

COALITION OF NORTHERN GROUPS

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3rd June, 2021

His Highness,
The Emir of Kano,
Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero

Your Highness,

ALERT ON UNFOLDING SCENARIOS FOR DESTABILIZATION OF NIGERIA:

We address this letter to you with a deep sense of patriotism and concern for a strong and prosperous northern region in the context of the current Nigerian nation with respect to both historical and current trends and the underlying character of the Igbo people of the South East.

We address you Sir, consciously believing that as critical stakeholder in the affairs of the northern society, you will accept and treat this as a warning from history which repeats itself, according to Karl Marx, once as a farce and twice as a tragedy.

1. LESSIONS OF HISTORY

It is instructive to recount that the Igbo have benefited more than any other tribe in terms of economic monopoly and are the most accommodated and tolerated of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, despite their notoriety for disregard to every rule of decency and etiquette globally.

They have persisted in spiteful and vile threats on the whole nation as catalyst for the kind of violence that the country faced in 1966 following the first ever military insurrection by their kith.

Setting the protocol for the unfolding agenda, the 1966 coupists decapitated the Prime Minister and the political leadership of the Northern and Western regions, leaving the zenith of Igbo leadership at the federal level and the Eastern region intact.

Since that time, the Igbo have continued to intermittently taunt and rebel against the Nigerian State, demanding to secede and form an independent country called Biafra which was among the key elements that culminated in the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 that resulted in colossal death and destruction.

2. RESURGENCE

Decades after, Nigeria is again witnessing the resurgence of separatist agitations, especially by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its ilk, as strategies employed to achieve the results that the coupists of the First Republic failed to realize.

The scene began with the regrouping of the Igbo to launch a brazen, though relatively decent campaign for Biafra under the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

This was eventually hijacked by another rogue group called the IPOB, led by Nnamdi Kanu whose violent campaign went beyond public lectures to the spread of xenophobic, hateful war messages, targeting the Nigerian state and other non-Igbo ethnic groups.

Kanu and IPOB's activities grew exponentially, ranging from ordering people of other regions out of the South East - particularly northerners, to open declaration of amassing of arms to fight Nigeria.

As these dangerous contours began to spiral with repeated calls to arms by the IPOB leader, the CNG in 2017, took the bold and necessary step to issue a "quit notice" in the famous Kaduna Declaration and followed up with series of communications to the then acting President, Yemi Osinbajo, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and all major foreign diplomatic missions represented in Nigeria, in which we drew attention to the emerging trends in the country that were pregnant with complications and unforeseen consequences.

Those truly patriotic representations by the CNG aimed to anticipate and forestall the current drift toward anarchy and bloodshed in Nigeria, and also to alert the international community as to where responsibility would ultimately lie if such momentous and terrible events ever came to pass.

Since 2017, on almost a daily basis, IPOB/ESN have coordinated violent attacks, indiscriminate killings and destruction of properties of northerners that continued unceasingly in almost all South Eastern states and some South South communities

The threat grew more existential with revelations of catches of arms meant for the Boko Haram insurgents routinely smuggled into the country and intercepted by the Nigerian authorities, traced to Igbo merchants.

Evidence also abound of how IPOB'S incitement to mass atrocity and possible genocide against the North, and outright rebellion to the Nigerian state, manifested in the ugly incidents of the #EndSARS protests resulting in attacks and killings of security personnel, non-Igbo residents in the East and arson across Western States like Lagos.

The attacks went on literally unchecked climaxing with the cold-blooded massacre of 19 innocent members of a pastoral family in Anambra and more recently, the gruesome assassination of Dr Ahmed Gulak in Imo.

3. THE NORTH

The typology of the current disturbances spreading across all northern states where the fissures between ethnic and religious groups are much more accentuated, suggests a wider plot to cause greater national instability by first diminishing the northern economic, political and educational viability.

It began with an exponential increase in the level of drug addiction and substance abuse driven by outside forces and players particularly Southeastern traders and "pharmacists" who are the main sources of the substances and drugs that target the North.

There is also an established correlation between the arms trade and drug trade in the North, both of which are intended to cause the disintegration of the region and bring about its weakening from within.

OUR CONVICTIONS

The CNG is convinced that the bulk of the support for the violent Biafra agitation coming from the younger generation of the Igbo in the fifty-year bracket with pent up jealousies against the North and its people, are direct results of the dangerous indoctrination and radicalization by their forefathers, political, religious leaders over a long period.

We are also convinced that the dimension of the current agitations and disturbances that have been ongoing ceaselessly since 2017, are aimed at rendering the country practically ungovernable, and ushering in of anarchy and instability thereby

occasioning an inter-regional crisis possibly leading to civil war or general unrest that could portend towards the breakup of the country.

Thus the targeting of the North and its people for attacks and irreverent treatment by IPOB and the Eastern Security Network, emboldened by the active support of all Igbo leaders, aim at sparking off retaliation in the North with subsequent attacks to be perpetrated against Northerners in the South-East, thus making it even more likely to insist on dividing the country.

4. OUR STAND

In the light of the observations and inferences drawn above, the CNG hereby arrives at the following inevitable positions:

a. That with the dimension taken by the Biafran agitation that involves attacks and destruction of public utilities, national security assets and personnel, and violence against fellow Nigerians from other parts of the country particularly the North, it has become no longer reasonable to expect us to continue having the Igbo as a federating partner.

b. The fact that the strength of the Igbo agitation rests on youth who are mainly below the ages of 50, with diseased mindsets induced by their forefathers and encouraged by their political, cultural and religious leaders to take up arms against the Nigerian state and northerners, confirms that the nation's unity is definitely negotiable.

c. It is therefore unreasonable for those older Nigerians who are mostly above 70 to insist that the unity of Nigeria is sacrosanct whereas the people executing the dangerous Southeast secession agenda are almost entirely below 50.

PRAYERS

Committed to constitutionalism, peace, security, fair play, decent patriotism, love of our country and fellow citizens and respect for elders, CNG hereby urges you as respected leaders to:

1. Act to get the Nigerian state and other critical stakeholders and international players to accept the reality that the only remaining option to avert a civil war and bloodshed is for the Igbo to be allowed to have the Biafra they have used intermittently for decades to destabilize the nation and deny peace to other components of the country.

2. To take urgent steps to check the mass movement of people from the proposed Biafra land into the vast interior of the North as well as the permanent nature of that migration.

3. To set up a machinery for the final evacuation of all Biafra indigenes from the North to their new country and for the safe relocation of all northerners from the South East.

CONCLUSION

Finally Sir, we submit that the level of anger elicited by the activities of the IPOB and its sponsors at home and in the Diaspora has reached the inevitable point where the Igbo must be separated from us by invoking the relevant statutes on self-determination entrenched in various international conventions and treaties to which Nigeria is a signatory.


And for the avoidance of doubt, the North should no longer be expected to be restrained from paying back any further act of aggressive provocation on northerners living as minorities in any part of southern Nigeria.

No one needs to be reminded that a destabilized Nigeria also comes with negative consequences for peace and security in West Africa sub-region as well as Europe and the US and the rest of the global community.

As such the North shall no longer be disposed to relating as Nigeria with the violent Igbo secessionists nor relate at any diplomatic level with a Biafran nation that may emerge now or in the future.

Thank you.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nastura A. Shariff', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Nastura A. Shariff,
Chairman, Board of Trustees,
Coalition of Northern Groups