



SENATOR MAGNUS NGEI ABE

SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
(RIVERS SOUTH EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT)

The President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Senator David A B Mark GCON
National Assembly
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja

17th January 2014

Mr President Sir,

RE: ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE BY AGENTS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

Let me under these difficult circumstances start by wishing you and all my colleagues a happy new year.

I write to officially bring to your notice and that of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, an attempt on my life by agents of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Mr President Sir, the series of events in my home state of Rivers now popularly referred to as the "Rivers crisis", is no longer news, as you and other distinguished Senators are aware of the several events that have shaken the state to its very foundation. It began with the dubious polarization of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, and continued with the failed forceful attempt by a minority of members sponsored by the federal Government to take over the River State House of Assembly. The crises ultimately led to the exit of the democratically elected Governor of Rivers state and other elected officials in the state from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Since the beginning of this crisis there has been a clear attempt sponsored by the Federal Government to overthrow the elected Government of Rivers state by unconstitutional means. In that effort every provision of the Constitution designed to protect the integrity of Rivers State and its Government as a federating unit in

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our country has been serially violated based on "orders from above".

Sir, Let me refer you to the report of the Senate committee on states and local government which investigated the Rivers State crisis and submitted a detailed report which was accepted by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria following which several resolutions were passed by the Senate in an attempt to end the Rivers crisis. Sadly, the Federal Government implemented none of them. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge no response has ever been received by the Senate.

Mr. President Sir, since then the Rivers crisis has not only continued but has escalated beyond reason. The state is now openly balkanized into two groups, one loyal to, and sponsored by the Federal Government in Abuja and the other loyal to the Rivers state government. As a Rivers man, I have naturally identified with and supported the Rivers group. My decision to stand with my state has clearly made me a target.

Both groups developed non-governmental organizations to sell and market their different positions and ideas on the root causes of the challenges in the state to Rivers people. While the Abuja group named the Grassroots Democratic Initiative (GDI) is given a free hand to hold televised rallies in all local government areas of the state, the Rivers group, The Save Rivers Movement (RSM) is harassed, targeted, intimidated, and brutalized by the police at every turn.

This is a clear violation of the rights of the people to peaceful assembly and association as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Injustice as the sages say is a situation where equals are treated unequally. Any country where an official can apply different rules to people in the same situation without fear of sanction is a banana republic.

On Saturday 11/01/14, I was reminded of the planned rally of the Save Rivers Movement which was to hold the next day, Sunday at the College of Arts and Science (CAS) field along Rumuola road. Port Harcourt.

I was also told that the police had been duly notified. However members of the rival group were openly boasting that the Save

Rivers rally would not hold in Obio-Akpor, the home base of the grand patron of GDI in Rivers State.

It was clear to me that using the police to stop a gathering that had been extensively advertised and was to be aired on live television would be an unfair blow to Rivers people and a clear abuse of Police power.

I decided to reach out to the State commissioner of Police, Mr Mbu and share my concerns with him. The CP refused to pick my calls. I also tried to call the Inspector General of Police to bring the facts to his attention.

When I could not reach the IG, I called my friend and brother the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu to help me reach the IG, DSP advised me to try and reach you, Mr President, as he was not in the country. After making several unsuccessful attempts to reach you, I called the Chairman of the Senate Committee of Police Affairs my friend and brother, Senator Paulinus Igwe and briefed him of the situation.

Senator Igwe promised to reach the Inspector General of Police and get back to me. I also spoke with my Chairman, The Chairman Senate Committee on Security and National Intelligence, Senator, Major General Mohammed Magoro and also briefed him. My Chairman called me back to say that he could not reach the IG but that I should call the Director General of the Department of State Security (DGSS). The DGSS is one security official in Nigeria who maintains open lines of communication with all Nigerians irrespective of their political lineage. I spoke with the DGSS who promised to call the state command to verify the situation. All this occurred on Saturday, the day before the fateful event.

The Save Rivers Movement event was due to start at 1pm on Sunday however at about 9.30am I received a report that the police had invaded the planned venue of the rally, destroyed all canopies and other arrangements for the event and they were firing teargas indiscriminately in the area, I was also informed that men, women and children were running out of churches because the entire area was saturated with teargas smoke.

I called the Chief of Staff to the Governor of Rivers state Chief Tony Okocha who confirmed the situation and said he was stuck in

Elder Chidi Wihoka's house in the CAS premises with children in the house who could barely breathe.

At this stage I felt it was necessary to go over to CAS to appeal to the police, and try to establish from them exactly what was going on, and why such extreme force was needed even before the planned time of the event. When I arrived at the gate of CAS, I saw the Nigerian Police in full battle formation with armored personnel carriers and scores of mobile policemen armed to the teeth.

I was received by the Police officers at the scene including Mike Uche Chukwuma, whom I know. One Marcus, ASP Pere, Supol Sani and DPO Esther Effiong, among others. The chief of staff then joined me. We spoke with the officers and I reminded them of the contributions of the Rivers state government to the police, I also said that whatever the situation it is clearly wrong to shoot teargas around our churches on a Sunday.

The officers informed me that they were acting on "orders from above" and that I should call the Commissioner of Police or the Inspector General of police. I was busy trying to call the CP and the IG, when one of the policemen walked close to me and whispered, "Oga, leave now, leave now, they said we should take you down". At this stage, I became apprehensive, and I reminded the officers that I am a serving Senator in Nigeria, in fact I went close the senior officer and said, "I am following you and if anything happens to me it will be in your presence and before God".

It was when I was standing with him that the attack began and the first teargas canister was shot directly at my feet, he quickly moved away while more teargas canisters were fired directly at me in quick succession, it was at this stage that I was hit by something in my chest. I screamed, "I have been shot"! Friends and staff who were with me realizing what had occurred rushed me to my vehicle.

I noticed that I was having difficulty breathing in the car, so we stopped at the nearby Living Faith church (Winners Chapel) on Eligbam road. It is to the eternal credit of that congregation that they quickly got me inside the church and gave us kerosene soaked handkerchiefs to clean our faces. However the left side of

my chest where I was hit was very painful and inflamed. My staff decided that we should rush to the nearest doctor. We were able to reach my doctor, Dr Mackay Anyanwu who stabilized me at his clinic and transferred me to the Kesley Harrison hospital, from where a decision was taken that I proceed to London immediately for further cardiological evaluation.

I did mention to my brother Dr Noble Abe, that the Nigerian public would scream, " Blue murder", if I fly abroad for medical treatment and his reply was "yes, but nobody ever complains about money spent on state burials".

Let me say that I have heard those who have mocked my injuries and demonstrations sponsored by the Federal Government in support of the Police action. Fortunately I don't need to die to prove the veracity of the events of that fateful day, and I am sincerely thankful to God that I survived the attack on me.

On arrival in London, I was taken to the Princess Grace hospital where tests were carried out on my heart. My heart repeatedly fluctuated so much that it triggered the alarms in the hospital repeatedly. It was the doctor at that hospital who decided that I should be moved to the cardiological unit at the London Bridge hospital. The consultant cardiologist at the London Bridge Hospital determined that the site of impact on the left side of my chest was directly in line of my heart and there was a risk related to the distribution of kinetic energy from the high velocity impact to my chest.

The Federal Government spin-doctors have been hard at work to convince the Nigerian public that the attempt on my life is somehow part of opposition drama by APC, but APC did not send the police to CAS, it is the federal Government that deployed the Police and gave them orders. It is the Federal Government that gave orders that I should be taken down. I have heard that the Rivers State CP has alleged that the police were chasing criminals on that day and that I was running from the scene and that I ran into the church to evade arrest.

It is only in Nigeria that a serving Senator of our Republic who has not been declared wanted on the allegation or suspicion of any



crime will need to run from the police. I consider Mr Mbu's statement if he said so to be a direct insult not on me but on the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to which we all belong. I have also heard that Mr Mbu said that they have no rubber bullets in the state command. It is clear that Mr Mbu is talking with the confidence of a 'Governor General' who knows that nothing will happen, and nothing would have happened even if I were killed. I have even been asked if I have the evidence of the projectile with which I was hit. Was I to scramble around the floor, after being hit looking for evidence?

The tragedy of our country is not just that we lie, but that we lie even to ourselves. Pictures of cartridges at the scene that are not from teargas canisters were visible on channels television on that fateful day. Was it lawful to hit me with anything? Be it teargas canister, rubber bullet, stick or bomb. What was my offence?

The decision to take my life comes from the highest levels of the Federal Government and no body will be questioned or punished even if I am killed because I am one of those that have stated and I want to repeat here that I will cross over to APC on the floor of the Senate.

I have written to the Metropolitan Police and other human rights organizations here to inform them of the circumstances of my presence here in London and the facts of what happened to me in Port Harcourt. I believe that it is important that the international community should have an idea of what is going on because when a government goes after the life of its own citizen it will be fool hardy for that citizen to rely on the same instruments being primed for his elimination as his sole source of justice and protection. If I was not hit with a rubber bullet then it is the constitutional responsibility of the Police to carry out an investigation and tell Nigerians if I was hit, what I was hit with, why I was hit, and most importantly, **who hit me AND ON WHOSE ORDERS?** . The Federal Government is more interested in protecting its agents and image than finding out the truth.

Finally, all of us must remember that we all call the name of Almighty God, it is time for us to know that His retribution except by mercy is always exact, for even while we lie to each other and lie to ourselves we cannot lie to God. He knows who did exactly



what, when, why and how, and in His hands and His Hands alone lie the future and ultimately our fate.

I plead that the Senate should intervene to defend our democracy to protect my life, in this atmosphere of gross impunity. It is Senator Abe today; it may be Senator Mark tomorrow.

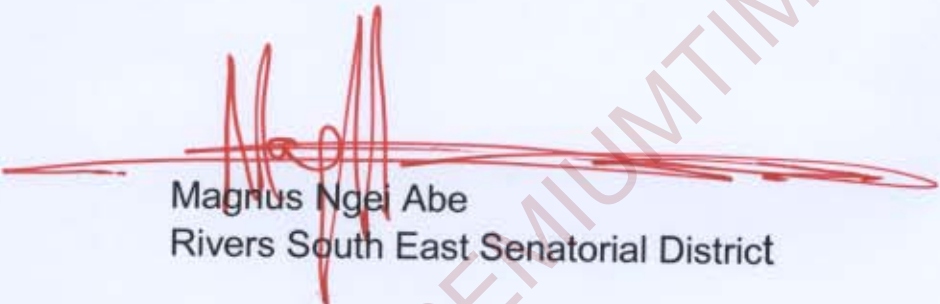
I thank my colleagues in the National Assembly for their solidarity, and indeed all well meaning Nigerians for their show of love and their prayers for my family and me.

I pray that the contents of this letter will be brought to the attention of all Distinguished Senators.

Thank You and God bless.

Yours faithfully,

Magnus Ngei Abe



Magnus Ngei Abe
Rivers South East Senatorial District

