

**WELCOME REMARKS TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE RULE OF LAW
DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION WEBINAR ON THE TOPIC ‘INSECURITY
AND IMPUNITY IN PRESENT DAY NIGERIA-IS IT AN UNWITTING
PRELUDE TO RESTRUCTURING OR FRAGMENTATION?’ POWERED
FROM THE LAW FIRM OF J B DAUDU AND CO, 16 MAFEMI
CRESCENT, UTAKO ABUJA ON MONDAY THE 15TH OF MARCH 2021**

PROTOCOL

Distinguished Guest Speakers, Participants, Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999 when Nigeria transited presumably from Military Rule to Civilian Democratic Dispensation based on the American Presidential Model, the nation was relatively peaceful, borders were secure, Rural communities were in harmony, debilitating crimes such as Kidnapping, cattle rustling were few and far between. The nation’s financial balance sheet was in black. The words ‘impunity’ and ‘insecurity’ could not be considered at that time as part of Nigeria’s lexicon or stock in trade. Today, the story is different, with apologies to the late Chinua Achebe it seems as if ‘things have fallen apart and the centre cannot hold’.

The essence of this opening remarks is not to lament the state of the nation today. It is to lay foundation for the consideration of the cause, effect and solutions to the twin problems of impunity and insecurity currently bedevilling Nigeria by two of the brightest minds on the subject under review.

CORRUPTION AS A FACTOR

It is true that Nigeria is endemically corrupt. What has earned us such disrepute emanates from several factors that time and space will not

allow us to dwell into. Suffice however to say the quest to acquire wealth by any means by a large percentage of the population and the loss of the values of probity, accountability, integrity, honesty and love of neighbour and above all, the fear of God Almighty have remotely and directly led to the collapse of the political and economic space by the twin debilitations of impunity and insecurity.

THE TOPIC AT HAND

In the past 2 years, criminal activities such as kidnapping, abduction and ransom collection, banditry, armed robbery, targeted killings, cattle rustling, terrorism, invasion and destruction of agricultural produce and farmlands by herdsmen, political instability, occupation of large tracts of the geographical space by malevolent bandits operating outside the laws of the federation, drug addiction etc have been rife and rampant in Nigeria. The State, which is administered by the Government in power is mandated by the provision of section 14-(2)-(b) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) thus: **‘the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of Government’**. The litany of security breaches and its attendant loss of lives and damage to property is beyond the scale of losses in countries where full blown war is ongoing. The truth is that Government has not played its anticipated constitutional role in providing security and welfare to her citizens.

This webinar seeks in the main to examine the genesis of impunity and insecurity (with emphasis on the latter), the magnitude and/or extent of the numerous security challenges, its impact on the socio-economic and political well-being of this great nation and the failure of the security agencies to contain these incidences of insecurity.

Another important aspect of this discourse is apparent when insecurity in the nation is juxtaposed with the cascading/gushing demand by the most of the ethnic nationalities and political actors for restructuring of the administrative and political landscape of Nigeria.

The beating of the drums of war exemplified by frequent communal and ethnic clashes, acts of challenge to government such as the food blockade of staple foods from the Northern part of Nigeria to the South carried out at Jebba, Kwara State which led to economic losses estimated at about N 4 Billion and other criminal acts have led analysts to forecast that if these destabilizing actions are not arrested forthwith then the Nigeria as we know it today may cease to exist as the various ethnic groups may disintegrate or fragment or lead to an answering of the prayers of advocates of confederation, regionalization or true fiscal federalism for Nigeria.

There is therefore a continuous need for a discussion among all well-meaning Nigerians for an understanding of the cause(s), effect and solution of and to the twin calamities of insecurity and impunity currently ravaging our land.

Our speakers are Chief Mike Ejiofor and Mr Majeed Dahiru, tested patriots and nationalists, who have served this nation in numerous capacities as their biodata will reveal shortly.

Chief Mike Ejiofor is a legal practitioner of vast experience. He is a security expert and consultant and presently is Chairman/CEO of Apex Safety and Security Consultants Abuja. He retired from the Department of State Services as Director and has been engaged in safety and security consultancy since his retirement from public service. He is affiliated to many international and local security agencies and organisations. His remit is to engage the audience with the technical aspects of insecurity, particularly the origins and spread of the crimes of Kidnapping, banditry, abduction and ransom payment and similar offences, which currently pose a grave threat to unity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He is expected to provide solutions to this existential problem.

Mr. Majeed Dahiru holds B.Sc. Geology KSU 2008, a Syndicated Newspaper columnist at Daily Sun, Premium Times and The National

Pilot Newspapers. Member Editorial board of the Pilot Newspapers, media Adviser at the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation and currently Team Lead, Technical Committee of the Lux Terra Leadership Foundation's Network and Advocacy Group. He is a celebrated journalist and public policy analyst. His remit at this webinar is to deal with the political and economic reasons for the slide of Nigeria into the aforescribed crimes and also to engage the issue whether impunity and insecurity in the various ways they have manifested themselves will not unwittingly lead to a fragmentation of Nigeria at the very worst and if we escape lightly bring about the much sought after restructuring of the country into Regions having greater autonomy over their affairs or a strong fiscally independent federation with manageable units of not more than 10 States autochthonously forged together practising true federalism. Mr Dahiru will also interrogate specific devastating events such as the Chibok, Dapchi, Kagara, Jengebe and other abductions of secondary school children nationwide, including recent ones such as the Federal College of Forestry Afaka, Kaduna, and Government Science Secondary School Ikara etc, other deleterious happenings include terrorist activities of Boko Haram and other like-minded terrorist organisations, inter-ethnic conflagrations and conflicts and other ongoing criminal activities and he will assess their effect on the stability and unity of Nigeria as a nation-state. In other words, how long can Nigeria withstand all these stress before it snaps?

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Deo Volente, i.e., God willing the webinar having commenced at 2pm on the dot will be flagged off by opening prayers, then followed by the Moderator's opening remarks, which is still being delivered at the moment, thereafter, our Guest Speakers will make their presentations for a period of 45 minutes each and few interventions will be permitted with preference being given to those participating online. Thereafter, the coordinator will make a few closing remarks and take

the vote of thanks before bringing the webinar to a well deserved close. God willing we hope to see you all at our next webinar, where hopefully we will explore the pros and cons of the Electoral Amendment Bill and its anticipated impact on the Nigerian electoral system come the 2023 elections.

I will at this juncture, wish all participants a thought provoking and exciting afternoon.

J B Daudu SAN

Coordinator, Rule of Law Developing Foundation

Abuja

15th day of March 2021

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