Benin artefacts: Obaseki will continue to engage His Royal Majesty to secure final return

The attention of the Edo State Government (EDSG) has been drawn to the widely publicized media statement issued by the Palace of His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II.

It is concerning that the statement appears to have created the impression that there is a major conflict between the interests of the EDSG and His Royal Majesty with regards to the laudable national milestone of having our highly valued artefacts returned home to Nigeria.

The Government of Edo State and the Governor have always acted transparently and in consonance with existing Federal and State laws in all matters relating to the proposed return of the artefacts and monuments.

The actions of the government thus far on this issue have been driven by selfless, patriotic considerations and in the best interest of Edo State and Edo people.

The Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has displayed and will continue to display immense respect for our traditional institutions and therefore will continue to make effort to secure a private audience with His Royal Majesty to discuss his concerns.

The Governor has consequently ordered that on no account should anyone, whether in government or acting independently, engage in disrespectful exchanges and/or altercation with our revered Royal Majesty and the Benin Royal Palace.

Governor Obaseki, meanwhile, expresses his gratitude to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR) and Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed and other officials of the federal government for their patriotic and tireless efforts that have brought us to the verge of this eagerly anticipated achievement which has remained elusive for over a century.

While thanking and congratulating the Federal Government, the President, the Minister, the Royal Palace of the Oba of Benin and all stakeholders who have contributed to the successes so far recorded in this endeavor, the Governor assures that he will continue to work assiduously with all local and international stakeholders for the eventual and final return of these valued records of our great and glorious heritage back to Benin City for the benefit of ALL Edo people, Nigerians and the black race.

Signed

Osarodion Ogie Esq.
Secretary to the Edo State Government