

## **BORO DAY MESSAGE /PRESS STATEMENT**

**BORO DAY MESSAGE/PRESS STATEMENT** by former Ijaw Youth Council Secretary General in the erstwhile Dr. Chris Ekiyor led administration of the organization and current Presidential Candidate in the coming 2013 IYC National election Comrade Udengs Eradiri.

My fellow Comrades and my dear Ijaw compatriots I salute you as we once again gather to commemorate the life and times of a great Ijaw son and compatriot, a man I would not be wrong to describe as one of the greatest Ijaw men and true Nigerian that ever walked the African soil. We salute you.

My salute also goes to our indefatigable number one citizen of Nigeria, His Excellency President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, whose actions in government so far, daunting as it appears, clearly indicate that you are on course and doing your best under the prevailing circumstances notwithstanding, the many obstacles thrown on your path daily by enemies of progress in the Nigerian state to distract you from peacefully achieving your well constructed and mapped out reformation agenda. I thank you for the Amnesty Program put in place by your ex-boss Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and which you have courageously watered to maturity to bring out to its full potentials to our comparative advantage and welfare to the glory of God.

Your Excellency, Governor Seriake Dickson, I salute you too for your true Ijawness and sponsorship of this Isaac Boro Day Celebration and your effort so far to exhume and bring home the remains of our Late Hero to be reburied in Bayelsa state and your various other efforts and activities to unify and strengthen the Ijaw nation and bring its full potentials and prosperity to bear on all. Your efforts at accountability and transparency, plans and vision to bring about sustainable investments to the state, laying of solid educational foundation for children of the state and your policies to resuscitate true Ijaw values in our people are well noted and the commendable BDIC project which has brought the Ijaw nation to the world economic limelight as demonstrated during the BDIC commissioning ceremony in Johannesburg South Africa. To state the obvious your idea for free and compulsory education for the Bayelsa is the first step towards the pursuit of actualizing the fight for resource control and self determination as we need educated Ijaws with the requisite capacity to manage of our resources.

This is no doubt a time for sober reflection to reassess our journey and relationship so far in and with the contraption called Nigeria to decide whether or not we are as a people and ethnic nationality in Nigeria where our dynamic hero Late Major Isaac Adaka Boro who for our better today fought and died for our liberation. To have an adequate, concise and correct appraisal and assessment we must look back and trace the sequence of events of the past years and those of recent times of our checkered history to be able to know if we are far or closer to the promise land of Boro's ideals and the collective dreams we crave for. This has become paramount, necessary and expedient in the spirit of our celebration of this year's Major Isaac Adaka Boro Memorial Day this 16th day of May, 2013 and in the face of recent developments in our country Nigeria.

First let us ask ourselves what were those things that prompted Isaac Boro to throw out his pioneer job as a teacher, put aside his promising and successful police career, abandoned his university education half way, organized and spear-headed the 12 day Revolution, got arrested, tried and given life sentence alongside his fellow compatriots before they were later given pardon and allowed to enlist in the Nigeria Army. Isaac Boro fought on the Nigerian side on the task to keep Nigeria one united and indivisible country but was sabotaged and killed by enemies within the Federal troops who were scared of who Boro might become or what he might do if alive at the end of the war for his Ijaw people and nation.

The reasons are not far-fetched. He discovered that we, his Ijaw brethren, were facing oppression, victimization, and were grossly cheated, marginalized, our areas under-developed, deprived of our God-given wealth and we had no sense of belonging and completely denied power to participate, direct and run the affairs of the country we call our own and contributed so much to unify and develop.

He discovered that those people he considered and thought were his fellow countrymen in Nigeria and who he ordinarily thought are sympathetic and concerned about the welfare of his people as he was concerned about theirs considered him and his people the Ijaws not only as enemies but aliens and people only good as mere foddors, hewers of wood and fetchers of water notwithstanding the fact the Niger Delta lands and terrain producers Nigeria's economic main stay and are contributors of the huge annual GDP, National budget and foreign exchange earnings since 1958. Even as this situation

transforms their domain and areas to modern cities ours remain neglected, deteriorating, encapsulated by poverty and a state of perpetual squalor staring us in the face. And our areas entrenched in the dungeon of total darkness of thick forests infested with mosquitoes, scorpions and other dangerous reptiles and animals remains our lot.

We are all now aware that it was due mainly to British colonialism and their economic interest in the Niger Delta region that the ethnic nationalities in the area were today forcefully put under the Nigerian state and not allowed to evolve separate and distinct nation that would have enjoyed undiluted political economic and social cultural autonomy of their own. The separation of the Southern protectorate into East and West in 1939 by the colonial government was the beginning of the balkanization of a hitherto territorially contiguous and culturally homogenous Niger Delta people in political and administrative units. This was much to the disadvantage of the minority tribes bringing about a catalogue of socio-economic, political and psychological woes we suffer today.

We are all aware that the social and political crisis in Nigeria today is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral in the Niger Delta region that accounts for over 80% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 95% National budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings.

Hence so far even under an administration run by our own nothing has impacted positively on the lives of the people and communities of this region because of utter suppression and marginalization visited on us by unholy alliance of some select few Nigerians and politicians including a number of those indigenous to the north on daily basis are collaborating with the trans national oil and gas companies to ensure an endemically corrupt status quo remain the same till they take back power in 2015 to continue the old trend of public office looting of billions of dollars from oil resources without any holes barred in the Nigerian state.

The crimes and plots of the Nigerian state and the oil multinational corporations against Ijaws and the Niger Delta people heaped on us over the years are enormous and they include amongst others the under listed obnoxious laws enacted or promulgated during civilian and military administrations run by Hausa/Fulani people and they predate the Jonathan administration. They are not issues four year tenure can possibly erase and correct particularly in the face of

several distractions thrown on the path of our son the president. These are some of the issues we must vigorously fight to dismantle because they meant to engage our people and wealth forever.

These are the vestiges and summary of our internal colonization.

- i. Land Use Act Cap 202
- ii. Lands (title vesting etc) Osborn land Act
- iii. Allocation of Revenue (Federation Accounts etc) Act Cap 16
- iv. Exclusive Economic zone Act cap 116
- v. Oil in navigable waters act cap 337
- vi. Oil terminal dues act cap 339
- vii. Petroleum control act 351
- viii. Petroleum Production and Distribution(anti sabotage)Act cap 353
- ix. Petroleum Profits Tax Act 354
- x. Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission Act Cap 392
- xi. Territorial Waters Act Cap 428
- xii. Oil Pipeline Act Cap 428
- xiii. Associated Gas Re-Injection Act Cap 26
- xiv. National Inland Water Ways Act
- xv. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as being fraudulently amended.

And we must do everything in our power to dismantle them before the end of this administration.

To give honor to this man who lived for only 30 years and opened our eyes to these realities is why we are gathered here today. Only very few people then understood and courageous enough to join forces with him to chart the way forward to free us from this internal colonialism we are talking about today. Better late than never we thank God we have woken from our slumber to appreciate the enormity of these issues and challenges ahead over 50 years after and are prepared to take them on to achieve Isaac Boro's and our collective dreams.

Boro left us a great mission to retrace our footsteps, recover and harness our lost paradise. This is no doubt a tall order and food for thought one so far we have chewed upon these last few years that returned us to us to Boro-like militant revolutionary path beginning with the Kaiama Declaration. Our movement and

entrenching ourselves in full militancy and militant activities we must acknowledge has not been without its pains and gains, but to God be the glory that today the effort as hopeless as it was has yielded us some visible and viable commendable dividends we are very proud of that is now the envy of many across the country. I salute all of our compatriots who were involved in the exercise one way or the other. I particularly salute all those who lost their lives, got maimed or risked their lives to get us to where we are today.

Our gains or dividends though few include the creation of Bayelsa state an homogenous Ijaw state, that is today the Jerusalem to all Ijaws including those aboriginal in the other five states of Ondo, Edo, Delta, Rivers and Akwa Ibom. Other dividends include our achievements and successes at the amnesty program which have today seen over 20,000 of Ijaw youths scattered in various Universities and other higher institutions of learning all over the world. The various elections and appointments of our people into positions of responsibility in Federal parastatals, ministries and above all the elevation of one of our own to the highest office of president of Federal of Nigeria. These are a strong encouraging land marks for us to continue till we reach the promised-land.

I agree it is not yet Uhuru and we know we have still a long walk to freedom we need to thank God that we have never had it so good. For the spirit of Isaac Boro to rest in peace we must walk all through no matter the odds to reach the promised-land.

It is only when Boro rests in peace that all of us will receive peace in our heart and in our nation. The least we can do therefore is to immortalize this great hero to enable peace come into our hearts. And the way to do this is not to build monuments but for all of us to do his will by being selfless, patriotic and committed to doing only good things to move Ijaw people and our ethnic nation forward in which ever position in public or private we find ourselves. The only way to intensify effort to help us actualize our ideal Ijaw nation is to follow in the foot-path of Boro to the latter. I hereby call on all Ijaw people to remain in their true Ijawness and turn out massively in this year's Isaac Boro Day Celebrations I call on all our youths, women and leaders of thought to emulate the life, times, sacrifices and activities of Late Major Isaac Adaka Boro by being selfless and patriotic in every endeavor of their public and private service to the Ijaw nation and people.

Be prepared at all times to give your best without thinking of any untoward benefits. We must all be prepared to lay down our lives if the need arises for the good of the common man and remain protective and defensive of our Ijaw land and the Niger Delta terrain with all its inestimable resources and wealth.

The time has come again for us as youths burdened by the plight of our Ijaw people and by extension the other people of the Niger Delta region who as God designed it are today our indivisible neighbors whose activities sometimes often affect us negatively or positively to make us take serious decision as a people. The choice of those who are to pilot the affairs of our ever resourceful, buoyant and dynamic Ijaw Youth Council Worldwide is a serious matter deserving ultimate serious attention and approach.

I therefore as one contending for the office of President of this noble organization call on you our ever resourceful and intelligent electorates in the coming election to open your eyes and vote only candidates you believe in, have tried, tested, trusted and proven to be selfless, focused, accessible, credible, reliable, accountable and committed to the Ijaw cause and its struggle for Resource Control and Self-Determination that would bring out the best of programs in the IYC that will positively our long-dreamt goals that would impact on your lives.

I wish to state that the IYC under my leadership will not only back Alhaji Asari Dokubo's statement on the need for President Goodluck Jonathan to be returned to power in the 2015 Presidential elections but will do everything humanly possible to actualize it whether Nigerians in the north or anywhere else like it or not. It is a task that must be done. Reason is that it is not justifiable and not right that a man from the North or any other part of this country for decades take trillions of Naira realized from oil mineral situated in Otuoke back yard to run government as they like and same people say it not right for an Ijaw man or any other person from the Niger Delta region to be president and therefore denied the chance and conducive atmosphere needed to rule Nigeria with the resources found on his father's land and for only two tenures of eight years the constitution allows. IYC under my leadership will vigorously mobilize all our people and every resource at our disposal to reiterate and actualize our position which should also be the position of every right thinking Niger Deltan.

As IYC president I will unite all Ijaw people. To this end the IYC and INC must join forces and be strengthened to have the necessary capacity to pursue and actualize the Ijaw of our dream. In like manner as IYC president I will build bridges of friendship and comradeship with every ethnic nationality of like minds across the country who believe in one Nation, one people one, to enable us achieve our goals for the presidency in 2015.

I want to use this opportunity to also totally condemn the action of all South South members in the House of Representatives who sat and colluded with our enemies in that house to deliberate and endorse that the IGP arrest a Niger Deltans for equal comments and threats made by some northerners without any repercussions or punitive measures. Where were they when General Muhammadu Buhari and others from the North made similar calls before and after the 2011 presidential elections that rained mayhem on and killed scores of Youth Corpers, market women and children and Christian worshippers in churches across the north.

Our current representatives by their lackadaisical and nonchalant attitude action in that house have shown that henceforth there is need to screen and elect persons of high moral standard with integrity, substance and charisma capable of withstanding intimidation and harassment directed at our people.

My leadership will support President Jonathan in his effort to tackle issues that will impact on the life of the ordinary Nigerians in the pursuit of his transformation agenda to a logical conclusion. I wish to use this opportunity to call on Mr. President to revoke all illegally acquired oil licenses and oil blocs acquired by corrupt past leaders and military generals indigenous to Northern Nigeria

We condemn every act of illegal oil bunkering carried out in the Niger Delta in the full glare of security agents and with their collaboration and connivance. On my assumption of office as President of IYC, a blue-print already in existence to curtail the activities of bunkering in the Niger Delta will be put to effect.

We hail the Federal Government withdraw of the suit against the people of Odi, having said this we recommend that in the same spirit with which the suit was withdrawn the government should as a matter of urgency commence immediately payment of compensation to all persons affected by the 1999 army invasion.

To keep Nigeria as a united and one indivisible entity we cannot shy away from the need to urgently convene the long overdue demand for a sovereign national conference, therefore we call on Mr. President to set the necessary machinery in motion that will bring about this most desirable organ to address the grievances of all over 250 ethnic nationalities in the country.

Thank you and God bless.

**Comrade Udengs Eradiri**

Presidential Candidate, IYC Worldwide National Elections 2013