

 **YORUBA SELF-DETERMINATION**

**MOVEMENT**

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On this historic occasion of the inauguration of our beloved brother, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, I Prof. Banji Akintoye, Chairman of the Yoruba Self-Determination Movement, for and on behalf of the overwhelming majority of Yoruba people at home and in the Diaspora worldwide who seek self-determination and sovereignty for the Yoruba nation, deeply and sincerely rejoice with our brother on the fulfillment of his political ambition to preside over the affairs of the Nigerian state.

Exactly eight years ago, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu’s energetic, sincere and dedicated assistance to another Nigerian citizen enabled that citizen to rise to these same positions of President and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria. Therefore, none of us citizens of Nigeria can now say that he does not deserve the same elevation for himself today. Indeed, his elevation to the Presidency of Nigeria against all the odds that we Nigerians are painfully familiar with, and against all the man-made contortions of order that characterize Nigeria, demonstrate clearly the tenacity of spirit that characterizes his political career.

These man-made contortions of order demonstrate the fundamental bankruptcy, and the essential non-sustainability, of the Nigerian state which our brother must now lead. It is particularly noteworthy that all the electoral cycles under the successively fraudulent Constitutions of Nigeria since 1959 have ended up unalterably in controversies that are irresoluble and that are ultimately never resolved. That same scenario remains with us today.

Nigeria stands at this moment in the devastating pains of an unresolved nationality problem. As a highly perceptive leader of another African country remarked recently, the nations of Nigeria hate one another and the hatred has steadily escalated since independence, and yet the political leaders of Nigeria strangely choose to keep Nigeria as one country. Today, Nigeria stands at a grave moment when the nationality problem and the hatred have been fearfully aggravated by the decision and efforts of one of Nigeria’s nations, the Fulani nation, to conquer, break and subjugate all the other nations of Nigeria. We stand at a grave moment when the would-be conqueror nation is still killing, maiming and destroying, still seeking to make Nigeria “the bloodiest war zone on the African continent”. We have experienced fully eight years during which the would-be conqueror nation has enjoyed total freedom to carry out its invasions, killings and destroying across the face of Nigeria, while enrolling the services of foreign terrorist organizations in the invasion, all with very obvious complicity by the government and the security forces of Nigeria. With very loudly announced invitations by the President of Nigeria to non-Nigerians to come migrating from all over Africa to Nigeria without any travel documents, huge masses of hostile non-Nigerians, all ethnic kinsmen of the would-be conqueror nation, have been assisted to flood into Nigeria in order to reinforce their nation’s conquest of Nigeria. We Yoruba have lost an estimated 29,000 of our people to these rampages. Countless Yoruba women have suffered the degradation of being raped by the invaders. Farming has been destroyed in large swathes of the Yoruba farmlands, and our whole Yoruba nation now faces the danger of devastating famines. In fact, the would-be conqueror nation once embarked on a loudly proclaimed effort to starve out the whole Yoruba nation by blocking the Lokoja Bridge for days against trucks that were transporting food products to the Yoruba Southwest from the Nigerian Middle Belt - and, again, without the government of Nigeria raising a finger against the crime.

 But these are not all that the Yoruba people have suffered in Nigeria’s ever intensifying cauldron of inter-peoples hatred. Under a system of limited self-government and federalism in the decade preceding Nigeria’s independence in 1960, we Yoruba achieved such great development and modernization that made our Region the pace setter in modernization, not only in Nigeria, but in all of Africa. We instituted the first Free Education Program in Africa, built the longest mileage of modern highways, the most urban water supply projects, the first industrial estates with an ambitious industrialization program, the only investment capital structure with holdings in industries, banking, real estate and commerce, many large plantations producing crops for industries, various skills-development centers for our youths, etc. But Nigeria’s culture of inter-peoples hatred has almost totally destroyed all of these. Though Yoruba people were confidently living in growing prosperity by 1960, most Yoruba people now belong in Nigeria’s horrible culture of poverty which is growing worse and worse. Yoruba educated youths, confronted by Nigeria’s hopelessness, are fleeing abroad at a terrifying rate, thereby creating a serious threat that their Yoruba nation could perish in Nigeria.

 Against this background, we Yoruba people remain fiercely convinced of the reality of the non-sustainability of the Nigerian state as a vehicle for galvanizing and translating the inherent creative energies of our people, the Yoruba people, into a developmental thrust again. We are determined that the bottled-up Yoruba creativity must be released so as to generate the impetus to reenact the historic dynamism for which our Yoruba nation was famed in the past. The more the Yoruba nation remains sucked into, and trapped in, the vortex of the Nigerian trash machine, the more stagnated and backward we Yoruba would become. Accordingly, we Yoruba people state categorically that the political realities of one Yoruba man’s presidency over Nigeria cannot possibly alter the continued bondage and retrogression of the Yoruba people in the cauldron of the heavily devalued Nigerian state. The Yoruba nation will never submit itself to unending citizenship in a Nigeria that is irretrievably held in the deep dungeon of more and more poverty and hopelessness.

Therefore, we Yoruba nation reaffirm our decision to negotiate with Nigeria the creation of our own and separate autonomous political and economic space outside the framework of the now illegitimate Nigerian state. We Yoruba have repeatedly stated this in our letters and petitions to the United Nations Organization as well as to various governments of the world, including the Nigerian Government. In particular, we have stated as follows: “Above all, we Yoruba conclude irrevocably that the agenda of war of conquest and subjugation by one nation that is part of Nigeria against the other nations of Nigeria, and the said nation’s invitations to foreign terrorist organizations to come and help to wage war against the other nations of Nigeria, all with the obvious complicity of the Federal Government of Nigeria, have hideously violated, and conclusively eliminated, the unity and legitimacy of Nigeria as one country. We Yoruba have therefore concluded that we have the legitimate right and the duty to separate our Yoruba nation from Nigeria”.

We Yoruba are prepared to attain these goals through negotiations with the Nigerian government, either on a bilateral basis (that is, between our Yoruba nation and the government of Nigeria) or on a multilateral basis that brings all or most of the constituent stakeholders in the failed Nigerian project around one negotiating table. We have stated this in various ways to the Federal Government of Nigeria, and these communications of ours to the Nigerian Federal Government remain our firm and unalterable demands to the Nigerian state.

In conclusion to this statement, we Yoruba applaud the noble assurances which our brother, the new President of Nigeria, uttered in his inaugural address. We refer to the following statements in his address: “Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate. We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own”. We his kinsmen say “Thank you, Mr. President”, for these typically Yoruba assurances.



Professor Banji Akintoye

**LEADER AND CHAIRMAN YORUBA SELF DETERMINATION MOVEMENT (YSDM).**