

## **“IF I WERE THE PEOPLE OF IMO STATE.....”**

Since the concluded 2011 elections in Nigeria and especially in Imo State most Nigerians, home and abroad have been commending your collective effort in making the “unthinkable” happen in our state, namely in facing all odds and in unseating an incumbent governor and installing a governor of your choice. Many objective observers in both Nigeria and in the Diaspora insist that you voted massively for the candidates of your choice in spite of intimidation, harassment, brute force and monetary enticement. You are great people and the rest of Nigerians admire your indomitable courage. Will you live up to expectations this time again after the elections of 2015?

When some of the so called *‘party agents’* and some INEC officials through their nefarious activities wanted to ruin the entire exercise you (the people’s ‘army’) and trusted ‘agents’ took over to help the rescue mission of you beloved candidate succeed. No one paid you any kobo. You did not demand any. You didn’t even care whether anybody recognized or appreciated your roles. You fought gallantly and won the protracted fight! Your own governor, the people’s elected governor has now taken up the mantle of leadership and you need to consider the next line of action, hence this my address to the people of Imo state!

**BE PATIENT AND CONSIDERATE:** *If I were the people of Imo state* I will continue to support our able governor, in prayers, word and action. Your unflinching support, in times of adversity and prosperity, will never be found wanting. How can you make your good wishes to the governor and his aids work? There are many ways! Let me refresh your minds, in **“word and parable”** Imolites remember Moses and the Israelites of old. They had no patience with Moses. They complained of thirst. They complained of hunger. Even when water and food *‘manna’* were provided in good **quantity**, they complained about the **quality**. The people grumbled, lamented, insisting that the food was **tasteless, insipid and uninspiring**. They wanted a balanced diet and classical menu as they were having it in Egypt, in the land of their slavery before the so-called **liberation** by Moses. **“Had we known was the pounding sentiment of remorse. “We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. And now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.” (Num: 11.5-6)**, The Bible said “The **rabble** that was among them has strong craving!” Therefore it was not all the people; it was the **rabble, the gang, the insatiable mob, the traitors, the trouble makers**

*If I were Ndi Imo*, I will not begin so soon to blame our Governor for inaction or expect miracles within days! He needs some time to settle down and find means and ways of executing his rescue mission. Some mischief makers among us would soon begin to wish **that the last administration was given the much needed second tenure to “finish up its good work”** as these fail to see the governor turn Imo State into a land flowing with milk and honey within the first hundred days, or as one critic has put it already bring to fruition **“his so-called and much-orchestrated Free Education Program!”** There is no doubt there are many mischief makers that have mixed up now with the true lovers of the governor and APGA. We may easily **have forgotten, we were told that the two major parties PDP and APGA were at that critical time ‘running neck and neck!’** How can we now separate the wheat from the cockle, from election riggers who failed in their mission, and the true Imolites who voted that sanity could return to Imo State ***If I were Ndi Imo*** I will join hands with governor and his aids to move Imo forward,

exercise patience and as well be considerate in our judgments and expectations.  
**How!**

### **IMOLITES JOIN HANDS IN THE BATTLE AGAINST CRIME.**

Government would not worry so much about insecurity in the cities and communities, if Imolites continue to keep watch over their property so that no thieves can break through and steal them. They accomplished this task during the governorship elections in Imo state. Nobody hired them. Nobody paid them any kobo to keep watch on *election riggers and their agents*. Imolites constituted themselves into small and big *vigilanti groups*! It worked! They caught *ballot box snatchers* and punished them. They insulted and booed *corrupt INEC officials and dirty money distributors*, and as well shunned their illegal cravings for success. History can repeat itself and in the most inspiring and dramatic manner. Then other states and Nigerians will come to Imo state to learn how the ‘People’s army’ can work together! *Kidnapping and related violent crimes* will disappear from Imo state!

### **TRADITIONAL RULERS JOIN HANDS IN THE RESCUE MISSION:**

Here our *traditional rulers* will truly become the immediate right hand comrades of government. Traditional rulers like clergymen and men of God don’t play partisan politics. They are primarily the custodians of the communities’ good customs and traditions. In Imo state therefore, traditional rulers, as far as security is concerned are the *“Generals and Commanders of the People’s Army”*. Security and peace must be their paramount concern. The people of Israel demanded a ‘king’ who *“may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.” (I Sam.8)*. Our ‘kings’ today are our traditional rulers! They must love their people and be loved by them. Where this symbiotic union fails to materialize, then there will be cause for alarm.

**IMOLITES HELP FIGHT CORRUPT PRACTICES.** *If I were patriotic Imolites* I will no more feel unconcerned and indifferent about what goes on in communities and government. There is no doubt”, some say, “Corruption has come to stay in Nigeria”. Honestly, the evil is found all over the world, not only in Nigeria! But war can be waged to eradicate it. The Imo *Credible Election Formulae* can apply here and it can work. Thousands of Imolites, even the poorest of the masses completely rejected all monetary gratifications to vote in the 2011 elections. Those who accepted the offer and never even voted have not become richer. Some have been on the run pursued by *‘the evils that men do’!* Surely all of us know the amount of havoc *dubious and corrupt government contractors* have raked on the economy of our fatherland. Imolites will no more fold hands, for example and watch *corrupt and greedy contractors* execute *poor road contracts* worth millions of naira in our cities and communities. Concerned Imolites must insist that dubious contractors executing nasty road jobs must **STOP WORK!** Imolites must protest to the *Local Government authorities*. If these take no action; they ask for the intervention of the *Commissioner for works*. Where these fail to take appropriate action, Imolites should march to *government House* to see the governor!

Many greedy contractors all over Nigeria perform poorly and go away with their loot, while no one, the people and government authorities never care. Many *road contractors* usually use poor quality materials to execute road projects and after a few months the roads witness the worst state of dilapidation. Culverts and bridges collapse and Nigerians find alternative routes and go about their business! *Contractors* are allowed free passage to big cities and overseas where they enjoy their wealth! Vigilant and concerned Imolites will no more condone evil. They will be helping government to fight evil and corruption. *Contractors* who perform poorly must be arrested and prosecuted to serve as deterrent to other interlopers!

## **CIVIL SERVANTS JOIN THE BATTLE AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION**

There is no doubt that Nigerian civil service is corrupt from top to bottom. *It is only in Nigeria* that any one who needs any ‘favor’ no matter how legitimate and ‘normal’ must pay ‘*tithes*’ to government officials and their aids at all levels of government. *One must pay the gate keeper, the security man, the messenger, the butler, the man who keeps or guards the keys to strong rooms where important files and departments’ valuables are stored. One must pay through one’s nose if the permanent secretary should ‘treat your file!’* The list of government workers who must be ‘bribed’ before hapless Nigerian citizens are give a piece of paper they need from the officials in charge is endless. Civil servants therefore can help the governor of Imo State fight corruption by taking a vow to reject any and never to ask for any.

Did *Commissioners, Perm Secs, and other highly placed Government employees* hear the governor speak on this all important issue? I heard him (our governor) say it as he addressed his closest aids on “responsible and faithful discipleship”. He urged them never to let files pile up on their desks. An irresponsible and corrupt officer may delay the treatment of files until he receives some monetary gratification called “bribe”. The governor does not want that. It is a well known practice and order in Nigerian civil service. There is need for a change now!

## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: HELP RESTORE SANITY TO THE SYSTEM**

There is no doubt that the Ministry of education, (Federal, State and Local,) has contributed largely to the deteriorating situation in our education system at all levels, principally in the low performance of both teachers and students and notably too in *examination malpractice*. Corruption is the hallmark of the *Inspectorate of education* as corrupt officials instantaneously and heartily approve the operation of schools and educational institutions with sub standard infrastructures that can barely be identified as schools or places of learning. Hence the proliferation of “schools” established by groups and greedy individuals in our country who can only be issued with certificates to run schools *only in Nigeria*. The result is clear. “What the people sow they reap!” The *Inspectorate of education* in Imo state needs total overhauling if the governor’s *FREE EDUCATION POLICY* will be realized!

**GHOST WORKERS SYNDICATES, STOP THE BUSINESS:** Government officials who engage in nefarious activities associated with ‘*Ghost Workers Movement*’ may think twice if they really mean to join the rescue mission of Owelle Rochas. Millions of naira are siphoned from government treasury every month and paid into the accounts of dead and non existent workers. Who will blame the government that claims it is unable to pay her workers? One Local Government officer in Imo state (once a very poor man) is known to have been taking home monthly a staggering sum of money, in the name of ‘salary’, fatter than that of a Nigerian law maker. People referred to a large mansion he built in the village as ‘a shameless over-sized structure for a man of his caliber and qualification. Perhaps the non payment or even the late payment of workers syndrome may stop in Nigeria if “*Ghost Workers Salaries*” are channeled back into the state treasury.

**ASSOCIATION OF WIVES JOIN HANDS WITH YOUR HUSBANDS:** There are many groups, clubs, associations of wives and mothers of *governors, law makers, councilors, traditional rulers* (name them!) that can help our political and traditional rulers perform well in office. These women who by God’s grace now enjoy exalted positions like their husbands can become true

guardians, councilors, and advisers to their husbands, sons and daughters only if they are God-fearing and true supporters of their husbands as these leaders ‘go about doing good!’ These wives and mothers can never support the evil deeds of their husbands if these ever derail. Mothers must be distrustful of their husbands’ clandestine activities, query and caution them when the need arises! Wives can never condone evil but must guard the good image of their husbands and their families. Wives of governors, lawmakers and traditional rulers can contribute immensely to the success and failure of their husbands in office!

**BAD ADVICERS, CROOKED COMRADES, FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.** These must be good advisers and not the ones to lead the governor, law makers and other political leaders astray and into temptations. Bad advisers encourage their friends and brothers and sisters in power to loot the government treasury, to use the offered opportunity to get rich quickly! They put many obnoxious, tantalizing, and rhetorical questions to their ‘best friend and brother’; (Hear them): *“Are you the one that will rescue Nigeria from her political and economic doom?”* *“Are you the one that will succeed in cleansing the mess which generations of your predecessors never cared to look at?”* Often ones closet allies can help turn the former good leader and politician, a hitherto man of the people, into a dictator and even a monster, and in fact an enemy of the masses. Imolites, advisers, party stalwarts and god fathers, school mates, former business partners and associates, friends and well wishers take care. Remember what *Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa* admonished: *“If only ‘yes men’ surround a leader, who will tell him that his policies are useless or dangerous or need to be fine tuned?”* Good People, Ndi Imo who support the governor, note what this Latin adage says, and try to guard your utterances: *“Cave quid dicis, quando, et cui” (Beware of what you say, when, and to whom)*

The pathetic story of a WAEC supervisor in the concluded 2011 WAEC examination in one school in Imo state fits correctly into the ‘picture’ we are painting here. The story worries many Imolites who cared to listen. The said supervisor, a simple Pentecostal Church member, rejected every offer by the students who were bent on succeeding through examination malpractice. Unable to convince the supervisor, the students summoned their principal, vice, dean and rest of teachers around, and even some of their parents to intervene. Okay. Here the question this group of people put to the *“insubordinate and crazy supervisor”*: *“Sir, are you the only one that can stop examination malpractice in Nigeria. Answer: “Yes, if you join me in this crusade for sanity in our school system!”* Yes, this lone crusader has said it all. Imolites wake up and join the crusade. Don’t be a cog in the machine. Become a front liner today!

**LAW MAKERS, HONORABLE MEMBERS:** Help make Imo State governable for Owelle Rochas. Irrespective of your party of affiliation, *CPC, DPC, PDP, APGA, CAN, CAN*, put the interest of the state first in all your deliberations. Spend more hours on good lawmaking business and less on impeachment procedures of uncooperative and undeserving members. Let discipline, law and order reign in your chambers and houses of parliament; never disorder, exchange of blows and raucous sessions. Imolites, including your wives, children and great friends and admirers are watching you!

**MORAL ORIENTATION AND SPIRITUAL REJUVENATION:** Fellow Imolites, having listened to our new governor’s speeches and addresses as he begins his rescue mission, most of us must have noticed that the man is AN ACTION GOVERNOR. Surely action speaks louder than words. For all us to participate in this mission, in our own little ways, there is no doubt that we must match our good wishes for the governor, our support for the success of this administration with new and fresh moral orientation uplifted by commitment to the

spiritual ideals of Christianity we practice. Parents, for example, should henceforth live lives worthy of emulation by their children and no more remain sources of scandal and deceit. Leaders and directors of education in our tertiary institutions should no more promote or tolerate cultism in institutions of learning in our state and fatherland as a whole.

*Teachers, especially lecturers in our universities and colleges* can no more afford to be seen as promoters and perpetrators of scandalous activities in campuses. Merit, hard work, honesty, and no more favoritism, should become the impeccable gauge for measuring achievement and success in education. *Sexual harassment of female students* (offence punishable with long jail sentences, elsewhere, except in Nigeria) becomes a thing of the past. Listen to this short story: *In the concluded 2011 elections in Nigeria, a lecturer in our of our tertiary institutions in Imo state employed some female students to execute the electoral contract he won. Agreement: "You will receive half of the money and I keep the other half". No problem. The poor students agreed. The three week job completed. The girls went for the payment. "You will not receive your money unless you pass a night with me in a chosen hotel". "No, Sir, how can we do that?" "Okay. If you don't agree, you forfeit the payment". Mute! Some of the girls agreed to forfeit the remuneration and vowed to take their grievances to God for arbitration. Others succumbed to the temptation!*

It is *only in Nigeria* that such scandals take place and perpetrators are not even questioned or brought to justice. One of the most important and richest men in the world (the IMF boss) is presently standing trial in court in New York for 'harassing a female hotel attendant'. If convicted, he must go to jail. In Nigeria such a 'story' is risible piece of news, in fact funny to relate or publish in a newspaper!

Imolites, if we truly support the rescue mission of the present government, we must put words into action. We must be our brothers' keepers. Every Impolite must join in the crusade for lasting sanity in the hitherto impoverished sectors of our economy. We can never afford to sit on the offence and watch evil men and women loot our treasuries. Like you stopped, arrested, and punished ballot box snatchers, you must join in the exercise to fish out evil men and women in our society. Then Imo state will become a safe place for all. Other Nigerians may choose to come and take shelter in our communities because there is absolute security here. The governor seeing such number of trusted Imolites, volunteer foot soldiers, and innumerable numbers of 'vigilantes', young and old, will no doubt do more than the expected and the unthinkable for fellow citizens he has vowed to lead and as well serve. He will dance and sing songs of praise. *"Blessed are the people who Yahweh is their God!"*

**The End**