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16th December, 2024.

HIS EXCELLENCY,
Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu,
President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Aso Rock Villa,
Federal Capital Territory,
Abuja.

Your Excellency Sir,

IN RE:

A "MAY DAY" CALL OVER THE STOCKPILING OF SMALL, MEDIUM AND HEAVY FIREARMS BY PRIVATE ACTORS AND ITS THREAT TO NATIONAL AND THE WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL PEACE: A FORMAL PROTEST AGAINST THE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF TANTITA SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED, (TSSL) IN COASTAL AREAS OF DELTA STATE OF NIGERIA

We act for (1) Mrs Tsaye Mene, (2) Edward Omagbemi, (3) Prince Sammy Egbele-Okoro, (4) Dennis Mene, (5) Arugha Weyinmi, (6) Jonathan U. Okotie, (7) James Aderojo Ereku, (8) OJUMUDE TOSAN BISHOP and (9) Lily-White O. Esigbone who are the accredited representatives of the members of Concerned Itsekiri Communities, Organisations and affiliate bodies in Warri North, Warri South-West and Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria; on whose instruction we hereby humbly register the extant petition and state as follows:

1. That our clients vehemently protest the cocktail of illegal and life threatening activities of TANTITA SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED, (TSSL), an arms stocking, land grabbing and human rights violating firm disguised as a registered security outfit.

2. That to place our client's protest in proper perspective, it may be necessary to state the following background facts relevant to the case at hand:
 - a. That the alter ego of TANTITA SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED, Government Ekpemupolo, also known as Tompolo is widely reported to be deeply engaged in illegal gun running to the extent that vide one of his kinsmen who rose to become the President of Nigeria, His Excellency, President Goodluck Jonathan, he became so empowered and was contracted to secure arms of assorted types including assault rifles and war boats for the Nigerian Government; a window which the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) then headed by Government Ekpemupolo explored to acquire and still retains what can be described as the hugest pile of arms in private hand in Nigeria, a country where the possession of firearms ironically remains a criminal offence.
 - b. That it was also reported that even during the disarmament phase of the Presidential Amnesty Program, only some of the weapons stockpiled in the manner described above by Government Ekpemupolo were handed over to the Nigerian Military; which weapons included 7,000 AK-47, 1,000 general purpose machine guns (GPMG); unspecified number of bombs; other explosives and full military and police uniforms; surface-to-air missiles, grenade launchers and gun boats.
 - c. That it was vide this informal discriminatory policy of private citizens' access to small, medium and heavy firearms that the said Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) was able to prosecute the war against the oil rich Itsekiri communities between 1997 and 2003 resulting in the displacement of over 700,000 people as reported in Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia of facts.
 - d. That sequel to the said attack, by Government Ekpemupolo as aforesaid, he has continued to lead the occupation, re-naming and re-documentation of the sacked communities; the names of which said communities are not only being changed from their historically known Itsekiri names to Ijaw names, but are now being occupied by Ijaws from other areas some of whom were displaced by natural disaster from Bayelsa state; all of which fraudulent acts are courtesy of the threat of violence with the aid of the said arms stockpiled by Government Ekpemupolo.
 - e. That with the aid of the said illegally stockpiled arms, Government Ekpemupolo has continued to threaten not only the locals but the multinational companies; blackmailing them with the danger of violent attack should they not do his bidding.
 - f. That it is the same *modus operandi* then deployed by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) that the TANTITA SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED,

has adopted overtime with special focus on serial attacks on Itsekiri Communities, destruction of settlements and buildings, now in the guise of security services. Government Ekpemupolo has also extended this illicit land grabbing operation to Udu, a recognized Urhobo community in Udu Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria.

3. That given the antecedence and background of Government Ekpemupolo who may be reading his first name as meaning that he is government, it is not desirable to have such a character placed in a position where he can and has done more harm than he did during the attack of 1997 to 2003 under the guise of executing security contract but in reality pursuing the Ijaw ethnic agenda of illegally and with the use of arms taking over the rich oil communities of the People of Itsekiri ethnic nationality. As a matter of fact, in a couple of press conference, Government Ekpemupolo has consistently demonstrated his propensity for disrespect and regard for court judgments insisting that his people would forcefully annex all oil communizes in the coastal areas of Warri irrespective of judgments of the Supreme Court vesting the land in our clients.
4. That in appreciating the extant protest of our clients, it becomes worthy of note that the following are some of the illegalities that Government Ekpemupolo has led in this regard under the threat of violence against the Federal Government, State Government and Multinational companies operating in the area:
 - a. That up till date, the Local Government Council Headquarters of Warri South-West Local Government Area remains legally and statutorily Ogidigben, an Itsekiri Community in all Federal Government records, gazette and codification. However, as part of the incidents of usurpation, encroachment and illegal re-naming of Itsekiri homeland by the Ijaws with the aid of persons of Ijaw ethnic extraction in strategic and relevant public offices across the country, the Headquarters of the Local Government Area has been forcefully listed as Ogbe-Ijoh, an Ijaw community. This is despite the fact that all materials agencies and offices intended for the Local Government Area from the Federal Government are documented and channelled to Ogidigben, the rightful headquarters of the Local Government Area which is an Itsekiri community but these items and agencies are incessantly diverted to Ogbe-Ijoh the illegally documented Headquarters with the aid of the aforesaid officers of Ijaw ethnic extraction. It is common knowledge that a Local Government headquarters sited by the Federal Government cannot be relocated by the State Government. A look at the Federal Government records will easily reveal the notorious fact that it is not Ogbe-Ijoh but Ogidigben that is the headquarters of Warri South-West Local Government Area.

- b. That in Warri South Local Government Area, that is Warri urban, particularly an area known as Miller Waterside which is a vast expanse of land belonging to the Itsekiris, bordering the Nigerian Ports Authority is currently being increasingly encroached into in a similar manner as described above by the Ijaws most of whom are not even from Delta State but from neighbouring Bayelsa State. In the execution of their illicit scheme, they built mostly temporary settlements which they have begun renaming as Ijaw communities in the course of which they have created a huge level of unrest in the area. An examination of the records with the Nigerian Ports Authority, security agencies and the court cases involving the Nigerian Ports Authority would confirm that even the Port was acquired from the Itsekiri communities of Ugbuwangue and Ugbori respectively.
- c. That the Ijaws have actually never had any legal aboriginal presence in Warri South Local Government Area; hence, even their recent attempt to lay claim to Royal benefits and entitlements in Warri South Local Government Area through the courts was fatally unsuccessful.
- d. That for some time now and on a sustainable basis, several portions of the said vast oil rich parcel of land belonging to the Itsekiris have been forcefully and illegally acquired, occupied, renamed and redesigned contrary to the authorized statutes, guidelines and official policy documents in that respect. The Ijaws have also included an orchestrated cyber scheme to change some of these names by attempting to alter the original names in Google.
5. That further to the fact in paragraph 4 above, the benefits and entitlements accruing to the Itsekiri owners of the said parcels of land have been forcefully and unlawfully confiscated by the Ijaws who are adjudged tenants of the Itsekiris by numerous court judgments. The Ijaws through Government Ekpemupolo have been able to thus far execute this agenda with the aid of the said illegally acquired arms and ammunition which he and his cohorts indiscriminately put to use in that regard with a view to executing an ethnic pogrom agenda against the Itsekiris. This is the reason why the Itsekiris have continued to urge the Federal Government for a disarmament of the region. It is an irony that billions of naira is being expended on the Amnesty Program for the region with the Ijaws always heading the Amnesty Committee and dominating all the benefits accruing therefrom and yet, they as civilians can still retain the level of arms suspected to be responsible for the killing of a good number of military officers recently; making it clear that disarmament is the way to go in the region.
6. That our clients recall with regret, the Okuama military attack in which more than a dozen military officers on peace mission were killed; an incidence which the Honourable Minister of Defence, H.E Muhammed Badaru Abubakar CON MNI and the

Honourable Minister of state for Defence H.E Dr Muhammed Bello Matawalle, MON condemned in its totality yet the same state of affairs in which the Nigerian state acquiesces in the face of characters like Government Ekpemupolo being able to illegally stockpile arms that could have been used to execute such a shameful avoidable massacre of our national heroes. It is then pertinent to ask; “how is the conduct of Government Ekpemupolo different from that of Boko Haram”?

7. That a critical point of reference in this light, is the forceful and illegal acquisition, occupation, renaming and redesigning of Itsekiri lands by the Ijaws, even in the face of the judgments of the highest court in our land, they have continued to defy relevant court judgments and legal advice of the Chief Legal Officer of the Federation whose legal opinion was given in connection with the bill for an act for the establishment of Nigerian Maritime University, “Okerenkoko” instead of “Okerenghigho” in a most classical case of disparagement of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.
8. That worthy of note is the fraudulent sales and over-bloating of the price of the said parcel of land which is currently a subject of investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); an investigation initiated at the instance of a formal complaint made by the Itsekiris as legal owners of the said estate, the Itsekiri people of Omadino Community in Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria; which investigation process is currently being jeopardized by some top officials of government with a view to shielding the principal suspect in the said offence, Government Ekpemupolo who though was once declared wanted by the agency yet moves around freely with the protection of state security and has even now been ironically further emboldened by Government contract patronage.
9. That other communities affected by the said pogrom of the Itsekiri communities include kpokpo changed to Ikpokpo, Uba idibi to Orumagada, Olokpo Okan to Olobokan, Aja omamunigho to egwa 1 and 2, Uba kokodie to kokodiagbene, Omidundun to Benikrukru, Benet (uba urure) to Sarabobuwei, Akpata to Akpota, Abiteye to Kenya-Gbene, Gbabor/Opuraja to Oproza, Saghara to Sagharauborwei, Aja- Ipepe to Pepediagbene, just to mention but a few.
10. That the major trigger for the extant protest can be appreciated in the following more recent developments:
 - a. That Government Ekpemupolo undertook the forceful occupation of the Ugborodo Community land proximate to Chevron EGTL plant and mounted a shrine therein an act which obviously constitutes a ticking time bomb with the potentials of communal clash the intensity of which could result in the avoidable destruction of oil facilities and establishments in the area.

- b. That between November 29 and December 3, 2024, Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited launched a series of attacks on Itsekiri communities in Warri North and South Local Government Areas, including Tisun, Usor, Kolo-kolo creeks, and Aja-Jelebe.
- c. That in the course of the said attacks, the community members were subjected to random beatings, their women raped and their valuables, including foodstuffs, phones, and money, were reportedly stolen.
- d. That those of whom attempted to resist the actions of the perpetrators were reportedly taken hostage by the said outfit.
- e. That the individuals who were forcibly taken from their communities are yet being held at the private cage of Government Ekpemupolo designed to torture and humiliate his victims in the comfortable guise of executing the said security job.
- f. That apart from valuables been looted during the raid, four persons each were forcefully taken from Tisun and Usor communities, Aja-Jelebe community was completely raised by Government Ekpemupolo.
- g. That most recently Government Ekpemupolo and his cohorts acting under the assemblage of Pipeline Host communities in the Gbaramatu Kingdom, Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State, have issued a seven-day ultimatum to the Nigerian Pipelines and Storage Company (NPSC), a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), demanding compensation for damages caused by an oil spill to farmlands that do not belong to them but to the Itsekiris.

Your Excellency sir, may we at this juncture reiterate the fact that Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (PoA). In the said instrument, governments agreed to improve national small arms regulations, to strengthen stockpile management, to ensure that weapons are properly and reliably marked, to improve cooperation in weapons tracing, and to engage in regional and international cooperation and assistance. Within the PoA framework, the General Assembly adopted the International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in 2005, a global instrument for cooperation in weapons tracing. Improving weapons tracing is also part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together, both instruments constitute the normative framework on small arms and light weapons, which all UN Member States including Nigeria have agreed upon.

PRAYERS:

The above facts adumbrated, our clients have instructed us to formally bring the above said development to the notice of Your Excellency and humbly pray as follows:

1. That a Panel of enquiry be forthwith set up to investigate:
 - a. The proliferation of small, medium and heavy arms in the hands of private actors in Warri Costal Areas comprising of Warri South, Warri South-West and Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria.
 - b. The activities of TANTITA SECURITY SERVICES LIMITED, (TSSL) with regards to the arms stocking, land grabbing and human rights violations in Warri Costal Areas comprising of Warri South, Warri South-West and Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State of Nigeria.
 - c. The location of the lawful Local Government Council Headquarters of Warri South-West Local Government Area.
 - d. The incidents of usurpation, encroachment and illegal renaming of Itsekiri homeland by the Ijaws with the aid of persons of violent persecution.

We therefore hereby formally lodge the instant Petition with Your Excellency with the hope that as usual, a proper investigation would be launched into same with the possibility of a swift prosecution of the said suspect in the circumstances.

It is however our hope that our prayers may be granted so as to obviate the need for us to search for such alternatives that might constrain us to escalate it to the relevant intentional agencies and foreign governments in the circumstances.

We accordingly await the usual swift and smooth response of Your Excellency.

Yours Faithfully,

Pp: Robinson Ariyo & Co.,


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Chief Robinson Ariyo



CC:

HIS EXCELLENCY,
The Senate President,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Three Arms Zone, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.

HIS EXCELLENCY,
The Honourable Speaker,
House of Representatives,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Three Arms Zone, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.

HIS EXCELLENCY,
The Governor of Delta State,
State House Asaba,
Delta State.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER,
The Presidency,
Abuja.