

Press Release

Obasanjo Has Failed Nigerians

The Foundation for Good Governance and Development in Nigeria (FGDN) UK is deeply concerned about the recent spate of religious and ethnic violence in Nigeria as well as the continuous violation of the fundamental human rights of peace loving Nigerians by the Nigerian governments. The FGDN unequivocally condemns the recent massacre in Plateau State and the reprisal attacks in Kano, which led to the killings of innocent Nigerians.

The FGDN feels that these killings would have been averted but for the incompetence and uneven-handedness of the Plateau State government in handling the crisis as well as the untimely intervention of the federal government of Nigeria. If anything, the attitude and irresponsible public utterances of Governor Dariye of Plateau State have been instrumental to the perpetuation of the heinous crimes committed in the name of religion or ethnicity. It is against this background that the FGDN endorses the suspension of the governor as well as the imposition of the state of emergency in the state. This, the FGDN believes, will serve as an assurance to law-abiding citizens of their safety.

Nonetheless, the FGDN wishes to draw the attention of the federal government not to capitalise on the situation in Plateau to settle political scores and/or to blackmail state governors, particularly those that are critical of Obasanjo's dictatorial tendencies. It is true that the current socio-economic and political crises in Nigeria and the intolerable security situation in the country are the direct result of the electoral fraud associated with the 2003 general election coupled with poor, ineffective and feeble leadership. The FGDN believes that if Dariye were duly elected by the people, he would not have turned against them. He, along with over 90% of those

occupying government houses (including Obasanjo) and legislative assemblies, rigged their way to power. They, therefore, only serve the interests of those who helped them into such positions.

Obasanjo has said "Dariye was incompetent and has displayed gross inefficiency, insensitivity and dereliction of duty in managing the rich and robust diversity of his state". He further accused Dariye of "frequent unauthorised international globe-trotting, neglecting his primary responsibility of governing his state". These accusations can equally, if not more deservingly, be directed at Obasanjo himself. During the last five years of Obasanjo's administration, over 10,000 innocent people have been killed in Nigeria. More than ever before, communal violence has become a constant phenomenon in Nigeria. The continuous violence in the South-South, the massacre of northerners in the South-West, the Zaki Biam carnage in Benue State, the violence in Kaduna and the unwarranted reprisal attacks in the South-East as well as the upheavals in Taraba, Borno and Yobe States all occurred at various times during Obasanjo's tenure as president. Sadly, though, in all these and other crisis situations the government intervention, if any, was untimely and/or subversive!

The incessant crisis in Plateau State and other parts of the country could have been prevented or at least minimised by a timely deployment of security forces. Instead, these forces are often used against innocent citizens. The federal government of Obasanjo controls the security forces which have so far failed to guarantee peace and security in the country. In spite of the widespread incidence of political killings, deadly attacks on state governors' entourage, politically motivated death threats, organised armed robbery, and violent abduction of the

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FOUNDATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Anambra State Governor, the culprits have not been arrested, let alone be charged.

The lingering controversies surrounding both the 2003 general elections in Nigeria and the recently held local government elections in the country suggest that widespread malpractices seriously undermine the credibility of the political system and its actors. The Obasanjo government lacks the moral authority to act in good faith, thereby desperately resorting to all forms of undemocratic posturing to cling to power.

The recent police brutality against innocent citizens to lawfully participate in the 3rd May 2004 mass rally, marking the first anniversary of Nigeria's rigged general elections, provides a classic example of the federal government's desperation. The rights to freedom of speech, association and peaceful demonstrations are constitutional guarantees that must be upheld at all times. Without these fundamental principles the whole fabric of our nascent democracy is under threat.

The FGDN calls on Obasanjo and his government to respect the rights of all Nigerians irrespective of religion, political persuasion and ethnic background. Given the wide range of catastrophes in Nigeria (rigged elections, general level of insecurity of life and property, religious and ethnic crises, political assassinations, bad governance, and human rights abuses), the FGDN believes that the government of Obasanjo has woefully failed, and calls for the resignation of the entire government and the subsequent constitution of an interim government to oversee fresh general elections. This is the only way the honour and dignity of Nigeria would be restored both domestically and internationally.

The FGDN calls for the immediate resettlement of all displaced persons in all troubled spots in Nigeria. Law abiding Nigerians should be able to live freely without fear in whichever part of the country they choose to live. In addition, generous

compensation packages should be provided to those affected.

The FGDN calls for an independent commission of enquiry to investigate not only the remote causes of the crisis but also to ascertain the role played by the Plateau State government, the thugs in Kano, the military and other parties in the crisis with the view to finding a lasting solution to such a crisis.

Finally, the FGDN calls on Nigerians, especially leaders of thought, to preach peace and eschew violence in the interest of stability and harmonious coexistence, as there can be no development without peace and stability.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Long Live the *Foundation for Good Governance in Nigeria!!*

For and on behalf of *the Foundation*:

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