



August 15, 2020

Chief (Dr.) E. K. Clark, OFR, CON

## IJAW NATION IN CRISIS: THINGS CANNOT CONTINUE THIS WAY!

We write on behalf of the Ijaw Diaspora Council (IDC), a worldwide group of Ijaw professionals with headquarters in the United States of America.

This urgent letter is for the attention of all present and past political leaders, elected or appointed into positions of authority, Chiefs, Elders, Governors and Deputy Governors and indeed, all well-meaning Ijaws from all walks of life, who are interested in the progress and prosperity of the Ijaw Nation.

In your open letter to President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR on June 12, 2020, you said "Accordingly, as long as I live, I will continue to work for the good of this country, in any way, I find possible." It is important to acknowledge your contribution and achievements, and in many ways, we are very pleased with your leadership style and sense of patriotism. Your letter points to the fact that President Buhari has not governed with the fear of God and failed to deliver on his promises to Nigerians during and after his electioneering campaign. We believe that President Muhammadu Buhari has not properly addressed the yearnings and aspirations of Ijaw people "despite our contribution to the economy of the country."

You agreed with Colonel Abubakar Dangiwa Umar (Rtd), former Military Governor of Kaduna State, when he said "favoring some and frustrating others, shall bring ruin and destruction to the nation." Why is it that Ijaw people are being treated as if they are not Nigerians, as if they are foreigners, or as if they are second class citizens in Nigeria? Please tell us if you have received an answer to the preceding question from President Muhammadu Buhari and a response to your letter on June 12, 2020.

As nationalities all over Nigeria are re-assessing or have already figured out their place in the Nigerian federation, most of the Ijaw leaders appear to be complacent. The major nationalities "appear war weary," some have commented cynically. Unfortunately, the majority of our leaders are satisfied with the status quo. Ijaws do not have a clearly and publicly articulated strategic plan to address: WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE HAVE TO BE with respect to the apparent disintegration of Nigeria. WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE HAVE TO BE when security forces continue to advance social injustice and destruction of our towns and villages without provocation. This situation is no longer acceptable to the global Ijaw diaspora community.

In recent times, the stories of woe emanating from the area as reported by the mass media, almost daily, tell a tale of a people in bondage, and held hostage by the forces of oppression. It is simply unbelievable, that this is one of the major areas in the Niger Delta responsible for over 80- 90% of the entire country's wealth!

Over the past several months and weeks, we have listened intently to our community stakeholders about what they value and the security challenges in Nigeria and where we can improve -- with a focus on the systems, policies, practices, and actions that affect Ijaw Ethnic Nationality. We have spoken to hundreds of students, youths, leaders, groups, and surveyed thousands of people.

It is no news that the Ijaw Nation is militarized. All it takes for a bombardment of towns and villages to start is the commitment of some 'criminal act', be it real or imagined by a few persons. Such acts of brutality can be said to be institutionalized, judging by their consistency. We call on Chief Edwin Clark and all the leaders of Ijaw Nation to please wake up to the occasion immediately before it is too late.

To buttress this fact, a few examples will suffice. In 1999 Opia, Ikanya-Delta State and Odi in Bayelsa State were attacked and destroyed. Ogulagha, Delta State was attacked in 2003. In 2004 Odioma, Bayelsa State, Ogbudugbudu-Delta State and Elem tombia, Rivers State were attacked. In addition, 2007 and 2008 witnessed attacks in Bonny and Finima, Okochiri and Kula, Rivers State. Delta State was inundated in 2009 as attacks occurred in Okerenkoko, Abiteye, Azama, Kuritie, Kokodiagbene and Oporoza. Bayelsa State was again dealt with severely with attacks on Biri-2017, Azabgene-2019, Bilabiri-2020, Letugbene-2020, and Europagha-2020.

Are we a conquered people, occupying a conquered territory? Are we to be steadily milked until there is nothing left and then discarded like a piece of useless rag? It can no longer be business as usual. We want all the leaders to know that the Ijaw Diaspora community will openly and drastically take all necessary actions that will change the narrative if the indiscriminate and unprovoked destruction, killings, and militarization continues.

Indeed, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has been plunged into an extraordinary crisis rooted in unprecedented interconnected challenges with devastating impact on our people. We share a deep concern for the human cost that the crisis has already inflicted and express a profound sense of solidarity with the most vulnerable communities in Ijaw Nation.

We are critical shareholders in a country that has not only acknowledged us as such but has continued to treat us like dust on a shelf. We have agreed to reject the sad situation, whereby oppressors, criminals, and terrorists thrive on the well-worn out systems of divide and rule, intimidation, carrot and stick, etc.

Let all Ijaw leaders say a resounding NO to continues militarization of the Ijaw Nation. We must refuse to be bought and compromised for personal gain, which cannot last anyway. What joy is there in being used against your people who experience acid rain, with all lands, streams, rivers and oceans facing extreme degradation due to uncontrolled pollution? When are we going to say, over fifty years of exploitation is ENOUGH? What are the strategies, and our plans to

improve the strategies as we navigate this new normal in Nigeria? The Ijaw Diaspora community needs answers to the preceding questions.

It is time to say, give us our due! Let all our cities , towns and villages have minimum basic amenities like drinkable water, road networks, all-year-round electricity supply, functional and well equipped hospitals, well equipped schools managed by highly trained and motivated teachers and encourage and set up industries for which we have comparative advantage.

There have been perennial social, economic and political problems, especially in the five decades. Therefore, we are sick and tired of the political quagmire that has been raging on since the forceful amalgamation of the Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria in 1914. Since the country is always at the brink of disintegration and the fundamental question is: Should Ijaw people be:

1. an independent country,
2. a part of Biafra,
3. a part of Odudwa,
4. a part of Arewa,
5. a part of BRACED, or
6. any other country?

The time for lamentation is over.

Let us unite and speak with one voice.

Do it for the sake of our young ones and generations yet to come.

Do it for the sake of posterity.

Do it for your place in history.

**Signed:**

1. Prof. Mondy Gold
2. Hon. Mrs. Gesiere Brisibe-Dorgu
3. Lady Ebieri Gold-Richard
4. Moses Yomi
5. Bishop Samson Amajene
6. Dr. Brisibe Nabena
7. Tony Biegbudu
8. Akpoebi Okorowanta
9. Barr. Matthias Boboye E. J. Omusuku
10. Dr. Godspower Prezi
11. Nelson Tukoroa
12. Johnson Ebiotu
13. Dr. Lawrence Jituboh

**cc:**

1. King Alfred Papapreye Diete-Spiff, the Amanayabo of Twon Brass, Bayelsa State
2. King Francis Fedode Emomotimi Tabai, Hon. Justice, CON, Pere of Tuomo Kingdom, Delta State

3. King (Dr.) Charles Ayemi-Botu, aka "Lion of the Niger," Paramount ruler of Seimbiri Kingdom, Delta State
4. King Edmund Maduabebe Daukoru, ARSM, PhD, FIC, CON: Mingi XII, Amayanabo of Nembe, Bayelsa State
5. King Ebitimi Banigo, the Okpo XXI, Amayanabo of Okpoma Kingdom, Bayelsa State
6. King Agara O. Mozi (JP), the Kala-Okun III of Kolokuma Kingdom, Bayelsa State
7. Pere (Barr) Zaccheaus Doubra Egbunu JP., Opukutu 111, The Agadagba and Paramount Ruler of Arogbo Ijaw kingdom, Ondo State
8. Pere S.P. Luke-Kalanama VIII (JP), the Pere of Akugbene-Mein Kingdom, Delta State
9. Pere Major Lucky Meshack Erebulu Aduo II (Rtd) of Kabowei Kingdom, Delta State
10. Pere Oboro Gbaraun II, (Aketekpe, Agadagba), Delta State
11. Pere Williams Ogboba, Oboro Gbaraun II, Aketekpe, Agadagba, of Gbaramatu Kingdom, Delta State
12. King Oweipa Jones Ere III, Ebenanaowei of Ogboin Kingdom, Bayelsa State
13. Pere Godwin Ogunyenbo, (Alagbabunafa III), Agadagba of Olodiana Kingdom, Edo State
14. Pere Beri Apoi, (Ogudumu, Oki, Kalasuo III), Pere of Okomu Kingdom, Edo State
15. Pere Frank Fieke Okiakpe, (Egbesuwei Gbaraun X), Agadagba Of Gbanraun Kingdom, Bayelsa State
16. Oba (Prof.) Sunday Adejimola Amuseghan JP, Lawe 11. The Kalasuwe and Paramount Ruler of Apoi land Ondo State
17. King (Prof.) Theophilus J.T. Princewill, Amachree XI, Amayanabo of Kalabari, Rivers State
18. King King Disrael Gbobo Bob-Manuel, Amayanabo of Abonnema, Rivers State
19. King Malla Sasime, the Obenibe II of Epie Kingdom, Bayelsa State
20. King Joshua Igbugburu, the Ibenanaowei of Bomo Kingdom, Bayelsa State
21. King Edward Dappa Pepple 3rd, the Perekule X1 and Amayanabo of Grand Bonny, Rivers State
22. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan GCFR, GCON, former President of Nigeria
23. Present and Former Governors & Deputies Governors
24. Present and Former Ministers
25. Present and Former Senior Officers of the Nigerian Army
26. Present and Former Senior Officers of the Nigeria Police
27. Present and Former Senators and Representatives
28. Prof. C. A. Dime, The pioneer president of the Ijaw National Congress
29. Dr Obianime Atuboyedia, former President of the Ijaw National Congress
30. Prof Kimse Okoko, former President of the Ijaw National Congress
31. Joshua Benard Fumudoh, former President of the Ijaw National Congress
32. Engr. Ebieridei Charles Ambaiowei, former President of the Ijaw National Congress
33. Comrade Joseph Evah, Ijaw Monitoring Group
34. Government Ekpemupolo ("Tompolo"), Commander of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
35. Annkio Briggs, Convener, Niger Delta Self Determination Movement
36. Asari Dokubo, Founded, Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
37. All Activists and Freedom Fighters
38. Bishops, Pastors and other Religious Leaders

**Ijaw organizations:**

1. Andoni Forum USA
2. Arogbo Ibe-ABADI Ukputu
3. Bayelsa State Association
4. Bayelsa Youths Council
5. Binitoru Women Global Development Initiative
6. Congress of Niger Delta Youths
7. Egbema Youths Progressive Agenda
8. Ijaw Elders Forum
9. Ijaw Foundation
10. Ijaw Leadership Forum
11. Ijaw National Alliance of the Americas
12. Ijaw Nation Development Group (Ijaw Peoples Assembly)
13. Ijaw National Congress
14. Ijaw Youth Congress
15. Ijaw Youth Council
16. Izon Ladies Association
17. Izon Progressive Congress
18. Ijaw National Council USA
19. Ijaw Republican Assembly
20. Ijaw Women Connect
21. Ijaw Women of America
22. Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)
23. Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality
24. National Union of IzonEbe Students
25. Niger Delta Peoples Forum
26. Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)
27. Ogbia Brotherhood
28. Progressive Youth Leadership Foundation