

Mass Poverty, Political Fragmentation of Nigeria? Towards Independence of the Biafra State?

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Theme: [History](#)

Ambassador Uche Ajulu-Okeke is a veteran Diplomat and Development Studies Expert with thirty-year achievements in the Nigerian Foreign Service. She is widely known for her performance orientation, positive mentorship and team spirit. In recognition of her high-level competences, the Anambra State Government appointed Ambassador Ajulu-Okeke to serve in various capacities. She also served in the All Progressive Grand Party (APGA), a Southeastern-based political party, before relocating to the United States.

In the present-day Federal Republic of Nigeria, several years after its independence, the leaders have not succeeded in rebuilding its state institutions enough to reflect all-inclusive ethnic diversity, let alone in adopting Western-style democracy that takes cognizance of different public opinions on development issues in the country. The struggle for and misuse of power have brought the country into a stalemate, disrupting any efforts to overcome the deepening economic and social crisis, she explained in her in-depth discussions.

In this interview, Ambassador Uche Ajulu-Okeke further spoke about many other significant and outstanding issues that are creating tensions in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and why the Biafra has to work unreservedly towards self-determination and independence. Here are the interview excerpts:

How is the situation, in your interpretation, in the Eastern regions that constitute Biafra today in Nigeria?

The situation in the region is dire depicting a derelict lack of infrastructure widespread unemployment, insecurity and youth hopelessness. As a result of decades of state endorsed systemic exclusion since the end of the Civil War, economic emasculation of the East by Nigeria in giving all Easterners £20 irrespective of previous bank holdings at the end of the war, State sponsored nepotism ostracism which eschewed merit and human enterprise from mainstream governance, Easterners found themselves at the brink of socio-economic exterminations and had to pull themselves up by sheer perseverance and dint of effort resulting in disenchantment with Nigeria and a massive migration to new diasporas.

In the region, what economic spheres are available for foreign investors? Currently what foreign players are showing interest in the region?

There are no foreign investors of repute in the region. However, a plethora of virile local entrepreneurs abound which provide fertile ground for viable foreign investment. The indigenous entrepreneurial spirit and the dexterous will to survive the odds has been of immense value in containing widespread poverty. To this end, a number of indigenous entrepreneurs such as Innoson Motors, Coscharis Forms, Lynden Forms, ABC Transport, Air

Peace, AA Oil et cetera, have become successful industrialists from sheer dint of self-effort.

The economic spheres open to foreign investors will usher in unprecedented growth in the area of human capital especially in the digital space. Human economy and venture capital leveraging on the age-old entrepreneurial apprenticeship tradition is the way to go for any foreign investor. No foreign investors are currently showing interest in the region due to heavy occupationist police and military presence in the region that does not permit the thriving nature of free enterprise to grow as people live and operate in a climate of persecution and fear.

What investment incentives and kinds of business support are available for foreign investors in Biafra?

The Republic of Biafra will emplace a sustainable merit-based investment regime and a justiciable investment climate based on the rule of law. With the emplacement of security and the rule of law, merit and equity in governance models and institutions and a sense of patriotism and belonging in the Citizenry, the restored Republic will lay enviable firm sustainable foundations for investor confidence and economic growth based on tried and tested models and international best practice. The model of business support incentives readily available to the People are the traditional entrepreneurial self-help. Highfaluting government postulations on business exist on paper but are beyond the reach and access of the common man, especially the unschooled rural dweller or urban slum dweller with no access to political or nepotic privilege.

Since 1970, after the civil war, has Igbo women's status changed in the Eastern Nigeria? Generally, what are the popular perceptions about Igbo women, as against Yoruba, in Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Nothing has changed for the Igbo Woman since after the Civil War. With the increasing socio-political incarceration endured by her male brethren, Igbo women lost their self-esteem. Popular perception of the Igbo Woman are no different from the plight of their male brethren. The renowned resilient strength and baseline support for which Igbo women are known for has been corroded by willful denial of opportunity by the Nigerian State. Many have been forced into unwholesome practices for basic sustenance and are now part of the human and brain-drain which has engulfed the East.

Do the social and cultural changes influencing the activities of women in Biafra State. Can you please discuss the main spheres where Igbo women are currently?

Currently Igbo Women agonize over the seemingly disparate dissipative efforts of their Male brethren in their quest for the restoration of Biafra. Within the sphere of Christianity however Igbo women have excelled and found avenues for self-worth and social expression as religious activities and platforms have created viable avenues to restore the self-esteem of the Igbo Woman. Also, Igbo Woman in the diaspora has again and again proved beyond all reasonable doubt her achievement orientation and resilience in all walks of life. Names like Chimamanda Adichie and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala are household names.

What are the challenges, in your view, that remain especially for Igbo women and the youth in the region of Biafra?

Several challenges exist, the first of which is coercive alien hostile occupation of our

homeland which have severally subjected Igbo Women to rape, ravaging their homes and farmlands, decapitating their husbands and children and sources of traditional rural livelihoods. Widespread poverty, unemployment and unemployable skill sets, remain a major challenge. State endorsed occupation of large portions of rural and village communal lands by alien hostile Jihadists have hampered the ability of women to provide for their families as supportive income earners.

Many women and young graduates from schools and cannot find jobs as there are no factories to absorb them and Government, the major employer, has become an overburdened inept nepotism and corrupt. With the prevailing socio-economic climate and the steadily dwindling economic fortunes and hostile stance of the Government towards entrepreneurial endeavor of Easterners, the future is bleak for women and youth. The only glimpse of hope in the horizon is a fallback to the age-old traditional practice of nurtured apprenticeship has been the bulwark of survival and sustenance in the face of the current existential threat facing Easterners.

Could it have been better if the region were independent of the federal system of governance?

An independent Biafra will, of course, usher in a regime of laws. A merit-based system of law and order. Independent Biafra will emplace a just and fair system where merit is accorded due cognition and reward and criminality and kleptomania is eschewed. In five years of independence indigenous enterprise of the East will reach unparalleled heights with world class infrastructure and a first-tier digital economy. This will be achieved through the effort and resilience of the indigenous Peoples of Biafra. In the face of years of criminal neglect by Nigeria and our strong footing in the Diaspora, Biafra's emancipation and development will be the Eighth Wonder of the World.

In your objective assessment, what can you say are the current achievements or gains in the economic sphere for the Biafra under Federal President Buhari?

Absolutely nothing. The current entrapment of Biafra within the British Nigeria contraption prevents the actualization of its investment and development potential in all ramifications. This is why we Easterners want to delink from this entrapped arrangement called Nigeria.

What are some of the weaknesses and strengths of Nigeria's stranglehold on Biafra?

Nepotism at all levels and institutions of Government. Morbid corruption. Endemic kleptocracy. Ethnic cleansing and persecution of Christians and ethnic capture of the military and security apparatus of the State. Our current entrapment in Nigeria has been of no gain to the East and a lingering Albatross.

What do you suggest could be possible exit ways out from all these? Most probably, you would advocate for political independence, to become a separate republic?

Some members of the international community and the Comity of Nations were not part of and did not participate in the 1885 Berlin Conference which saw the scramble for and partition of Africa and heralded blatant conquest colonialism. Greedy European nations lumped indigenous nationalities together with little regard for their distinct indigenes and cultures identities. European colonialism therefore created unstable amalgamations of hitherto strange and alien groupings into artificial contemporary nation states of today.

In many African nations such as Nigeria, these indigenous nationalities have had a hostile acrimonious fractious relationship that has impeded development and led to unstable anarchy. The result is that there is massive corruption and widespread kleptocracy with indigenous ethnicities in power making strenuous effort to capture State resources to the exclusion of other groups. This scenario found in many African countries today have led to several Civil Wars and quests for self-determination notable of which is the Nigeria-Biafra War and the enduring quest for self-determination of the indigenous Peoples of Biafra and recently of the entrapped nationalities of the Western and Middle Belt Regions.

The international community has long recognized that the structure of many African states remains unsustainable due to the artificial nature of their creation. They also recognize that many of these indigenous nationalities such as the Igbo have enduring ancient democratic state and governance systems that were subsumed by colonial conquest and use capable of having separate countries as seen with the Republic of Biafra.

The way forward in restoring these ancient nationalities and bringing sustainable peace and development to the beleaguered peoples of Biafra is through the conduct of plebiscites that will afford the indigenous nationalities the inalienable right to choose how they are governed.

In Nigeria, the juxtaposition of ancient nationalities with incompatible values presently held together by a coercive military decree in a centrist top down military format federations, fundamental regional autonomies should be returned to the constituent indigenous groupings through the conduct of plebiscites. There should also be the renunciation of the military Decree 1999 Constitution which has been held the constituent indigenes hostage since 1999. A return to the truly democratic 1963 Constitution and holding of self-determination autonomy plebiscites for all indigenous nationalities will usher in sustainable development and peace.

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Kester Kenn Klomegah is a passionate contributor to Global Research.

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