

MOVEMENT FOR NEW NIGERIA

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THE FAILED STATE CALLED NIGERIA: OUR STAND

Being text of a Joint Declaration by the Lower Niger Congress, the Federation of Oodua People and the Middle Belt Congress at a World Press Conference held on June 30th 2011 at Lagos, Nigeria

We, the undersigned Representatives of:

1. The LOWER NIGER CONGRESS, made up of indigenes of the Lower Niger, (the Homeland of the ethnic nationalities of the former Eastern and Mid-western Regions of Nigeria), involved in the mission of evolving a LOWER NIGER FEDERATION,
2. The FEDERATION OF OODUA PEOPLES, made up of indigenes of Oodua Land (the Homeland of the Yoruba ethnic nationality of the former Western Region of Nigeria,) involved in the mission of evolving an OODUA PEOPLES FEDERATION,
3. The MIDDLE BELT CONGRESS, made up of indigenes of the Middle Belt (the Homeland of the ethnic nationalities of the former Northern Region of Nigeria, excluding the Sharia territories) involved in the mission of evolving a MIDDLE-BELT FEDERATION;

now collaborating under the aegis of **MOVEMENT FOR NEW NIGERIA (MNN)** in its quest to facilitate the reconstruction of the Nigerian Federation, have chosen this time to address the burning issues of the tottering Nigerian union.

The aforementioned territories, all being parts of the Nigerian project, having over many years variously expressed our dissatisfaction with the project and having called upon the Nigerian authorities, who have each time turned deaf ears, to provide an opportunity for dialogue between all the entrapped ethnic nationalities participating in the project, albeit, under various forms of force, in view of the total collapse of the project, are constrained to state as follows:

WHEREAS

“Our forebears were not Nigerians; they were ethnic peoples, who inhabited their own homelands with well-defined territories, waterways and resources of their own; with their customs, traditions and governments, before the amalgamation in 1914 that absorbed them into an artificial state known as Nigeria. Prior to the advent of British colonisation, they occupied and exercised unfettered and inalienable sovereignties over their respective homelands. It is the inalienable occupational rights of our forebears over their homelands that subsequently gave us the citizenship of Nigeria under the Independence Federal Constitution. Our consent ceding some of our sovereignties to a Federal Union, was first truncated then subsequently carried forward, time and time again, by force, culminating in the forceful imposition of the fraudulent 1999 Constitution.

Colonisation, which truncated our inherited sovereignties, resulted in the abrogation of the control over our lands and waterways which we inherited from our forebears and in the carting away of our resources. In 1960, the British relinquished our usurped sovereignties and returned our lands, waterways and resources and we agreed to continue with the British Nigerian project only as federating units, parts and members of a Federal Union, each with its own constitution. In 1966, the military intereved in governance, sacking the said voluntarily worked out and agreed constitutions and, once more, truncated our sovereignties, confiscated our lands, waterways and resources and forcefully re-introduced surveillance over them.

At the seeming exit of the military in 1999, instead of returning our sovereignties, lands, waterways and resources, like the British did, some predators, in the name of the same military, by subterfuge, continued in the uruspation of all our sovereignties, lands, waterways and resources, pursuant to a single, again imposed, 1999 Constitution, which they nevertheless fraudulently proclaimed was made by “We the people...” and given to ourselves; secondly, proclaimed “Federal”, notwithstanding the absence of federating units and their individual constitutions and thirdly, proclaimed that we had all joined in the creation of a centre to which we had ceded all our sovereign rights, pursuant to which 68 items were placed on the Federal Exclusive Legislative List with a further 30-item Concurrent List of the so-called 1999 Constitution, in which the central government enjoys overriding powers, thus subjecting us to internal colonisation by reserving the right to provide or not **provide electricity, railways, security, highways and access to ports, etc., by taking control of our natural resources, including oil and gas**, on the false claim that we had ceded all our natural resources to the centre.

Further intent upon deceit, the so-called Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution, political and economic objectives, proclaimed, among other things that: “sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government, through this Constitution, derives all its powers and authority”; “that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”; “that the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice”; “that the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution”; “that there shall not be a predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in government or in any of its agencies” and “that the affairs of government or its agencies shall be conducted so as to recognise the diversity of peoples.”

Successive governments have breached each and every one of the foregoing provisions towards the peoples of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle Belt, with impunity. We assert that the 1999 Constitution was imposed in breach of our sovereignties; that the country is organised on the basis of a master-servant relationship in which merit is thrown to the dogs and that there is a palpable class structure importing first-class citizenship for some and behind whom the peoples of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle Belt must queue to find relevance.

Apart from acquiescing in participating in the true Federal System that succeeded colonialism in 1960, our forebears and us were never subdued in any war with any other inhabitant(s) of Nigeria, let alone being

subjugated in any post-war negotiations, yet, we have known no other fate in the Nigerian Project other than the brazen denial of access to any meaningful participation in the affairs of Nigeria. This has manifested in a variety of ways:

1. The refusal by those who have usurped our rights which Independence retrieved from the British, particularly the right to participate in constitution-making to determine the acceptable minimum standards of political, social and economic engagement and to allow us participate in shaping our own destinies;
2. the confiscation and exposure of our resources to a sharing formula that compromise our sovereignties and ownership;
3. the refusal by our unknown “conquerers” to allow us participate in choosing the type of government, Presidential or Parliamentary, acceptable to us in our relationship with our “fellow countrymen”;
4. the determination of our fate from far far away places by people we really do not know and with whom we share nothing at all in common other than an inglorious colonial past and an inscrutable and fabricated 1999 Constitution”.

As we lamented our plight through the foregoing indignities, we wondered how we came by such a dilemma in a relationship supposedly amongst equals, only recently to stumble upon the reason for our fate: On the 13th of November, 2002, the Tribune Newspaper had cause to recall Sir Ahmadu Bello’s admonition in October 1960, to the descendants of Uthman Dan Fodio, reported in the Parrot Newspaper of 12th October, 1960:

“The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over their future”.

In order to be fully cognisant of its purport, it is necessary to put that admonition, which is no less than a “Battle Order,” in its proper perspective. By that admonition, Sir Ahmadu Bello created three categories of Nigerians:

1. First-Class Nigerians – the inheritors of Nigeria as an “estate of Uthman Dan Fodio”;
2. Second Class Nigerians – the “willing tools”, who are the same as “the minorities in the North”, to be used by the inheritors as tools and
3. Third Class Nigerians – the whole of Southern Nigeria, alias: “the conquered territory”, who are no more than “Slave Boys”, who must never be allowed to control their own future, let alone be allowed to rule over the inheritors.

Both implicitly and explicitly, Ahmadu Bello’s “Battle Order” is the Oracle for unraveling:

why the inheritors insist that Nigeria is an indissoluble marriage made in Heaven;

why whatever manner of candidate the inheritors present is good enough as President;

why the almajaris of the “inheritors” could not stomach the audacity of the Nigerian Authorities subjecting their Crown Prince, Buhari, to a contest based upon the “stupid game” called Democracy; worse still

expose him to defeat by a “slave boy” from a people who must neither be allowed to rule over the inheritors;

why, “Aburi”, which, General Gowon, a Head of State, but still no more than a “willing tool” at the disposal of the inheritors, in an attempt to achieve true and fiscal federalism and return Nigeria to the consensual project that it was in 1960 at Independence, laboriously negotiated and agreed with “slave-boy”, Ojukwu, was scuttled twice in 1967 and 1974.

why the three regions of the South at Independence had to become only 17 States against the one region of the North’s 19 States plus 1 Federal Territory; the latter garnering to itself a majority in the National Assembly and a greater number of the 774 Local Government structure enshrined in the 1999 Constitution; all structured to enable inheritors to keep a larger piece of a cake to which they contribute nothing;

why the Northern Blueprint for any structural re-arrangement of Nigeria, has the states and Local Government Areas enshrined in the 1999 Constitution as no-go areas.

why Yakassai, Ciroma, General Babangida and Atiku cannot stomach PDP’s winning formula which handed over its presidential ticket to a “Slave Boy” from the South.

This true perspective of the “Battle Order” shows Obasanjo’s first coming; Shonekan’s anointing and Obasanjo’s second coming, all of which were made possible by inheritor-godfatherism, for the aberration that they were.

Not knowing that our fate was the direct implementation of a Battle Order, we, in our ignorance, kept insisting upon restructuring. On hind-sight, the whole episode has been an ongoing 96 years tragedy now ‘legitimised’ by a “1999 Constitution” that is a ploy by which erstwhile fellow victims of colonialism turned predators, planned to exercise perpetual control over our lands, rivers, resources, our lives and the lives of our generations yet unborn.

We have now come to the realisation that we have stood and folded our arms for too long as if we are in captivity, whilst

- i. our resources are plundered, hacked and carted away to far away places for the betterment of other people and to our detriment;
- ii. our environment is despoiled while we are being reduced to a state of political extinction, in spite of our huge contributions to the Nigerian economy.
- iii. On the whole, nothing works under the 1999 Constitution, resulting in failed everything: **education, health care, electric power, roads, food security, personal security and job security; all of which breed unemployed and restive youths.**

As if the foregoing traumas were not enough, following upon a “Slave Boy” assuming the mantle of leadership after the 2011 Presidential Election, the inheritors, refusing to accept the verdict of the Nigerian electorate, resorted to the unprovoked murder of our siblings claiming and insisting: that they do not accept Democracy as a form of government; that Sharia Law must apply in the twelve states in which inheritor voters voted and in which their inheritor candidate, Buhari, won and that Justice is not possible

under the 1999 Constitution; for which reasons they have resiled from being bound by the 1999 Constitution.

Other than the proclaimed disdain for Democracy, there is nothing new in the inheritors' present stance. For several years now, they have demonstrated their contempt for the 1999 Constitution. In 2000, contrary to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution, the State Houses of Assembly of the same twelve states enacted Laws converting their States to Sharia-law States and set up Sharia Police, HISBA; the Executive arms of the Sharia Law States executed the verdicts of Sharia Tribunals, including the chopping off of limbs and stonning "adulterous" women to death. For whatever other reason, but certainly including an attempt to ensure that the Police Force enshrined in the 1999 Constitution does not exercise surveillance over their homelands, they have now sought its extinction by continuous and indiscriminate bombing of Police Formations. From 2000 to date, not one inheritor voice has been heard in condemnation of these actions. In effect, the inheritors, long ago, declared the death of Nigeria and are presently continuing in the same vein.

At this juncture, we, the peoples of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle Belt, HEREBY DECLARE that we have reached the end of our endurance in this matter and assert that the present state of affairs is totally intolerable and unacceptable to us.

In view of the foregoing, We, the peoples of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle Belt, Declare as follows that:

1. We acknowledge the inalienable right of the inheritors not to want to have anything to do with Democracy whilst asserting our own inalienable right to continue our belief in and desire for Democracy in our own homelands, both in exercise of our mutual Rights as the Indigenous Peoples of our respective homelands, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007, particularly Articles 3, 4 and 5 thereof, applicable in Nigeria.
2. Provided the peoples of Southern Kaduna and similar borderline communities, who are not of their own stock and who do not subscribe to Sharia Law are excluded, we acknowledge the inalienable right of the inheritors that Sharia Law should be applicable in their homelands, whilst also asserting our own inalienable right not to have Sharia Law apply to our own homelands, both in exercise of our mutual rights as the indigenous peoples of our respective homelands, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, particularly Articles 3, 4 and 5 thereof, applicable in Nigeria.
3. We accept the Declaration inherent in the actions of the inheritors that, except for being co-victims of an inglorious colonial past which brought us together in the first place and equally co-victims of an imposed 1999 Constitution, we, the peoples of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle Belt, have nothing in common with the inheritors and are also convinced that the Nigerian union remains "the mistake of 1914."
4. At the instance of the Movement for New Nigeria, plaintiffs representing our ethnic nationalities in Suit Nos. FHC/ABJ/CS/367/07 in the Federal High Court, Abuja and No.

5. FHC/L/CS/558/09 before the Federal High Court Lagos Division, sought reliefs, including a Declaration that the 1999 Constitution is a Forgery; that the Preamble be set aside and that the Government of the day be ordered to initiate a process for the negotiation and re-enactment of our Union Document (Constitution) via a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) to which they have turned deaf ears to date. Having, therefore, been at the receiving end of the injustices it has meted out to us over the past 12 years, we share the views of the inheritors that the 1999 Constitution is incapable of affording justice.
6. Whereas we were prepared to participate in the Sovereign National Conference advocated recently by NADECO whereat the ethnic nationalities of Nigeria would have settled the Question: ABUJA, ABURI OR ARABA, we assert that the actions of the inheritors have thrown that option into the basket of history and we hereby accept and adopt the declaration inherent in the actions of the inheritors, whilst equally declaring same, that the 1999 Constitution is dead and equally ceases to apply to and in our homelands. In consequence, we equally declare that the Nigeria contracted by our Colonial masters and hitherto sustained by the pretentious and inglorious 1999 Constitution, the only contrived cord binding us together, is at an end and by virtue of the self-determination rights conferred by the aforesaid United Nations Declaration, reserve our inalienable right to deal with our homelands as we choose.
7. By virtue of Declaration 5 herein, we, the owners of the homelands of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land, and the Middle Belt are HEREBY RESOLVED to henceforth pursue the ratification of our various Draft Constitutions, which may be the basis of a future union to be still known as Nigeria or by whatever other name we choose.
8. Post the event of a future Union to be still known as Nigeria or by whatever name we choose, we, the owners of the homelands of the Lower Niger, Oodua Land and the Middle-Belt, HEREBY PLEDGE to abide by any and all obligations of an international nature imposed by the now at-an-end contracted Nigeria upon our respective homelands.

For and on behalf of

The Lower Niger Congress: *Kalada M. Jene; Alfred Ilenre; Dr. Idongesit Ambrose; Alex Ayotalumuo*
Federation of Oodua People: *Tokunbo Ajasin; Shenge Rhaman; Kunle Olaiya; Leye Akinmodiro; Wole Aina; Suleiman A. Salawu*

The Middle-Belt Congress: *Professor Leonard Shilgba; Andrew Ayuba Butswat; Nath Apir; Bishop Luke Angula*

FRED AGBEYEGBE, ESQ.
 (President)

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 (Secretary-General)

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