

1. Yearning For The Return Of Bulldozers On Anambra Roads!

2. Saying No To The Return Of Tears And Bloodletting In Anambra Politics!!!

(Intersociety, Onitsha Nigeria, 23rd November 2016)-The leadership of **International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law** has resolved to join other well meaning citizens and residents of Anambra State and its national, regional and international well wishers in ***yearning for the return of bulldozers on Anambra Roads, as well as return of other fundamental public governance incentives to the people and institutions in the State.***

Conversely, our leadership has also resolved to strongly kick against the ***return, in any form, of the State to the theatres of tears and bloodletting in the exercise of political activism by the incumbent administration of Mr. Willie Obiano and other core stakeholders in Anambra politics.*** The periods before the middle of 2006 and above; particularly from 1999 to 2004, must not be allowed a foot again in Anambra Politics.

This firm statement of ours is strongly predicated on two recent unhealthy developments in the State. One of which is the near silent of ***bulldozers and road graders on Anambra Roads;*** usually at their peak by this time of the year (dry season); with concurrent noises and dusts spreading across the State's three Senatorial Districts of Anambra North, Anambra South and Anambra Central; with mainly attended areas being Anambra North and Anambra Central Zones. It is on the ground of this, therefore, that ***Intersociety*** has resolved to join other well meaning citizens and residents of the State in ***yearning for the return of bulldozers on Anambra Roads!***

Bulldozers' Noises and Dusts; by way of ***road construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or maintenance;*** were traditionalized by then illegitimate government of Dr. Chris Nwabueze; particularly between late 2004 and early 2006. This was after Dr. Chris Ngige's failed abduction by his estranged violent political godfathers.

The referenced ***Noises and Dusts of Bulldozers*** were later expanded and consolidated by the legitimate administration of Mr. Peter Onwubuashi Obi; leading to inclusion in the ***work-plan*** of large scale and medium scale bridges, strategic inter-communal roads and a number of strategic federal roads; resulting in ***road revolution;*** with which Anambra is creditably known for till date.

Today, ***Bulldozers and their noises and dusts,*** appeared to have gone silent and dead in the State. For over two years running since the emergence of legitimate administration of Mr. Willie Obiano, no known single road of reasonable or distance mileage or kilometres, is known to have been started from the scratch, completed and commissioned in Onitsha Zone by the administration of Mr. Willie Obiano.

By ***Onitsha Zone,*** we mean ***Fegge Community; Fegge Housing Estate, Odoakpu, Inland Town, Woliwo Layout and Onitsha GRA.*** It also includes non-Onitsha urban areas such as Awada, Ugwuagba, Enekwasumpu, Omagba Phases 1 & 2, Okpoko, Nkutaku, Iyiowa Layout and Odekpe Town, Obosi Urban, Ogidi Urban, Nkpor Urban, Nsugbe Urban (including "33 GRA"), Nkwelle Urban, Mkpikpa Layout and Oba Urban, etc.

We challenge the administration of Mr. Willie Obiano to rubbish this position of ours with contrary and provable facts as it concerns the existence of any fresh road or failed city road located in any of the areas mentioned above; which contract was awarded, completed and commissioned by its Administration from April 2014 till date.

This is just one urban area and we have not mentioned others such as Ihiala sub Urban, Nnewi Urban, Ekwulobia sub Urban, Awkuzu sub Urban and its environs; Awka Urban (other than flyover bridges at Amawbia Roundabout, Kwata Junction and Aroma Roundabout); Umunze sub Urban; Ekwusigo, Aguata and Nnewi South areas, among other strategic communities in the State.

Till date, the centre right main lane of the Upper Iweka to Borrowmeo Roundabout portion of the Onitsha-Enugu Expressway and its left service lane (starting from former MICMERAH Park to Borrowmeo Roundabout) are yet to be fully asphalted or coated. While other lanes that are fully asphalted have long been marked, the referenced portions have remained unmarked till date.

The strategic and all-important Atani-Ozubulu Link Road or Bypass is yet to be completed till date. The all-important Road, with three bridges worth billions of naira; was completed by 80% before the inception of the Obiano Administration; yet the remainder has remained abandoned and uncompleted till date. This is not to talk about the abandonment or acute slow pace of work on dozens of roads inherited by the Obiano Administration with works on them progressively progressing at various speeds before the inception of his Administration. Other critical areas of governance in the State, except the “payment” of workers’ salaries and control of violent crimes; are not faring creditably, contrary to media jingling.

Before now, **Bulldozers** are traditionally known particularly since 2006 in Anambra State as **active road users** during the dry season, competing for a road space with other road users; on account of their owners moving them to the sites having been fully mobilized or partly-paid. In the time of Peter Obi’s Administration, for instance, rapid ***Bulldozers’ movement during dry season, with accompanying dusts and noises***, were made possible through ***huge rainy season savings*** as well as proactive ***contract policy of: complete designated kilometres, raise warrants, get paid and move back to site for other segments.***

Further, owing to high concentration of vehicles of private, commercial and industrial usage in Anambra State as well as fragile topography and soil fragility of the State landscape; in addition to incessant flood menace in rainy season; occasioned by the State’s poor waste and environmental management system; the lifespan of asphalted road network in the State is constantly threatened and required short periodic and constructive maintenance. As we speak, 50% of the asphalted roads or more in the State, particularly, State and urban or township roads are in dire need of strong maintenance in their failed portions.

Such roads include township roads in Okpoko (i.e. Ede Road and Obodoukwu Road), Harbour Industrial Layout in Ogbaru; Fegge (i.e. Port Harcourt Road, Creek Road, Bida Road, Ochanja Market/Zik’s Avenue, Niger Street, etc), Odoakpu (Iweka Road, Modebe Avenue, New Market Road, Old Market Road, Sokoto Road, Iboku Street, New and Old Cemetery Roads, Ozomagala Street, Enugu Road, Oguta Road, Obanye Street etc).

Others are: Onitsha GRA, Inland Town, Nkpor, Omagba Phases 1 &2, Ogidi, Obosi, Oba; and inter-communal roads in Umunze, Igboekwu, Nnobi, Nnewi, Ihiala, Oko, Nkwelle, Ekwulobia, Idemili North and South, Anaocha, Njikoka, Nsugbe, Umuchu, Uli, Mbosi, Uga, Agulu, Awka and environs to mention but a few.

Substantial parts of major drainages and waterways in the State are also filled up and blocked. Of alarming concern are the dicey state of SAKAMORI Drainages at Okpoko, Silas Work and Nwangene River in Fegge, Onitsha; a major collector of all human and rainy season generated water in Onitsha and its environs and depositor of same into the River Niger. Well over half of the referenced Drainages are filled up and blocked and have not been cleared since the beginning of 2014. In the rainy season of 2015, for instance, not less than 20 innocent citizens got flushed away and killed, mostly at Obodoukwu Road and interior Okpoko areas; owing to flood menace associated with flirty and blockage of the SAKAMORI Drainages.

Saying No To The Return Of Tears And Bloodletting In Anambra Politics: In the period up to March 2006, particularly in the disastrous era of Dr. Chinweoke Mbadinuju (June 1999 to June 2003), Anambra State was hellish and experienced bloodletting of alarming proportions. Tears and bloodletting pervaded and enveloped the State's political landscape; leading to opposition voices and other innocent citizens in their tens of hundreds hunted and slaughtered by the State killer-squads with the full backing of the then Government of Anambra State headed by Dr. Chinweoke Mbadinuju.

The likes of Barristers Barnabas and Amaka Igwe (his wife), Ezeodimegwu Okonkwo, Edward Okeke, Rockefeller Okeke, Ikechukwu Nwagboo and scores of others were brazenly slain, while others like Hon Ifeanyi Ibegbu of then Anambra State House of Assembly got miraculously saved; but not without being murderously tortured and lacerated using a State killer squad called "Bakassi Boys" or Anambra State Vigilante Service.

Late Barristers Barnabas and Amaka Igwe and their suspected unborn child were waylaid and slaughtered along Oraifite Street, Awada in the evening of 1st September 2002 by then Government detailed operatives of the Anambra State Vigilante Service (a.k.a. Bakassi Boys). Our several calls on former Government of Peter Obi (17th March 2006 to 17th March 2014) to immortalize the Igwes and others who shed their precious blood for the triumph of true democracy and betterment of the people of the State; including naming Oraifite Street in Awada after the slain couple went unheeded.

Also to the disastrous credit of Dr. Chinweoke Mbadinuju's Administration, over 3500 citizens and residents of the State were slaughtered, in the guise of "crime fighting"; using Anambra State Vigilante Service; disastrously noted for its "trial-by-ordeal" and political influence and interference methods. Earlier on, (September 1999 to July 2000), under the watch of the same Mbadinuju Administration, hundreds of citizens were also slaughtered using "Onitsha and Nnewi Traders Vigilante Groups"; abbreviated as "OTA". Shockingly, some of those who played a part in the butcheries are still very much around and have sneaked into the present Administration of Mr. Willie Obiano either as "Waste Management Consultants" or as "Security Consultants" or "Vigilante Group Heads".

Though Dr. Chinweoke Mbadinuju paid dearly politically by losing his second term bid, but his sponsors and violent political partners still went ahead and installed another stooge, in the person of Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige. It was Dr. Ngige's attempts to assert his gubernatorial independence and control that led to his attempted kidnap by a group of reneges loyal to one Mr. Christian Ubah; leading to burning of key State infrastructures including Government House, the State Judicial Headquarters and the Anambra State Broadcasting Service in 2004.

Political violence, as a result, eclipsed the era of Chris Ngige, leading to "NARTO violence" and unprecedented market leaderships' crises; resulting in deaths and property destructions. Anambra State was restored to political stability following the judicial victory by Mr. Peter Obi and his party (APGA) on 15th of March 2006 (became Governor on 17th of March 2006). The "NARTO War" of 2006 in which "the MASSOB reneges" or "fake MASSOB operatives" teamed up with "NARTO" to ground the State by way of kidnapping for ransom, jungle justice, forceful takeover of motor parks and markets, extortion, sexual abuse, torture, debt collection, involvement in land disputes and killings; was the last battle fought to regain the image and integrity of the State.

Since then till date, Anambra State has never experienced political chaos, tears and bloodletting; except the police-perpetrated Ezu River Saga of January 2013; solely coordinated by CSP James Nwafor led Special Anti Robbery Squad of the Anambra State Police Command in which over 30 able bodied youths were slaughtered under the guise of "violent criminals" and dumped in the Ezu River. Among them were nine members of MASSOB. The Ezu River butchery is not directly related to Anambra Politicking. The second butchery, which is also not related to Anambra Politics; is the massacre of not less than 120 unarmed and innocent citizens at Nkpor and its environs by the soldiers, navy and police personnel on 30th of May 2016 during the annual anniversary marking the World Igbo/Biafra Heroes Day. Most of their bodies were later recovered and given a secret burial inside the Onitsha Military Cantonment on 1st June 2016.

These explain why we are shocked and alarmed as it concerns recent threats by some aides of the Government of Anambra State to return the State to tears and bloodletting on account of reported unhealthy verbal exchanges between the camps of the incumbent Governor of the State, Mr. Willie Obiano and his predecessor, Mr. Peter Obi. A threat of such magnitude to a former Governor of Anambra State, who is not a common criminal and did and achieve so much for the State and its People when he held sway as Anambra Governor; is considered a collective threat to the entire People of Anambra State.

We also reason that if such threats can be directed to a former Governor who can never govern the State in his entire life again except the 1999 Constitution is altered tomorrow; what becomes the fate and safety of other political actors particularly those who may most likely have indicated interest in contesting for public offices in Anambra State particularly the office of the Anambra Governor? This informs the timely alarms of ours before it is too late.

We have always advised elected political office holders to always draw a difference between **thinking and peopling governance; and parasitizing and funning governance**. It is a truism that **governance clock ticks as fast as clock seconds**. It is therefore extremely important to **make hay while the sun shines!** That is to say that elected public office holders have no time to waste because **input legitimacy is compulsorily and always tied to output legitimacy**. Real governance is also not run on **prototype** or **media hype**. **Chickens must always or all times come home to roost!**

It is on account of the above, therefore, that we strongly advise the Obiano Administration to eschew any form of violence and allow the People of the State to decide whether or not to vote for him for another four years. The Governor is called upon to call his aides to order and direct them to desist from making further inflammatory statements capable of **returning the State to the theatres of tears and bloodletting**. The Governor should squarely face the governance of the State and adequately attend to the deplorable state of roads, particularly those highlighted above. **Let Bulldozers and Road Graders be rapidly and forcefully returned to Anambra Roads!**

We also call on other core stakeholders in Anambra State politics to discountenance the referenced “threats of bloodshed” by some overzealous aides of the Government of Anambra State and avoid embarking on **reprisal vigilantism and militancy** ahead of the 2017 governorship election in the State. Those interested in governing the State should strictly engage in issue-based politicking in strategic and analytical manners and desist from resorting to or advocating for violence.

It is our strong warning that nothing must happen to highly placed citizens of the State; whether it is Dr. Chris Ngige, Mr. Peter Obi, Chief Victor Umeh, Barr Val Obienyem, Chief Oseloka Obaze, or Mr. Willie Obiano and his appointed aides, etc. As a matter of fact, it is incumbent upon the present Government of Anambra State to ensure their safety and happiness whenever they are in the State. Any of these citizens as well as other citizens of the State has a constitutional right to freedom of movement and right to life, personal liberty, and dignity of human person, residency, association and expression.

Signed:

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