



NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS

Office Of The President

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22nd June, 2017

The Country Director
ACILS
Abuja

Dear Comrade,

WE ARE FOR ONE NIGERIA

I wish to convey to you our warm compliments.

Concerned about the recurring threats of secession and expulsion by various youth groups in the country and the attendant heating up of the polity, we found it necessary to address the world press today as part of the process of managing the situation.

As a pan-Nigerian organisation, our belief in an inalienable, sovereign and ONE Nigeria remains unshaken. We shall do all that is necessary to keep it so.

I am pleased to forward to you a copy of our joint statement issued today, Thursday, June 22, 2017.

Yours faithfully,

Comrade Ayuba Wabba, mni
President

WE ARE FOR ONE NIGERIA

Being the text of the press conference by the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, mni, the President of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, Comrade Bobboi Bala Kaigama and Civil Society Allies at Labour House, Abuja, Thursday, June 22nd, 2017

Gentlemen of the Press;

We bring you the warm compliments of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Trade Union Congress and our Civil Society allies.

We are addressing this press conference to state in clear and unequivocal terms, our position on the unity and sovereignty of Nigeria as a response to the drum beats of war which had escalated to a deafening dimension while we were away in Geneva, Switzerland, for this year's International Labour Conference.

Due to the urgency and primacy of the issue, we have found it necessary to consult our organs, upon our return, to articulate the position of Nigerian workers, particularly drawing the attention of Nigerians to the immediate and present dangers of the on-going war-mongering.

You have been witnesses to the degeneration of the national conversation into threats and counter-threats; of pulling down the federation by disparate and desperate forces, all of which were conveyed in vile and base language.

Obviously, these persistent hot exchanges and attacks tend to threaten the very foundation and integrity of our sovereignty and unity; and therefore do not represent the true feelings of patriotic Nigerians for one another. Rather, they symbolise the intensity of greed, the implacable arrogance and desperation of the elites, some of whom have been funding or sponsoring the hate campaigns that can only lead to the disintegration of our dear nation.

We speak out today as a pan-Nigeria organisation that believes in the sovereignty and indissolubility of **ONE NIGERIA!**

We speak out because we are not persuaded by the base arguments that a fragmented Nigeria best suits any of our members!

We speak out because a physical conflict will hurt us all; most particularly workers, Pensioners and their families who will be the most direct and immediate casualties.

We speak out because dialogue remains the most tested and result-oriented form of conflict resolution mechanism and should be given full rein.

Thus, those fanning the embers of disunity need to be discouraged and schooled on the realities of war. In the same vein, we appeal to all parts of Nigeria, and indeed, all Nigerians not to fall cheaply for the glamorisation of conflict or war, as a solution to our self-inflicted crisis.

We urge all Nigerians – progressives or conservatives, men and women and of whatever faith and ethnicity – to stand up with one voice and fight those promoting division on the basis of primordial affinity. They do it not for the good of the community but for their vested interests.

Let us therefore not allow them to use poor Nigerian workers, Pensioners and peasants as cannon fodders for their selfish interests. The desperate but vocal few cannot and should not be allowed to speak for the majority of us!

We, of course, recognise the fact that in the course of consummating our Union, there are arguably genuine basis for dissatisfaction and disaffection. Nigeria is not alone in this kind of problem, there is no perfect political union anywhere under the sun. We know not of any nation that is perfectly happy with itself as conflict remains an indisputable reality of human existence.

Many of our men and women of conscience and goodwill have in the short period of the current altercation pointed to some of the fundamental social and economic challenges of our society. We strongly believe that we should be paying attention to these problems by developing the capacity to address them instead of falling into the self-inflicted trap of stereotyping one another as enemies, and debasing our common humanity by casting and shrinking ourselves into primitive shades.

Labour has over the decades stood for **ONE NIGERIA**, right from our founding fathers who were in the frontline of the struggle for independence through our leaders who led the masses to fight against imposition of neo-liberal policies by military dictatorships which have culminated in the prevailing hardship that Nigerians from all corners – North, South, East and West are facing.

We are still committed to these values that our forebears were committed to and we call on all committed patriots, young and old, to join the struggle against the myriad of social and economic injustices that occasioned the deprivations which have set our people in dangerous agitations against one another in the social, print and electronic media.

Our common enemy, and whom we must all resolve to face, remains the corrupt political class, who instead of utilising the God-endowed wealth of our nation, choose to loot it for themselves and their children thereby depriving us of decent

living and inflicting on us a scarred collective psychology that is predominantly negative, hostile and unproductive.

On our part as Nigeria Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress of Nigeria and civil society, we are determined to stop our elites and their lackeys from throwing us as a nation into another avoidable civil war.

Comrades, by no stretch of the imagination should anyone blame the escalating social and economic injustice, the poor living conditions of our people, the inability of the state to pay a living wage or even ensure the payment of salaries as at when due, the massive unemployment, our lack of productivity as a result of de-industrialisation, the galloping inflation in our land, the devaluation of our currency, among many other lows, on the structure of our federation. Instead it is inherent in the character of our ruling elite who have moderated our political economy for about two decades.

We should therefore look at positive options – peaceful, rigorous and altruistic of reforming the system of choosing or electing our political leadership in a way that when elected, they will remain answerable to us, to the public good.

However, in attempting to resolve issues of conflicts of interest for the purpose of having a better union, we are irrevocably committed to dialogue, responsible and responsive dialogue that takes on board socio-economic justice, democratic culture, cohesion, political competitiveness, mutual respect and all those other values that strengthen a nation.

We believe that as huge and diverse as our country may be, just a desktop research will show that we are not so “peculiar or “diverse” that we are not able to manage just like established federal states like India, USA, the United Kingdom and most countries in continental Europe, particularly Germany, Austria and a whole lot of them which became federations as a result of wars. There is basically no country on the surface of the earth that was literally created by God and installed as a model federal state.

We are therefore never in doubt about the potential greatness of Nigeria as a federated nation but only if the greed of our elites, and what our great Literary icon, the late Chinua Achebe, calls “the unwillingness or inability of its[Nigerian] leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership” will permit it rise from the ashes of its main challenge of bad governance to assume its rightful place as the capital of the Black Race.

We will continue to therefore underscore the need for good governance in our country as a basis for any realistic development and eventual emancipation of our people. If the resources available to us as a nation were well managed and not

stolen by both the corrupt public and private sector operators, the escalating problems of (youth) unemployment, decaying infrastructure, non-funding of education, health and other social services, would have been adequately addressed.

In our estimation, most of the issues in contention can be resolved through good governance, sustainable and transparent fight against corruption and addressing inequities and injustice in the system.

Retreating into our tribal or ethnic enclaves without first addressing these issues, for us, amounts to abdication of collective responsibility and no more than making a bad case worse. This is why we speak to the ordinary Nigerians and Nigerians of good conscience to stand up and fight the evil in the system instead of attempting to destroy the whole nation.

We reiterate our stand for one Nigeria

One Nigeria!
One People!!
Common destiny!!