

BIAFRA INDEPENDENCE PROJECT: MOVING FORWARD, Part 1

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An address delivered to the Biafrans in response to the call and requests by many Biafrans that Barrister Emeka Emekesiri should provide leadership and show directions for the way forward as the vision bearer of the legal methodology of self-determination.

1. **Introductory Remarks:**

This address shall be given in multiple parts. I have been informed that many Biafrans who are loyal to the Customary Government under the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have requested that I should be called upon to provide leadership to the Biafrans and give directions for the way forward. I have also been informed that few people opposed the call by pointing out my weaknesses and faults which include the use of “I” instead of “we” in my statements; and that they would like me to relocate and live in Biafraland instead of London.

I sincerely acknowledge my faults, weaknesses, failures and imperfections in the arts and science of organizational management, especially in managing the affairs of the Biafrans. Indeed, the little experience I have got so far in managing and advising the Biafran organizations in our Teamwork under the Elders has proved that much patience and longsuffering will be required in providing leadership to the Biafrans. I am willing to learn and grow in knowledge and understanding. Though I was trained in three professional disciplines and qualified as a Professional Management Consultant over thirty years ago, I remain a student of organizational management, social intelligence and human behavioural sciences with determination to achieve perfection. It is however expedient for me to state that leadership and followership are twin-sides of a coin as the failure or success of one leads to the failure or success of the other. It is our collective responsibility in teamwork by which the success is our success and the failure is our failure.

I appreciate the love of the Biafrans who made the observations regarding the wrong use of “I” instead of “we” in my statements. I promise to be more careful in the use of personal pronouns in communications to avoid giving an impression of arrogance, pride and haughtiness. Nevertheless, I believe in the Christian Scriptures that command us to make honest reports always and give honour to whom honour is due. Therefore, I will never make a statement claiming the glory for what I did not do. I must give honour to whom honour is due and I request all the Biafrans to do the same unto me regarding my own contributions to the Biafran struggle.

2. **Acceptance of the call to provide leadership:**

I hereby accept the call to provide leadership to the Biafrans who believe in the legal methodology of self-determination consisting of the judicial, political and diplomatic processes under the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra. This means that I must work with and submit to the Elders of Biafraland who believe in our methodology of self-determination.

By accepting this call to provide leadership, I do not arrogate infallibility to myself and will not presume or proclaim myself the Leader of Biafra or President of Biafra or Prime Minister of Biafra. The Republic of Biafra is not yet restored and therefore it would be childish or foolish for a person to designate himself as the Leader of Biafra, President of Biafra, Prime Minister of Biafra or Head of State of Biafra. At the moment, we have a long-term Project at hand. It is the Biafra Independence Project which in my previous messages was classified into three phases, namely: (a) Phase 1: Awareness Creation; (b) Phase 2: Regional Government of Biafra within Nigeria; and (c) Phase 3: Outright Independence of Biafra by a Referendum just like Scotland is doing now in Britain. I would prefer to be described and addressed as the Chairman of the Project Team. I request all the Biafrans to accept me as I am. In due course, we shall address the issue of relocating to Biafraland, if it becomes inevitably necessary, as some Biafrans have requested.

Phase 1 of the Project (Awareness Creation) has been accomplished by the pioneer Biafran activists who started the independence movement in 1999 led by Chief Ralph Uwazurike and his MASSOB members, who I was informed, also established the Radio Biafra in London in or about the year 2008 and the Voice of Biafra International in the United States of America. I appeared in the Federal High Court Abuja in 2007 with the late Chief Dr Chimezie Ikeazor, SAN, (Oboli Obosi II), before the Honourable Justice Binta Nyako, to advocate for the release of Ralph Uwazurike from detention. I also visited him at Keffi Prison in Nasarawa State. I was then the spokesman and public relations officer of Igbo Lawyers Forum in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the year 2007 was when I entered into the Biafran struggle.

Though the pioneers who started in 1999 split into various factions, it is my belief that the split helped to spread the message of Biafra further as each faction tried to outcompete the other. In recent times, the glorious image and honour of the body

known as Indigenous People of Biafra (aka IPOB) which was established under the authority of the Elders of Biafraland in 2012 with HRM the Honourable Justice Eze Ozobu OFR, as the Chairman, was damaged by some recalcitrant and abusive youths who created their own factions and brought the name of Indigenous People of Biafra to disrepute and opprobrium. Our human rights organization known as Bilie Human Rights Initiative also split into two factions. The Biafra Voice International (BVI) established in London also split into three or more factions. The Radio Biafra in London split into two factions, one called RBL and the other RBi. In fact, almost all the Biafran organizations have split into various factions in the quest to achieve Biafra.

Some people are worried about these splits and disagreements without understanding that it is the will of God, for even the great Apostles Paul and Barnabas who were called and ordained together by God to work as a team in Acts 13:2 also split up in their second missionary journey in Acts 15:36-41 for a divine purpose. The splits are a blessing in disguise, provided we understand how to use the splits to the advantage of Biafra instead of attacking and destroying one another. All the factions of the Biafran Independence struggle have done very well in spreading the message of Biafra and have jointly accomplished the Phase 1 of the Biafra Independence Project through their various activities. The Radio Biafra London under the leadership of Mr Nnamdi Kanu helped to create awareness of the Biafran struggle to all parts of the world, with the Biafran activists in the social media, bloggers, twitters, protesters, cartoonists, propagandists, etc. They have all done very well. All the Biafran activists who have helped in achieving the Awareness Creation Phase 1 of the struggle are greatly honoured and shall be remembered in the Chronicles and History of Biafra in due course. ***The question now is this: After the awareness creation, what next?***

As I stated in my previous messages, the Biafra Independence Project is Teamwork. It is like a team in a football contest where the players pass the ball from one person to the other until they pass it to the player at the vantage position who will strike the ball into the goalpost to score the winning goal. It is like a relay race in athletics where the first athlete runs his part and hands the baton to the next athlete and the next to the next until the baton is handed over to the last athlete who will reach the finishing line of victory. The victory belongs to the team and not to an individual. The glory is shared by all the team players and not ascribed to one man because the player who scored the goal would not have done so if the teammate had not passed the ball to him; and the athlete who reached the finishing line with the baton would not have done so if the last athlete had not handed the baton over to him. The person who started the race may not be the person who will reach to the end but the victory belongs to all. Moses brought the Israelites out from Egypt but it was Joshua that led them into the Promised Land. We are into a spiritual movement known as national deliverance ministry, for it is the perfect will of God that all nations in bondage must be set free, and all people oppressed by the rulers of darkness in the high places of political and economic wickedness shall be delivered. God shall reward every worker in this ministry according to his works.

We are now at the Phase 2 of the Biafra Independence Project. The ball has been passed to us and the baton has been handed over to us as a team to create the Biafran Regional Government within Nigeria just like Scotland within Britain. It is teamwork with dedicated and experienced team players. Unless Nigeria disintegrates in our generation by an act of God, or by high level international politics as happened to the USSR in 1991, it will not be feasible to gain outright independence today. There shall be the Phase 3 of the Biafran Project for outright independence in the future after we finish our own part today. Our assignment is clear, namely, to create the Biafran Regional Government within Nigeria just like Scotland within Britain. We shall lay a solid foundation for our children who shall finish the work in their own generation. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 430 years but maintained their indigenous identity as Hebrews from generation to generation until the 5th generation when Moses was born. I am persuaded that God shall raise the Biafran team that will achieve outright independence in future. Consequently, for the Biafra Project Phase 2 to create Biafra as a Regional Government within Nigeria, it is necessary for the Project Team to have a Leader. I therefore accept to provide leadership required to actualise the Biafran Project Phase 2 and shall work under the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra which believes in the legal methodology of self-determination. We shall continue with the original vision as it was in the beginning when we created the body known as INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA under Section 40 of the Nigerian Constitution and took the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Court for the independence of Biafra.

As we defined in Court in Suit No FHC/OW/CS/102/2012 reconstituted in 2013 as Suit No FHC/OW/CS/192/2013, Indigenous People of Biafra are the remnants of Biafra and their descendants who were not consumed in the war between Nigeria and Biafra, now inhabiting the three contiguous geopolitical regions of the South East, parts of the South-South, and parts of the Middle Belt of Nigeria. It is not a group or a limited liability company but a nation as defined by the vision bearer. All Biafrans are Indigenous People of Biafra. It is not a cult that admits members by oaths and fetish practices. We have made it clear to the Nigerian Government that we are Biafrans by indigenous identity but Nigerians by citizenship which was forced upon us against our will. We made strong legal submission in the Federal High Court of Nigeria which the Nigerian lawyers could not impugn that what Biafra lost after the war was its sovereignty and not the identity of its people. We have therefore decided to regain our sovereignty as guaranteed by both the Nigerian law and international law.

This definition of Indigenous People of Biafra in their ancestral habitation remains the definition of the Biafran territory in the Federal High Court as a nation-in-waiting which the Nigerian Government has taken judicial notice of. The actual delineation and mapping of the territory shall be done in due course and by due process. This definition covers all Biafrans. Please ignore the "Biafra maps" circulating in the social media as they have no legitimacy. We are a people inhabiting a definable geographical location but without delineation yet as a sovereign entity. We are Biafrans living in the Nigerian territory. It is our ancestral homeland forcefully

occupied by the Nigerian Government. We are a nation but not yet a nation-state. We are a non-legal entity which can only sue or be sued in a representative capacity.

The “Indigenous People of Biafra” which was sued by the Federal Government of Nigeria and declared as “Terrorists” is the one registered as a limited liability company in the overseas and not the people in the Federal High Court in Suit No FHC/OW/CS/192/2013 in the case between Biafra and Nigeria under the leadership of the Elders. We run a Customary Government under the Nigerian Legal System. To this end, I recognise and accept all the Biafrans as Indigenous People of Biafra, whether activists or non-activists, irrespective of their political ideologies and beliefs. I consider all the factions of Indigenous People of Biafra as one body, whether described as CG-IPOB; MNK-IPOB; or DOS-IPOB, knowing that most of the Biafrans were sincere but sincerely confused and misled even unto death with their sincerity and innocence. I therefore welcome all the remnants of the Biafrans into the one-fold of the Biafran Community Government in the world as a nation-in-waiting seeking to exercise their right of self-determination to have a recognised territorial homeland in their ancestral habitat.

3. **Acknowledgement:**

With utmost humility I appreciate and acknowledge the sacrificial works of the Elders of Biafraland who believed in my vision of self-determination by legal methodology and constituted the membership of the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in 2012. These Elders trusted me, risked their lives and stuck out their necks and signed the Legal Instrument drafted by Mekadolf Chambers, served upon the Federal Government of Nigeria for the case between Biafra and Nigeria at a time when many Elders and Igbo lawyers ran into hiding, thinking that we were mad for embarking on what they described as suicidal mission. I regard these Elders of Biafraland as the Foundation Fathers of the modern Struggle for the Independence of Biafra by legal methodology consisting of the judicial, political and diplomatic processes. They have continued in the battle of wits to set their children free from bondage despite the challenges they face in Nigeria.

I will specifically mention the names of these noble and honourable Elders and Foundation Fathers including HRM and His Lordship, the Honourable Justice Eze Ozobu OFR; Dr Dozie Ikedife OON, JP; Late Brig Gen Joe Achuzia; Professor Chidi Osuagwu; Chief Barr Debe Odumegwu Ojukwu, and Rt Rev Dr Maglorious Enyioha, who put their names and signatures on the Legal Instrument authorizing Bilie Human Rights Initiative to sue the Federal Republic of Nigeria on behalf of Biafra and came out in the open to support the Biafra Independence Project without fear. I must add the names of the other Elders and Traditional Rulers who joined the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra afterwards such as HRM Eze Iheanyichukwu Nwokenna, Hon Prince Sony Edet Osom, Elder Barr Sylvester Akpan, and Elder Apostle Kalada Jene, who have continued the struggle for self-determination by legal methodology. The list will be incomplete if I fail to acknowledge the works of the President General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Barr John Nnia Nwodo and the Elders

and Traditional Rulers who have given their support for the Biafran freedom movement by political diplomacy in line with the vision of the Movement of Biafrans in Nigeria (MOBIN) such as HRM Igwe (Amb) Lawrence Agubuzu, HRH Prince Chukwuemeka Onyesoh, Prof Uzodinma Nwala of the Alaigbo Development Foundation, Prof Mark Anikpo, and others too numerous to mention.

4. **Moving Forward:**

We have stayed too long in one place since 1999 to accomplish the awareness creation phase of the Biafra Project. We cannot continue to move in circles. It is time to move forward. The Israelites had a similar experience on their way to freedom from Egypt to their Promised Land when they dwelt at the foot of Mount Horeb in the wilderness for a long time until God said they had stayed too long in one place and ordered them to move forward, Deut 1:6-8. The Biafrans must move forward now, for we have stayed too long in one place running in circles from 1999 until now with only protests for awareness creation. Street protests alone cannot achieve Biafra. Only a mad man does one thing in the same way repeatedly hoping to get a different result. Street protest which began in 1999 up to the present day has achieved its purpose. Thousands of Biafrans have died in the protests from 1999 to the present day. There is no Biafran that will die now in the protests and confrontations with the Nigerian authorities whose head would be worth more than the heads of the 3.5 million souls that died in 1967 – 1970. We must move forward now with political diplomacy, lobbying the powerful nations in the world and making friends in the international community.

However, we have got some challenges that may hinder us from moving forward. I was informed by Dr Dozie Ikedife, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra, that two Biafran activists identified as Mr Cosmas George and Mrs Akpamgbo, who visited the Elders and attended the Customary Government Town Hall Meeting at Nnewi for the purpose of promoting peace and unity among the Biafrans were attacked physically, beaten up, brutalised and nearly killed by some unscrupulous activists claiming to be members of the MNK-IPOB on the allegation that they left their faction of IPOB and joined another faction and refused to be under the command of their supreme leader. The two Biafrans are critically ill now and receiving treatments in the hospital. We have observed serious attacks on the social media between members of the MNK-IPOB and DOS-IPOB, which if not nipped in the bud, may develop into a rival cult war that would destroy their followers. I call on the Elders of Biafraland to take action now to avoid the impending danger in Biafraland. The Igbo adage says that an elder cannot stay at home and allow a she-goat to give birth on tether.

I have been advised to ignore the atrocities being perpetrated by these overzealous Biafran activists in order to avoid receiving attacks from them. To keep quiet in the face of evil is unforgivable cowardice in the sight of God. We condemn the childish and cowardly behaviours of these Biafran activists operating as “IPOB members” who are still attacking their fellow Biafrans instead of attacking Boko Haram and Fulani

herdsmen, abusing and provoking the President General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Chief Nnia Nwodo, and attacking the Elders and Leaders of the Igbo Nation. We cannot allow this monster to take root in Biafraland. There must be orderliness, decorum, respect for one another, and respect for the elders and constituted authorities in the nation as we agitate for the self-determination of Indigenous People of Biafra.

We have said in our previous message that there are three methods of achieving independence for a people, namely: the military method, the judicial method and the political method. Both the judicial and political methods constitute the legal methodology otherwise known as the Due Process. At the moment, we have established a political movement for all the Biafrans called Movement of Biafrans in Nigeria (MOBIN) to lay the solid foundation for the actualisation of the Biafra Project Phase 2 and create the Regional Government of Biafra. Our vision is in line with the vision of Ohanaeze Ndigbo in its call to restructure Nigeria into autonomous self-governing regions so that every region will be autonomous within Nigeria, governing itself and developing at its own pace just like Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales, the four countries that make up the Great Britain. We have opened up diplomatic discussions with the Governments of some World Powers who have invested heavily in Nigeria and are opposed to the break-up of Nigeria because of their economic interests. Yes, we must assure them that their interests shall be protected in Biafraland. It is a spiritual principle that where a man's treasures are, that is where his heart shall be. The responses we have received so far concerning our quest for Regional Government are quite encouraging.

5. **Reorganising and Restructuring the Biafra Movement:**

At this stage, it has become necessary to reorganise and restructure the Biafran Struggle for self-determination. I am aware that Dr Dozie Ikedife, on 30 May 2018, speaking on behalf of HRM Honourable Justice Eze Ozobu OFR, said that the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra would be expanded and requested the Biafrans to submit the names of two credible elders from their Communities and States for inclusion in the Council. The office of the Secretary of the Supreme Council of Elders is now vacant following the demise of Brig Gen Joe Achuzia. The Elders have given approval for his replacement and have nominated a credible Biafran activist from Asaba who shall be made known in due course. Many strategic changes and reorganizations are being made at the moment. *The Policy Statements and Orders by the Government of Indigenous People of Biafra, Vol. 1, 2014*, signed into customary administrative law on 1st September 2014 shall be amended accordingly. We request for your patience.

We are gathering the Biafrans together as a nation-in-waiting, and preparing them for their independence. We are a nation with competent leaders who can sit down with the leaders of Nigeria and the international community and negotiate our freedom, eyeball to eyeball. The Biafran Struggle cannot be left in the hands of the youths and children alone. Every player has his own role to play. The youths have their role and the Elders have their role too. We need Biafran politicians, Biafran

diplomats, students, intellectuals, lawyers, scientists, industrialists, businessmen and women, etc, in a well-organized movement where nobody shall be tagged a saboteur for holding a different opinion. A lot has been achieved in our struggle for self-determination. We have created powerful structures on the ground to ensure that we achieve our goal of self-determination. We hereby request all the Biafrans to visit our website at www.ipobgovernment.org and enter their details in the Biafran Database. Our official media organizations at the moment are BVI Channel 1 transmitting from Biafraland and Voice of Biafra (VOB) transmitting from the United Kingdom. Our political and civil rights movement is MOBIN and those who want to become members are advised to visit the MOBIN website at www.mobinbiafra.org for details. Our Customary Government organizes the IPOB Biafra Town Hall meetings every month and invites all Biafrans to attend in their places of residence. Any Biafran activist who is willing to take the role as a coordinator of the Biafra Town Hall meeting in his place of residence is requested to contact us immediately.

All the leaders of the various Biafran groups which believe in the legal methodology consisting of judicial, political and diplomatic processes are invited to become part of this restructured movement. Our Customary Government is known and recognised by the Government of every country where we operate including the Nigerian Government. Our political movement, MOBIN, is known and recognised by the Government of every country where we operate including the Nigerian Government. MOBIN is active in both national and international politics. We are not illegal and do not operate in hiding.

We know that it is not every Biafran activist that believes in the use of law and political diplomacy to achieve independence. We plead with those who do not believe in our methodology to pray for us to succeed instead of attacking us and pulling us down. We are working as a team for the benefit of all Biafrans. Our methodology may be slow but we are sure of achieving our goal of independence for Biafra in phases. It is Biafra and Life, not Biafra or Death. We shall not die but live to declare the works of God in Biafraland. We have died enough. We are aware that all Biafrans earnestly desire freedom, whether freedom within Nigeria just like Scotland within Britain or freedom outside Nigeria just like Eritrea outside Ethiopia. We encourage all Biafrans to remain steadfast in our quest for freedom. Biafra must be free, whether within or without, but patience, longsuffering and perseverance are required. At the end, we shall overcome and the glory shall be given to our God while the joy and blessings of freedom shall belong to all the Biafrans as a team and not to an individual. It shall be well.

Emeka Emekesiri, Esq.

Chairman, IPOB BIAFRA PROJECT

By the authority of the Supreme Council of Elders of Indigenous People of Biafra