

ALLEGIANCE SHOULD BE TO THE NIGERIA

BY

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I have been moved to write this article due to the threat of the supporters of Chief Olabode George to decamp from the PDP after the pronouncement of his guilty judgement at the High Court of Lagos State, Criminal Division of Ikeja Judicial Division Lagos on the 26th October 2009. Chief Olabode George is no mean Nigerian, a former Chairman of the Nigerian Ports Authority, Deputy National Chairman (South) of the ruling People's Democratic Party the (PDP).

According to a lot of commentators, Chief George was christened untouchable, a sacred cow who enjoyed immense immunity as a result of his closeness to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo the former president of Nigeria. He was said to be held in awe by fellow Nigerians especially in the southwest and in Lagos in particular.

He was the former military governor of Ondo State and was appointed as the Director General of the Yar'Adua-Jonathan Campaign Organisation. How could he be sent to jail his supporters are asking. Now they are threatening the Yar'Adua government of pulling out of the PDP en-mass and the election is only in 2011.

The threat by the supporters of Bode George to decamp from the PDP is in protest against the state, regional and the national leaders of the party, over a perceived abandonment of Chief George throughout his trials and his eventual conviction by a Lagos state high court.

These supporters have failed to realise that the PDP as a political party is operating within the Nigerian constitution where any proved fraudulent practice will be viewed with all seriousness and punished appropriately.

Whatever the felon may have done, party membership does not exonerate him from any unlawful acts he may have committed. There is the erroneous belief that Chief Bode George may have been sacrificed due to his closeness to OBJ in the ongoing fight against corruption and abuse of public office in PDP governments at both state and national level. It is an indictment of the federal judicial system as opined by some commentators that a different result would have been obtained if the case has been held in the federal capital territory of Abuja. Does that then imply that this judgement was obtained because PDP does not control Lagos State?

It should be stated that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria supersedes political party constitution, party comradeship and cult constitutions or oaths allegiance.

Politics is interesting but those who play it in Nigeria are usually jobless professionals who see politics as an opportunity to amass wealth pauperise fellow Nigerians fail to implement their manifestoes. Playing politics in Nigeria is also very expensive as would be politicians have to pay evil and demanding godfathers huge sums of money, buy thugs to ward off attacks from opponents, buy other contenders to create elbow room, buy the police and in some cases the army boys as occurred in Edo State in 2007 when armoured vehicles were deployed by the then defence minister in support of those godfather who ran Edo aground.

Politics as exhibited in Edo State recently also showed the level of the intelligence of our politicians and that their allegiance is not to the people they have sworn on oath to serve but themselves and their political party. The case of the Oredo Chairman who is currently under suspension clearly illustrates the wrong allegiance to the political party rather than the

people of Edo state and our nation Nigeria. To ensure that the present government in Edo State fails or to contribute to the failure of the current Edo State government the Oredo Chairman refused to pay the council workers and remove refuse from the various markets in Benin City in spite of the State governor requesting him to obtain funds from the crude oil account to achieve a clean Benin City. The council workers went on work to rule to ensure they are remunerated monthly and the markets became infested with mountains of refuse all to paint the current state government in bad light. This did not last long as he was suspended by the governor and an acting chairman installed who within weeks paid all the outstanding entitlements of the council workers and collected the refuse heaps in the city. That was very bad politics played by the suspended chairman of Oredo local government as it was the inhabitants of Benin City who suffered from the heaps of uncollected refuse and the people exposed to preventable diseases due to non collection of refuse in the city.

In Edo State House of Assembly, the PDP controls the house as they have the majority of legislators. Allegiance to their political party has stalled the approval of the members of the Board of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) for Edo State which has prevented the state from benefiting from the Federal Government allocation to the state which amounts to over 2.5 billion naira. To imagine because of party politics people who went to school with federal government scholarship and Bendel State bursary award and scholarship during the governorship period of Dr Samuel Osaigbovo Ogbemudia and late Professor Ambrose Alli of blessed memory are now a clog in the wheel of educational development of Edo people and Nigerians by failing to allow Edo State children benefit from the Universal Basic Education funds is totally incomprehensible.

Our legislators seem to have forgotten the United Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child which is an international human rights treaty for which Nigeria is a signatory that grants all children and young people a comprehensive sets of rights which include rights to basic education and health amongst many other rights.

Deliberate obstruction of this right to free basic education by Edo State legislator is obviously contravening an international treaty for which they can be held accountable anywhere in the world if they persist in these obstructive policies to the education of our children. If they are unaware of national demographic studies which have shown that primary education sector revealed that, 12% of primary school pupils sit on the floor, 38% classrooms have no ceilings, 87% classrooms are overcrowded, while 77% pupils lack textbooks, they should be reminded of these facts. Almost all sampled teachers are poorly motivated coupled with lack of community interest and participation in the management of the schools.

This uncaring attitude of the PDP members of Edo State House of Assembly legislators is as a result of having allegiance to their political party and to 'self' rather than having allegiance to the electorate and all Nigerian people especially the children in of their education. This is why continued stalling of the 2.5 billion naira allocation to Edo State for the UBE is criminal to say the least no matter the reasons they may give for their actions.

There are many such other examples from other states of the federation and from the federal capital Abuja as well where the allegiance to the political party is placed before allegiance to the nation and Nigerian people.

Many obviously corrupt politicians who have been earmarked by the EFCC under Nuhu Ribadu for persecution in the courts of the land have been given a pat on the back of their hands and allowed to go absolutely free because they belong to the ruling political party at the federal level the PDP, coupled with the change of guards at the Aso Rock and the EFCC.

In an enlightened society where you have a high proportion of the electorate being well educated, they will punish such governments in the polls; but in Nigeria it is those whose pockets are deepest, who have the most ferocious thugs, who make the loudest noise, who have links with the Nigerian forces and the best rigging tricks win at elections. To achieve the millennium development goals and the seven point agenda of this government, in addition to transparency, accountability and honesty of the politicians at the helm of affairs, the

politicians must show total allegiance to the nation, to the national pledge and to our national anthem.

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