

**PRESENTATION FROM THE IJAW YOUTH  
LEADERS FORUM (IYLF) TO THE NIGER DELTA  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup>  
OCTOBER, 2008 AT OPOROZA, DELTA STATE.**

THE LAST CHANCE

We suffice to state categorically that the events and environment that occasion and or constitute the Niger Delta Question need no reiteration today. Stakeholders, researchers, scholars, within and without Nigeria and government's panels, committees, summits and conferences abound have those premises and basics in their numerous chronicles and documentation. Consequently, we welcome your revered visit with the pleasant words of the Chairman of the United States Senate Sub-committee on Africa, Russ Feingold " The Nigerian government's response to the Niger Delta crisis-sporadic military campaigns, empty promises of development, and half-hearted attempts at political dialogue has only made matters worse."

It is pertinent to state that the government of Nigeria has developed a conscious tendency without success to portray the Niger Delta crisis and question as that of militancy and criminality. This policy was instituted against Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro's "12-Day Revolution" leading to his controversial murder whenafter he fought for a united Nigeria. Same was applied in the "judicial murder" of immortal Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders hanged dastardly 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1995. Has this modus quenched or reduced the vigorous tenacity of the emerging trends and frontliners? Does it intimidate and blackmail the movement? Does it have a future potential of occasioning a peaceful region and united nation? Emphatically NO.

Instead, the Ijaw Youth Council emerged with a daring Kaiama Declaration in 1998 standing the trying test of time. Here comes a Dokubo Asari whose traumatic incarceration of 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2005 till 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 only created the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the ongoing and sustaining trend in events. What lessons for us all?

Whereas we ushered in the Yar adua- Jonathan administration with goodwill; even MEND issued a unilateral ceasefire before the 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2007 date of swearing-in preceding the historic visit by the Vice President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan to the sites and places you also visit today 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 with great strides recorded by the Senator Brigidi-led presidential committee and T.K Ogoriba-led Roadmap Implementation Committee, all inaugurated 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2007 and 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2007 respectively by the government. What have we got in response to the cooperation we gave? Inhuman and criminal attacks, killings and destruction on Ateke Tom, Boyloaf, Egbema 1, Prince Idolor, Gbarau Community, Agge Community, Farah Dagogo and most painful and challenging the orchestrated arrest of our treasured brother, Henry Okah in Angola 3rd September, 2007, repatriated 14th February with a commenced secret trial 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2008 amidst persisting protestations and anger. What lessons for Nigeria and the Ijaws? Russ Feingold was aptly right however, you may as brethren with common heritage and values receive our fundamental demands as below:

### **DEMANDS.**

1. We reject today the secret and possible open trial of Henry Okah who was illegally arrested and repatriated in breach for illegal trial. His release remains key to a genuine peace process.


2. We demand a Presidential Address on the Region and its crisis granting unrestricted Amnesty to all Niger Delta Activists. It must be gazetted.
3. We demand demilitarization of the region particularly Ijawland, and redeployment of the military to their facilities of national treasure.
4. We demand an immediate review of the Joint Venture Agreement to reflect Community stakeholding rights of equity participation and employment/empowerment quota for oil producing and impacted communities.
5. We demand a statutory constitution of oil commissions in all States of the region with a minimum of 50% of the 100% of 13% derivation injected therein for the development of oil producing and impacted communities directly.
6. We demand the development of new or satellite towns in the region accompanied by infrastructural developments and industrialization.
7. In as much as, the resources of our region are been controlled, managed and allocated through indices like States and local Government Areas by the federal government, we demand the creation of Toru-ibe State and Oil Rivers State to rightly accord the Ijaws an appreciable political space in the allocation of our God-given resources.
8. We demand that the Niger Delta Ministry be specially and substantially funded by the federal government without tampering with the NDDC and the 13% (rejected) Derivation accruable to producing states. We also demand that committed, steadfast and development-driven personalities of Niger Delta Stock be appointed to man the ministry just as we advocate a professionally sizeable structure in departments and or parastatals.

We conclude these demands as stop-gap measures to our age-long and world-acclaimed struggle. The Ijaws remain the nucleus in this regional drive in


pains, anguish and sacrifices, as such would resist by any means necessary any attempt by government in policy and practice to undermine our nationality interests and stakes. It is our uncompromising hope that government would appreciate verily that popular agitations the world over can only be temporarily suppressed even if you can, whilst it will surely emerge stronger, more determined and sometimes uncontrollable.

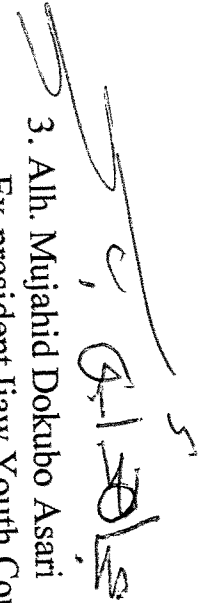
This truly is the last chance, maybe.


Signed:

  
1. Dr. Chris Ekiyor  
President, Ijaw Youth Council.

  
2. Elder Jonjon Oyeinffe  
Ex-President, Ijaw Youth Council.

  
5. Chief Government Ekpemupolo  
Chief Host.

  
3. Alh. Mujahid Dokubo Asari  
Ex-president Ijaw Youth Council

  
4. Elder T.K Ogoriba  
Chairman, Ijaw Youth Leaders  
Forum.