Gollmer. Meanwhile, The Igala Odogo Storey building was said to be built by Ata Idoko around 12th Century

(Over 500 years ago) and has survived the blizzard of the sun, rain, and wind and it is still standing in Idah till date.

Names of Past and Present Ata Igala

*Abutu-Eje - 9th Century

1. Ebulejonu- Oma Abutu Eje -10th century
2. Aganapoje- Oma Abutu Eje -11th century
3. Idoko- Oma Aganapoje -12th century
4. Ayebga- Oma Idoko-13th century
5. Akumabi- OMA Ayegba-14th century
6. Akogwu Oma Ayegba 15th century
7. Ocholi - Oma Ayegba 15th century
8. Agada Elame- Oma Ayegba -16th century
- 9 Amacho - Oma Akumabi 16th century
10. Itodo Aduga - Oma Akumabi 16th century
11. Ogala - Oma Akogwu 16th century
12. Idoko- Adegbé Oma Ocholi- 17th century
13. Onuche - Omacho- 17th century
14. Ekelaga Oma Ogala-1835
15. Amocheje Oma Itodo 1835-1856





Archival Picture

17. Akwu Odiba- Oma Idoko 1856-1870
18. Okoliko- Oma Onuche-1870-1876
19. AmaAga- Oma Ekelaga-1876-1900
20. Ocheje Onokpa- Oma AmeOcheje- 1900 -1903
21. Oboni Akwu - Oma Odiba - 1905-1911
22. Oguche Akpa- Oma Okoliko - 1911- 1919
23. Atabo Ijomi- Oma Amaga - 1919-1926
24. Obaje – Oma Ocheje- 1926-1945
25. Umoru Ame- Oma Oboni- 1945 - June 23rd 1956.
26. Aliyu Oma Obaje - 20th Oct. 1956- July 16th 2012.
27. Idakwo Michael - Oma Ame Oboni - 2013 till date.

Anyone viewing the map of Africa and zooming into Nigeria will see one of the greatest features; the two great Rivers that met at a point (Igalaland) and

together journeying down Southwards into the Atlantic without the waters mixing. Each one maintaining their white and dark colours separate identities until they flow into the Delta region and emptied into the Atlantic.

The Problem of Igala; how it all started

There was strong resistance to the European passage on the River from Igala leaders, who kept an eagle eye on the River. As a result, the colonial master (Administrators) became hostile in their policies against the Igala Kingdom. Hence, the beginning of the Igala Nation's problem with the colonial Masters. First, they strangulated the Igala homogeneity and planted seed of discord amongst them. The colonial masters balkanized and dispersed the Igalas into three provinces, namely; the



Archival Picture

Idah district (which was merged with Onitsha district), Ankpa (was merged with Munchi Province) and Dekina, was joined Nasarawa province. In 1918 during the reign of Attah Oguche Akpa, the three districts came together and were merged with the Northern Province but not without some damages in which some of the Igalias were ignorantly left behind in the present day Enugu, Anambra, Nasarawa, Benue, Delta and Edo states, thus drastically reducing the numerical strength of the Igala Nation. This singular act by the colonial masters has been the main cause of Igala's loss of strength and voice in national matters.

Looking back on the influence of the Igalias before the creation of Nigeria. The Attah Amocheje (an Ancient ruler of the Igala kingdom) was one of the earliest rulers (in present day Nigeria) to sign a treaty with the British. He signed this treaty with the British as early as 1841.

twenty years before Lagos signed hers with the British in 1861. The Igalias also controlled all activities and navigation on the Niger River at Idah many years before the advent of the Europeans. Attah Ameh Oboni, another past ruler of the Igala Nation was known to be very brave and resolute. He was revered for his stiff resistance to the British Imperialists, and his struggles to uphold the autonomy of the Igalias.

Furthermore, in 1963 during the national head count, the Igala tribe was declared the NINTH (9th) largest ethnic group in Nigeria despite her reduced geographical spread, and consequently listed among the national languages.

The prosperity of the old Igala nation left behind a society that is endowed with abundant historical relics which tells the stages of civilization, architecture, culture, settlement, pattern etc.

HISTORY



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THE EVOLUTION OF THE ONU IKE TRADITIONAL TITLE IN AJAOKUTA

The Onu-Ike is the traditional title of Ado'che (commonly referred to as Ado'chi) ruling house of the Ikere settlements in Ajaokuta. The Ado'che descendants who are known for their hunting prowess are of the Aju-Ocholi royal dynasty of Igala Kingdom.

In the course of their hunting expedition, they migrated to Agumagu in the present day Omala Local Government Area of Kogi State. After several decades, they moved to a place which they called Ojuwo-Anyoka, North of Itobe and later crossed to the western flank of River Niger which they named Agumagu after their original settlement in Omala in the 16th century. From there, they relocated to a flat hill top which they referred to as Ane-ek'ele, they were later joined by their other kith and kin from Gbagana. The hill top was eventually known as Ane-ek'ele ki d'Ojuwu (meaning a piece of land on the mountain) and the people on the hill were later called Ikere People.

The Ado'che people paid tribute to the Attah Igala through their leader on a regular basis. The appellation Onu-Ike (meaning Chief of Tusk) was given to Ado'che by

the Attah Igala who was inspired by the regular tribute to him. Ado'che was one of the children of Ohiemi Obogo (Ocholi) and descendant of Ayegba Oma Idoko. The Ado'che people were accorded the salutation – Ajode O'che in recognition of their hunting prowess of wild animals like elephants and the common salutation of Onu-Ike is Dooga!!!

History has it that Ado'che adorned his hands and legs with elephant tusks to the extent that he could no longer move out of his domain. So, as a matter of practice that connotes honour, he was dragged in a canoe on land up to the bank of River Niger from where he was paddled to Idah. Overtime, the path created by dragging of the canoe on land resulted in gully (channel) within the area downhill after downpour. The canoe's path was referred to as Ikpa Oko (Kpako).

Following the death of the first Onu-Ike in 1879 at the Ikere hill, his son, Achegede was appointed to succeed him but on acting capacity (not coronated). Achegede and one of his sons, Aguba had visited Attah Igala, Akwu Odiba before his death. Consequently, the stool became vacant for

several decades. On descending the hill top, Aguba and his kith and kin founded settlements in North and South forming some of the native towns of Ajaokuta – Achimkpa, Kpako, Kodogi, Omifun (Diboku), Waya, Oguro and more recently Akpamira and Ofunene respectively.

However, the descendants of Ado'che resident in the North and south of Ajaokuta native town came together and decided to revive the stool in 2017, and as a result, Yusuf Attah Ahmed of Aguba (Oba'ito) lineage was enthroned as Onu-Ike II.

The stool of Onu-Ike is hereditary and it is ascended to by those who belong to the royal lineage. And, succession to the throne is rotational among the four royal lineages of Aguba (Oba'ito), Obaro, Obaje and Ogunubi. The title has a rotational succession of the male line of descendants of Ado'che dynasty.

As a beaded chief, Onu-Ike is regarded as the leader and custodian of the entire people's culture. He is assisted by Gagos and Council of Elders who are involved in decision making and enforcement of law and order in the community. They also help to preserve tradition and custom of the people in their various areas of authority. The Onu-Ike, Gagos and Council of Elders therefore play very active roles in the traditional institution of the people.

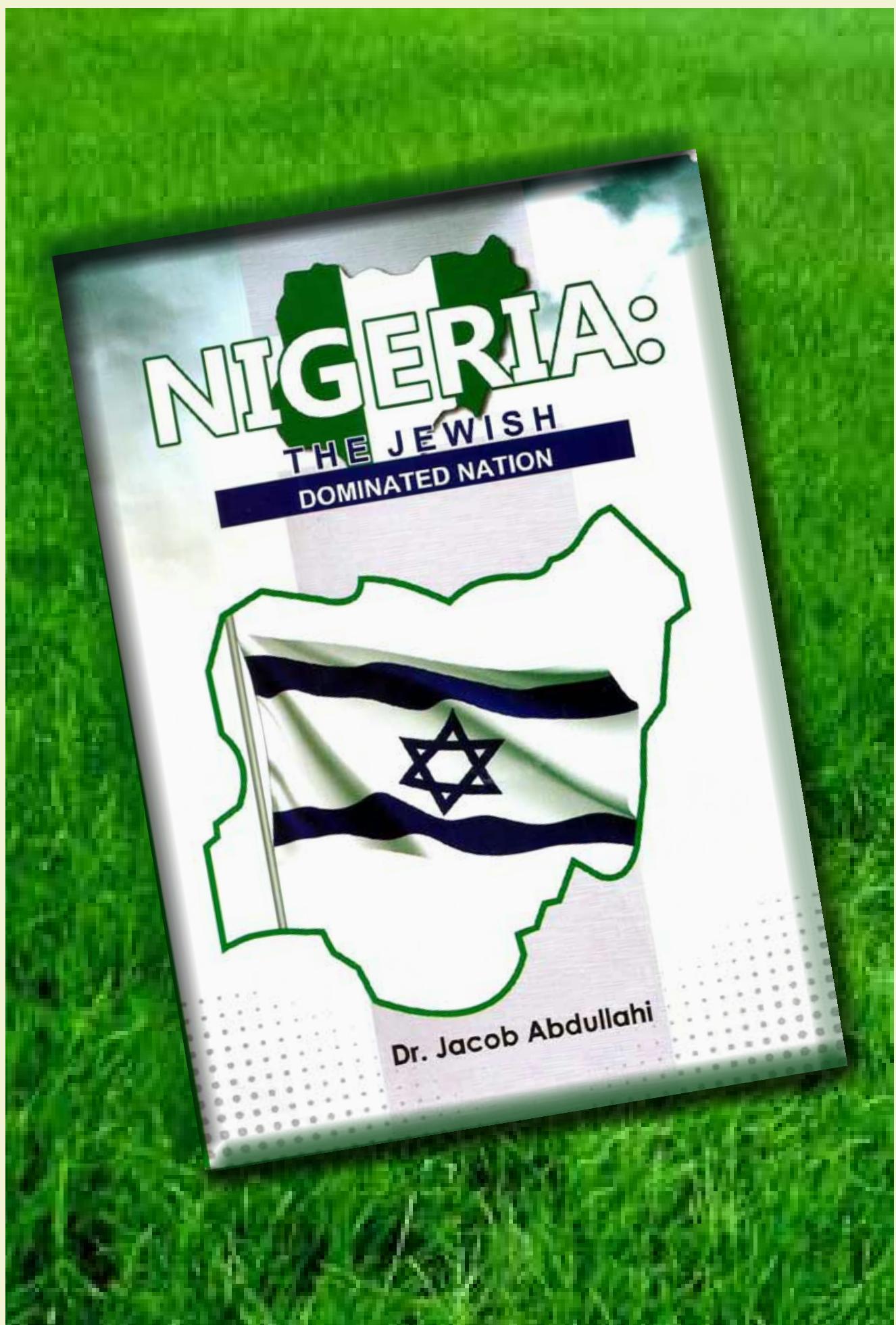
The advent of colonial rule and the establishment of multi-national corporations such as the Royal Niger Company which later metamorphosed into United Africa Company (UAC), John Holt etc. at the bank of the River Niger saw the location of a market on a flat rock top at the riverine area which is visible for boats conveying traders to the emerging market which was eventually

known as Ajaokuta (meaning market on stone, stone market or rock market in Igala language). The name Ajaokuta was later adopted as the general name for the area and other dependent settlements, and today, Ajaokuta is the nomenclature for the Ward, District and Local Government Area.

With the rapid population growth, Ajaokuta as a prominent town for commerce and industry, it assumed a metropolitan nature where other tribes such as Nupes, Kakandas, Yorubas, Hausas and the Ebiras came to settle with the Native Igalias and the few Bassas allies in Ajaokuta, hence the cosmopolitan nature of the place till date.

To complete the historical fact, it is pertinent to say that in the very foundation of Ajaokuta town, a street was named Gbagana in recognition of the people's initial settlement in Gbagana today located in the Omala Local Government Area.

ADO'CHE DESCENDANTS OF AJU-OCHOLI ROYAL DYNASTY IN AJAOKUTA



This book is a conscious effort of a great mind that dares to go deeper into many centuries back to trace origins of people who are today scattered everywhere on the planet earth.

It's a great insight that definitely broadens one's reasoning in terms of linkages amongst the people using languages, geography and history. This book is no doubt an opener into a research that will proffer solutions to the brotherhood of man thereby leading to peace and unity amongst various people who are actually one but time and journeys from centuries past have separated them in many forms.

The author, Dr Jacob Abdullahi is a Philanthropist, Medical Scientist who has invented the only curative drug for HIV/AIDS. He was born in Agojoeju in Biraidu District of Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. Dr. Jacob Abdullahi is a Prince from the Attah Ekele lineage with a crowned title of "UMAKU ATTAH IGALA". He holds Masters Degree in Immunology. His efforts to save humanity from terrible diseases, ignorance and poverty have been overwhelming. He is happily married to Mrs. Rahab and their union is blessed with five children.

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+234 (0)803 313 9270



Dr. Jacob Abdullahi, The Author



BEING THE TEXT OF SPEECH CUM LECTURE DELIVERED BY CITIZEN AKWU UMAR GOODMAN FCE, CHAIRMAN OF UJACHE IGALA ASSOCIATION, THE CONVENER OF IGALA SYNERGY CONCEPT ON THE 19TH JUNE 2020 AT IGALA UNITY HOUSE, ANYIGBA

I accepted the responsibility to organize this crucial family discussion with more than ordinary pleasure, you know why?

I had a dream that one day all sons & daughters of the great Igala Kingdom living in the North, South, East and West pole will come together under one umbrella with renew vigor to form ROCKS OF SOLIDARITY, as a matter exigency to propel the development and advancement of their father's land to make it GREATER.

That am exceedingly excited today is not because the long overdue family heart to heart talk is now a reality, but that it is taking place at the nick of time with the right people in attendance.

According to John Maxwell "Coming Together is A Beginning" today is the foundation of great union and synergy we need to accelerate forward

I say congratulation to all of us for this epoch achievement, our gathering here today is as symbolic as it is symbiotic, according to the Igala dictum "abenelo ta bene che le" (planners are more than executioners) because without working plan, you will have nothing to execute. Also the English metaphor says "if you fail to plan, you have planned to fail"

With the coming up of this particular meeting, the future of our Kingdom is rest assured, this meeting will not only seal our Union, it will produce a working plan (template) for the generations yet unborn.

The major task that will be accomplished at the end of this discuss, is putting into motion the machinery that will galvanize all our potentials to become a force (energy source) for our speedy socio-economic development and advancement.

Today is meant to give us much more than what all the days gone has taken from us.

We must be ready to make personal sacrifices as leaders. A leader is always keeping two graves; one to bury the tantrums coming from in and out of his community as well multiple allegations from mischief makers whose stock in trade is **DISTRACTIONS** and the second grave is the normal type, where to go and rest eternally when called to Glory.

We must be quick to remember that, there is no leader anywhere that is perfect, no Nation ever that have no challenges, but what made some areas better than others (more developed) is the people from there, it is not possible for strangers to come and develop your place, it is the people through the cooperation of all that will make it easy. If people continue to do wrong thing for 20 years they will continue to have bad result for 20 years, there is no MIRACLE that can change the result.

The only and sure way to succeed is to work together with singularity of purpose, we need connectivity and collectivity to succeed, we need to synergize to be cohesive before we can make progress.

The same John Maxwell went further to postulate that "Staying together is Progress" there is no doubt about it; we are already staying together here in this hall, this is the first time that the leadership of various associations of Igala extraction are sitting on round table to discuss family issues, is this not a big progress?

Maxwell was not done yet, but ended up the Theorem this way "Working Together is Success" there is no how a people, will work together genuinely and will not succeed, except if they are working without set GOALS, the easiest way to succeed is through collaborative efforts, the advanced nations anywhere in the world made it big via collaborative efforts.

There is no matter how big a group is that can succeed without networking. Sentiments are bound to exist among human beings who are not perfect, but it should not be allowed to divide and polarize one family that are joined together by blood. If a leader must succeed, he should continue to build bridges across waters, amend fences to make sure that the people are always together, co-existing peacefully and work in unison. We need cooperation and understanding to succeed.

It is easy for many Ants to kill Elephant but practically impossible for one Ant to kill an Elephant.

UNITY IS KEY; IT IS THE MAJOR INGREDIENT FOR THE SUCCESS OF A GROUP.

We have no reason not to work together, Mr. A group need B group, B group need C group, D need E, vice versa, provided we have similar GOAL.

All Igala Associations home and abroad are the same, name is just matter of identity, the goal is one and the same, **DEVELOPMENT, DEVELOPMENT & DEVELOPMENT**, this is the **HARD FACT**, so we have every reason to work together as far as development is the **KEY WORD**.

We are one beloved family with one agenda and must speak with one voice.

If this be the case, then we must have to abide by the rules of engagement if we are genuinely out for service delivery. Participation in community service is voluntarily, you serve under worst condition of service without personal gains, it is the fact we all know and

agreed with.

But those who are dedicated and have devoted all their energy and are magnanimous with their time to contribute to mankind's wellbeing, posterity will adequately equate them their portion in the yet to be written history and their names shall be engraved in dazzling colors.

According to Simeon de Beauvoir "Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity".

We must not fill the space with our intuition where the answer is meant to come from the people we are serving, we are the servant of the masses and not masters, what matters most in the lives of servants is the ability to read the mood of your master (masses) and do the needful as faithful servants.

Our activities, actions and conducts as community field workers should not often be guided by the imperfect constitution of various associations, but by the ethics, custom and core values of our society.

There are few things leaders must not lack; Patience, Vision, Resilience, Initiative & Innovative skills.

In the nature of time, there are moments whereby the doors of opportunity open up to let in people to make a choice. Let us see this meeting as big window of opportunities. We have packages of it here with us now, but it will take people with vision to see them. We have the one for change, correction, accountability, learning, forgiveness, leadership, talents & skills, love, to make amends, start afresh, to reconnect, to unite and to synergize.

I think the best choice for us today is that of **UNITY & SYNERGY** for us to mitigate the effects of the present hardship from the economic quagmire of our place and global pandemic of the moment.

It is my earnest belief that at the end of our discus today, we shall come up with not just **THINK TANK** as usual that will add more to the problems on ground, but the **THINK TANK THAT THINKS (TTT)** which will provide solutions

Thank you all and welcome.



LEGAL APPROACH TO RECOVER THE LOST DIGNITY AND POSITION OF THE IGALA PEOPLE IN THE SCHEME OF NIGERIAN POLITICS

BY FESTUS A. OGUCHE, ESQ.

LEGAL APPROACH TO RECOVER THE LOST DIGNITY AND POSITION OF THE IGALA PEOPLE...

In view of the current development, there was a great need for us to revisit some of the recent past strategic efforts and as a result, the high level one-day seminar organized by **Igala Strategy Team, Ukomu Igala Organization and Indigenous Equity Foundation** on Wednesday, November 21, 2018 at Chida International Hotel, Abuja with the theme, 'Legal Approach To Restructuring Nigeria Based On Historical Facts' becomes very critical. At this event, Barr. Festus A. Oguche did great justice to the discussion. The event's primary objectives are; to remind the people about their origin, to tell the people about the origin of Nigeria Project - how it started and the people that started it, to fashion ways to recover our lost grounds through peaceful means and legal action, to create awareness about the principality of the land of Nigeria and to restructure Nigeria where the monarchs will have constitutional roles in governance of Nigeria.

The event was inspired by the Igala Strategy Team led by Prof. Lucy J. Ogbadu and Prof. Godwin Ogbadu as coordinated by Dr. Sunday Uhiene with very strong support of Ukomu Igala Organization. The then National Leader of Ukomu Igala Organization, General

Patrick Akpa (rtd.) gave deeper insights into the efforts made so far to bring our people together for the common good of all and expressed confidence that continuous discussions of this nature will surely get us to our desired destination.

Also, the National President of Igala Cultural and Development Association (ICDA), Abubakar Sadiq Amodu spoke on various issues including the efforts being made to rebuild the IGALA HOUSE (at that time) as he welcomed the initiative of the Igala Strategy Team as a way to go if we must witness the positive change so desired for our dear land.

The Kwararafa Council delegates were also present with very good and encouraging reports made so far on the unity project of all the peoples of the old Kwararafa Empire. Dr. Adi Agbu Atosey and Barr. Gabriel N. Tsenyen gave enough update that will help in the unity project.

For the records and deeper insights into vital issues of our dear land, we have the full paper delivered by **Barr. Festus A. Oguche** here below for you and everyone concerned.

I had profound thoughts when Dr. Abdullahi sent this topic to me as my point of discourse going by the miasma of issues that would arise. This is so because the entirety of the Igala essence transcends the contemporary political landscape that is Nigeria as its glorious antecedents override and surpass the current reality of its existence.

To construct a legal position in this vein, entails a revisit or construction of the Igala socio-cultural and political vistas, specifically from a histo-cultural and political perspectives. It requires bringing to bear in this analysis, the myriad of the social, political cum internal and external factors that rubbed off negatively and precipitated its decimation as a veritable nation state and colonial power some centuries ago, and the extent to which its rape and ravishing reduced it to its current miniature position.

The Igala nation was a nation state recognized under international law, and this is evidenced in the several treaties entered into with other nation states, particularly Great Britain on equal parity. The Attah Igala, was a sovereign power of the mould J. S. Boston described as 'holding all the ramifications and accoutrements of sovereignty and political authority'. The early adventures into the African hinterland, particularly along the West Coast of the continent all had their mandate firstly, on the discovery of the two great rivers, the Niger and the Benue, and secondly, the search for the personage that holds the ultimate title and overlordship without whose authority navigation and trade activities were nearly impossible – from Ibn Batuta, 1353 to Leo Africanus 1556. The description of the great cities on the

banks known to the external world were Timbuktu and Idah. This is also evident in the works of the first Association formed in England for promoting discovery in Africa which comprised of Ledyard and Lucas – Major Houghton, Mungo Park, the Lander Brothers (Richard and John), (even though they never went beyond Bussah), Lieutenant W. Allen, Macgregor Laird and Mr. Beecroft. In his book – Peoples of the Niger-Benue confluence, Armstrong had revealed strong indications of the Igala paramountcy in the ethnographic survey of Africa.

The great explorations opened up the hinterland in such manner that the overlord and principality of the two great rivers was easily identified - and all voyages and discoveries were thereafter directed at Idah, and the Attah's palace. W.B. Baikie had in his 'Narrative of an Exploring voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Benue' depicted the scenario of a city where the sun never dims within the confines of the Benue-Niger confluence. There was the voyage of 1831, which inspite of all the entreaties for trade from the representatives of the English Monarch, Gaabaidu Attah Ekeleaga refused to bulge. Then came that of 1841, which met with a more amenable and less hostile Attah Ameh Ocheje, and so the Treaty of Cession was made and executed. A further Treaty was entered into at the instructions of Attah between Great Britain and Anaja-Gbobe over the control and Governorship of Lokoja at the instance of Great Britain. See Crowther, Samuel and Schon J.F – journals of an expedition up the Niger and Tshadda Rivers in 1854 – London, 1855. It was that treaty that provided the inroad to British penetration of the hinter land and subsequent colonization of the country.

Then began, the gradual decimation and plundering of the resources of the nation state. From the different battles between local merchants and the Royal Niger Company, the attacks on trade routes to the bombardment of Idah in 1899 by British forces (Idah was virtually deserted).

Attah Onakpa, inspite of all his innocence was banished to exile in Asaba.

Premeditated internal wrangling and strives were ensued and internecine wars and struggles weakened the fundamental structure of the empire. Then came the takeover of the territories comprising the Protectorate, and the Colonialists found good opportunity to weaken the structure the more and systemically constricted the overarching power of the Attah. They succeeded in reducing Gaabiadu's prestige, honour and authority to mere rubbles. At a point, Attah Igala became a mere district head. J.S. Boston had recounted how at a particular point fingers were pointed at Gaabaidu by British merchants of the Royal Niger Company for masterminding piracy and robbery activities along their trade routes which turned out to be a typical subterfuge of giving His Majesty a bad name in order to send him to the gaols.

The British authorities met an Igala nation state under the suzerainty of the Attah Igala, with a territory that encompasses almost the entirety of today's Federal Republic of Nigeria. Sultan Bello admitted to this fact which was well alluded to in Burdo Adolf's – A Voyage up the Niger and Benue – London 1880. Journal of African Society Vol. 7, 1907. They know and understand that the territories within and at both banks of the Rivers Niger and Benue to far flung territories all the way down to the ocean belong to the Attah Igala. It was

actually the transaction over Lokoja that gave them the foothold to the gradual and consistent debilitation of the Igala State.

A territory with such vast geographical expression was reduced to a radius that was a shadow of its old self. Later there was to be further tinkering with the Igala territory, which saw Idah district lumped with Onitsha province and the rest in Kabba province. When they finally were joined again, they were all grouped under the far away but unstable Munshi province. By then Nsukka had been excised from the territory, and so also the Idoma, Igbira and Nupe territories. Then came the creation of states where major fiefdoms of the Attah Igala Ajaokuta and Lokoja were taken away from Gaabaidu – (which battle is currently in the Law Court). At that point Lokoja, Ajaokuta and its environs which are unarguably the Attah's estate were in Kwara State, while the rest were placed under Benue State. The effect of this balkanization was a gradual but steady fragmentation of the Igala territory into several chiefdoms and entities thereby further disintegrating the Igala essence and existence from its territorial grandeur.

The amalgamation of the protectorates in 1914 had a terrible blow on the Igala more than any other nation or group. It saw very many Igala core traditional communities truncated and lumped in the southern protectorate and other provinces. Iga, Ette, Agejawjaw, Ogurugu, Okutu, Unade, Itchi Echorio, Ibegwa, Akpanya etc., are just to name but a few examples.

Brought down helplessly on its knees by a deliberate operation of colonial administrative policies that corrode upon its essence, power and grandeur, the Igala nation found itself in a serious cul-de-sac,



L-R; Arc. Chief Gabriel Y. Aduku, Prof. Godwin Ogbadu And Prof. Lucy J. Ogbadu

culminating to the suicidal end of its most celebrated and flamboyant monarchs, Attah Ameh Oboni I.

And here we are today, with the Igala Kingdom constricted into one tiny territory within Kogi State and consigned to the rungs of political insignificance and tagged

a minority enclave within the federation of a 21st Century Nigeria which bulk of territories was hitherto embodied within it.

At the end, the British succeeded in supplanting the traditional governmental institutions and systems with one that is even strange to them. The attempt



at indirect rule only ended up creating artificial monarchs, where there were none, and superficial puppets robed in imperial garbs, who are only empowered to do the biddings of Her Majesty, the Queen and at her convenience. It was this contradiction that culminated to the different face-offs and hostilities between the colonial authorities and the Igala

nation, culminating to Attah Oboni's sad demise in 1958.

Then came the post amalgamation developments – the Lugard's, Richard's Constitution Macpherson's, Lyttletons the London constitutional conference, the independence constitution of 1960, and finally the Republican constitution of 1963.

In all these constitutional evolution, the position of the traditional rulership system, which the British met on ground were relegated to ceremonial functions with a tiny window of political participation.

Neither the 1979, nor the 1999 constitution ever gave any recognition nor made reference to these traditional institutions. The exercise at creation of states through which the existing 36 states emerged was rather the arbitrary considerations and most times self-serving permutations of the military elite and completely erased every trace of traditional boundaries and pre-existing territorial jurisdictions. Igala nation is now confined within a tiny territory with several other ethnic groups, and the Attah holds office at the instance of a Governor at Lokoja. Less than a century ago, this would have been abominable! But here we are today, with the Attah, totally disabled from having his very Igala people in his brood – a large many Igala communities being entrapped and lumped in other states – and they cannot return to their kinsfold because a provision in Section 8 of the Constitution requires a boundary adjustment – a wavy phrase with no attachment with the practical realities of Law. And if you look deeply into the substance of the law, you discover there is no boundary to adjust. For the Ette case, of which I personally handled, we discovered that the whole regime of laws touching on national and interstate boundaries are either dubious or only exist in the imagination of the officials of the National Boundary Commission.

Today, there are more Igalias outside Kogi State suffering the yoke of one political thrall or servitude or the other. The legal implications are far-reaching – and these implications also translate



to the political reality of suppression, marginalization, deprivation, and as almost happened in the Ette case, dislocations.

The practical reality that stares everyone on the face is that all the systems of governance that applied spanning the colonial, post-colonial, military and post military era all failed the country. The Westminster system of government was a disaster in itself, and so also is the United States executive presidential system which today has kept us in the



L-R; GEN. PATRICK AKPA, DR. JACOB ABDULLAHI AND HRH, PROF. J.N. UKWEDEH

doldrums trapped in the carapace of a thwarted political existence. We operate a rather questionable federal structure that cannot fit into any contemporary model or design – Professor Isawa Elaigwu gave it the contraption of a unitary federalism. Sounds somewhat absurd though, but that's the best description to give this indefinable arrangement. People are now suggesting we return to the erstwhile regional structures as component units of governance – or people be allowed to secede and go their separate ways.

But then, the question is, if the argument for restructuring or centrifugalism are to hold sway, what would be the defining points or modalities for existence or separation as the case may be? For instance, what structural indices would serve as the underpinnings of its landscape as regards ethnic groups, affiliations and consanguinity that would be better than a predication to the pre-existing pre-colonial traditional boundaries of say, the Attah, Oba of Benin, Sultan of Sokoto, etc.



L-R; Dr. Sunday E. Uhiene, HRH, Elder Chief J.A. Okai And Arc. Chief Gabriel Y. ADUKU

For the Igalias, what is of paramount importance is how to restore the land to its glorious position as it existed prior to its rape and devastation by the colonial authorities. This restoration is also co-terminous with the restoration of the Attah's authority, prestige, dominion and the splendor of his status as a functional monarch. To this effort should also be, the restructuring of the polity which should mean more than identifying or defining the component structures within the country be they real or artificial. Our first port of call is to bring all Igalias truncated and stranded in different states and parts of the federation into the social and political mainstream and fold. This essentially means engaging the relevant institutions of government saddled with the responsibility for determination of boundaries namely the office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, the National Boundary Commission, and

the office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation. Within this ambit is also the office of the National Human Rights Commission, which has done tremendous work in promoting the rights of people to determine for themselves, who they are and where they belong in line with the exercise of their right to freedom and identity. This becomes apt, as it is now clear that Section 8 of the constitution do not apply in redressing the truncations as there are virtually no existing boundaries to define or adjust.

Ancillary to this is this drab trend of Igalias within the Kogi fold regarding their kins located elsewhere as being less of the main stock. This is saddening indeed as it has created a culture of stigmatization, whereby, the average Igala blood from say Ogurugu is tagged 'om'igbo' simply because he finds himself in a place outside Kogi State. I state this with every



Gen. Patrick Akpa (Rtd.), HRH Prof. J.N. Ukwedeh And Aruwa Atokolo

degree of equanimity because I've been a victim myself. It is rather preposterous for Igalias as a people to discriminate against themselves on the basis of a superficial distinction and discrimination created by the hard experience of our colonial and post colonial history.

The next, but very important port of call is the question of the restoration of the territorial boundaries of the Igala Kingdom in line with the area of the traditional authority of the Attah Igala as a determinant of the component structure of Nigeria. This should be the main plank of the Igala ethnic agenda for any future conference on restructuring, and not necessarily the creation of an elusive Okura State. This translates to a re-definition of the boundary framework of Nigeria beyond the Legal Notice 126 of 1954 which created the boundaries between the region, and the state creation efforts since 1968 to a more factual

actualization of the territorial boundary and extent of authority of Gaabaidu as a fact of component structure in the restructuring agenda for the country. It is not out of the way to envisage the existence of two or three Igala component units within the federation going by its vast traditional extent. With this, the years of deliberate decimation and plundering of the Igala State would have to a large extent been corrected, and the lingering vestiges of colonialism which daily hold the country down would have been finally broken.

Finally, beyond the razzmatazz of the traditional splendour and ceremonial veneration of Kings and Monarchs, it behoves on Igalias as an entity, to, from the perspective of its cultural heritage and experience, make case for the statutory and constitutional roles for traditional rulers, particularly those imbued with ancient traditional stools, traditional sovereigns and Monarchs. From the facts



L-R; Dr. Makolo, Esq., Sam Egwu (Leadership Newspaper), Alh. Sadiq Amodu (ICDA President) And Onoja J. Okpanachi (Arise Igala)"



L-R; Gen. Patrick Akpa, Barr. Festus Oguche And HRH, Prof. J.N. Ukwedeh

of Igala history and heritage, the Attah is conferred with a more profound authority and legitimacy by the people than even the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria – and that's one fact we must all swallow!

A situation that accords recognition and legitimacy to a Local Government Chairman over and above the Attah Igala

on the statutory plane under our so called constitutional ambience is preposterous and insane, and that's exactly why the systems are failing left, right and centre.

Festus A. Oguche, Esq., is a Port Harcourt based Legal Practitioner and Coordinator (Nigeria), Campaign for Social Justice and Constitutional Democracy in Africa.



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