

A Letter To

HIS EXCELLENCY

GENERAL ABDULSALAM ABUBAKAR

HEAD OF STATE

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

ASO ROCK

ABUJA

NIGERIA

By

Democratic Alliance Of Women Of Nigeria

On Behalf Of Nigeria's Women And Children

Your Excellency

On behalf of ourselves, the women and children of Nigeria, we welcome you as Nigeria's Head of State at this critical time in our country's history.

We congratulate you on the release of some of our political detainees, and hope that without much delay all others will be released. We are concerned about the category of Nigerians in Nigeria's prisons across the country, many of which have spent many years in prison without due process of law. Many have forgotten why they are being held. Nigerians deserve to be free and we are sure that you ShaRe our concern for our fellow Nigerians.

We are aware that you have come into 'power' at a time when our country is at the verge of total collapse as a result of long-standing abuse of political power by our Military and self-profess politicians of opportunism. Those who parade themselves as political leaders, but who in fact are only interested in acquiring wealth for themselves. We are confident, given your performance thus far, that you will avoid the 'selfish' counsel of these fake politicians in the interest of our country and her people.

Nigerians have been abused, many have died in the process; others have escaped into other countries where the pain they bear has been either ignored or misunderstood. Many have been trapped in foreign countries. On behalf of ourselves and those for whom there is hope for tomorrow, we wish to pray to the Almighty God (Allah) to give you the 'Divine' protection, the 'wisdom' and the 'will' to stay in the right side of Nigeria's history as we embark on the task of moving Nigeria forward politically, economically, socially and internationally.

You do not have a magic wand with which to accomplish the 'DREAM' for Nigeria's tomorrow, as such, we have the following submission as our contribution to the great task at hand.

NIGERIA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

June 12, 1993 Annuled Presidential Election

It is a fact that the military's transition to democratic rule which ended with the annulment of the June 12 1993 Presidential elections, presumed to have been won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola was a fundamental illegality. As it was undemocratic for the military to impose the two political parties of that era (SDP and NRC) on the people of Nigeria a situation which was compounded by the imposition of the of the two presidential candidates. However, when the people went to the polls within the framework and according to the dictate of the Military, they legitimised an illegality. Thus, the annulled presidential election became a symbol of the eight long years of the military's transition to democratic rule. This eight years have a great significance in the democratic process in Nigeria's political history. As such, the June 12 1993 political

situation cannot be wished away for, Nigeria would not rest until the issue is addressed properly and redressed.

However, five years is a long time in the political life of a nation, a lot has happened since, therefore, to move Nigeria forward, we will appeal to all those aggrieved to be prepared to make compromise in the interest of Nigeria. For, unwillingness to compromise amounts to 'personal interest'.

Your Excellency, our submission is that given the length of time that has elapsed, there is a need to have that June 12 1993 mandate renewed by the people of Nigeria in a democratic setting.

Elections

Because Nigeria's Constitution is still suspended, NECON must be allowed to conduct democratic elections in this current transition programme according to the relevant Decree without interference.

We wish to suggest that as the forthcoming elections are crucial for our country's democracy, that machinery be put in place for Nigerians abroad to participate actively, i.e. to elect our future political leaders for the next four years. This may be possible through Nigerian Embassies worldwide.

The Present Five Political Parties

Fundamentally, the five political parties are undemocratically set up as such, should not be allowed to set the stage for Nigeria's democracy. To compound their undemocratic nature and existence, their conduct thus far, has set the stage for a 'sham' and fraudulent elections. By introducing the concept of 'consensus candidacy' into Nigeria's politics, is more than sufficient ground for the parties to be relieved of their task of returning Nigeria to a genuine democracy. They have to be disbanded in order to inject credibility into Nigeria's democratic process. We will suggest that Nigerians form new political parties as a democratic way forward.

Election Campaign

It is a fact, that Nigerians have not been exposed to the democratic process; participation in various elections appear to be based on financial inducement by the candidates. This state of affairs is unhealthy for genuine democracy as, it effectively lays a flawed foundation and hence creates a political environment of "profit" and "loss" as candidate then sees their political positions as an opportunity to reap the financial benefit of the election campaign investment. To cure this defect, it will be necessary for there to be an extensive awareness campaign, during which, Nigerians should be informed of their rights, entitlements and their responsibilities toward an enduring democracy. This to our minds, will be the minimum requirements for a democratic Nigeria.

Women In Nigeria's Politics

It is a fact, that women represent over 50% of Nigeria's population; it is also a fact that the traditional woman is the 'home keeper', however, the role of the woman has expanded considerably to include issues which were traditionally male. Although this is now the case, the Nigerian woman is not accorded the recognition, which she deserves and earned. It is a fact that Nigeria's women have kept Nigeria going without the means of doing so. Many escaped into foreign countries in search of the means to feed their children left behind in Nigeria. Others went into prostitution along with their daughters – children as young as eight years old. This, Your Excellency, is an abomination and begs for immediate action. Although the women of Nigeria have the capability to keep Nigeria alive, politically, the woman is not given recognition. The women of Nigeria need political power and ask for the recognition and empowerment and partnership to resolve the country's political, socio-economic and international problems. The Nigeria woman want to be recognised in her own right and NOT as appendages to Nigeria's First Ladies as were the cases during the Babangida and the late Abacha's regimes. Your Excellency, the women of Nigeria need political empowerment and socio-economic recognition. – like our sisters in other African countries for example, Uganda.

Nigerians Abroad

It is a fact that the struggle to liberate Nigeria gained momentum after the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election. This momentum was sustained by Nigerians abroad, a manifestation of the patriotism of a large number of Nigerians abroad. Therefore, we are anxious to inform Your Excellency that as we search for a 'New Beginning' for our dear country, the efforts and interest of Nigerians abroad should be borne in mind and protected. We are aware that you have called on certain category of Nigerians abroad, but we are equally anxious to inform you that the contributions of the majority of Nigerians abroad have not been reported and acknowledged. It will therefore go a very long way for you to revisit your appeal to Nigerians abroad to join in the task of returning Nigeria to genuine democracy and the task of restructuring and rebuilding of our country. We are aware that many Nigerians have died abroad as a result of the terror, which covered our country. **WE REMEMBER THEM ALL**. There are still many who are waiting to offer their contributions. There are many Nigerians in Immigration Detention Centres in foreign countries, whose freedom is taking away as they escape the 'terror' in Nigeria. It is our hope that all such Nigerians gain their freedom soon. Nigerians are living rough in West Africa. It is our appeal to Your Excellency that you, on behalf of Nigeria, put machinery in place to assist 'returnees' many of whom have lost all their personal belonging and 'wealth' in their efforts to liberate Nigeria. We are counting on your kind nature and determination for reconciliation and prompt action.

The Nigerian State Of Affairs

Nigeria needs modernisation; every aspect of the country stand as a monument to the colonial masters. The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) appear to be engaged in a psychological war with the people of Nigeria, a situation which represent a major

problem and hence a challenge for the Government. It is damaging to the mentality of Nigerians to be placed in a position whereby, the availability of electric supply is left to the mischievousness of some individuals. Also, economic performance of the majority of Nigerians who depend on electricity supply for their various economic activities. The situation Needs Urgent Attention. Nigerians need to be liberated from the inhumane activities of NEPA and the destabilising noise and fumes from the many private 'electric generators' by a few members of the Nigerian community.

Nigeria's Roads have become 'death traps' and a major source of frustration to many road users. Tar poured on sand can hardly be described as road repair.

Drainage system is urgently needed all over the country as most of the country is now submerged in water, with water borne diseases endangering many Nigerian lives particularly the children.

Household refuse is in dire need of disposal as many roads, streets, market and homes have become dumping grounds endangering Nigerian lives and atmosphere.

A healthy nation is a wealthy nation as the saying goes. Nigerians need affordable healthcare provision.

To leave the education of our children in private hands is to condemn our future generation to illiteracy. The educational system needs urgent attention by Government.

Nigerian Airways v British Airways

It is a fact that following the diplomatic dispute between Nigeria Airways and British Airways is causing tremendous hardship travelling between Nigeria the rest of the world.

Your Excellency, the list is endless, suffice it therefore to say that there is an urgent need to consider the entire systems of the country. Nigeria is a very rich country. We recognise that a few Nigerians hold Nigeria's wealth in personal accounts in foreign banks. For the rebuilding of Nigeria, we need such individuals identified and made to return the money as a matter of justice and urgency.

Your Excellency, on behalf of ourselves, the women and children of Nigeria we hope that you will return Nigeria to a genuine democratic rule as scheduled and in the near future. Thereafter, it is our prayer that as Head of Nigeria's Armed Forces, you will use your military know how and position to install the military to its constitutional role and thereby, protect the various arms of government and hence the territorial integrity of Nigeria. This will be a very noble task, which will propel Nigeria in the path of genuine democracy.

Yours Faithfully

Alice Ukoko

FOUNDER: DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF WOMEN (AND MEN) OF NIGERIA