



OTU OKA- IWU ABUJA (IGBO LAWYERS)

Motto: Onye Aghana Nwanneya!

2024 OTU OKA- IWU WEEK

THEME:

**STRENGTHENING IGBO UNITY
THE QUEST FOR THE CREATION
OF A NEW STATE IN THE
SOUTH EAST**

13th -15th December, 2024

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2024 OTU OKA-IWU WEEK WITH THE
THEME: STRENGTHENING IGBO UNITY: THE QUEST FOR THE CREATION OF A
NEW STATE IN THE SOUTH EAST HELD AT NBA HOUSE, PLOT 1101, MUHAMMAD
BUHARI WAY, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, ABUJA ON FRIDAY, 13TH OF
DECEMBER 2024.**

The event featured one Keynote Speaker, three Panelists and one Moderator. Key observations and recommendations made during the event covered the following thematic areas:

1.0. **OBSERVATIONS:**

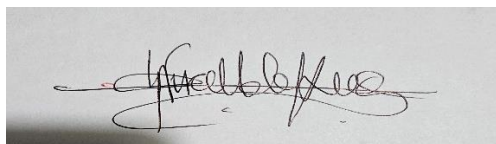
- 1.1. It was observed that the theme for the event, "**Strengthening Igbo Unity: The Quest for the Creation of a New State in South East,**" was timely and paramount to the Igbo community as it highlighted two critical pillars for the Igbo future: unity and equitable representation.
- 1.2. The Seminar observed that the quest for a new state is not just a political aspiration but a pursuit of justice, equity, and balanced development. A new state would address historical marginalization and ensure the Igbo region received fair representation and resources to thrive.
- 1.3. Otu Oka-Iwu was commended for the remarkable and noble ideals it stands for and propagates, particularly in uniting Legal Practitioners of Igbo expansion under one-fold and maintaining admirable brotherliness. Accordingly, Otu Oka-Iwu continued to demonstrate strength in unity and urged them to continue on this commendable trajectory.
- 1.4. The quest to create a new state for Ndi Igbo aligned with the principles of equity and fairness enshrined in the Constitution, *Motto: Owe Ndi Igbo Nwanna* aiming to correct historical imbalances and promote inclusivity in governance and resource allocation.
- 1.5. It was emphasized that Ndi Igbo had suffered significant financial losses, totaling 17.4 trillion Naira, due to the lack of a sixth State, which would have brought in additional federal allocations, expanded local government revenue, economic development, improved infrastructure, and enhanced Igbos' political representation in the National Assembly.
- 1.6. In 1999, a Constitutional/Political Reform Conference was held in Abuja, attended by notable regional leaders, where three (3) significant proposals

were put forward: the creation of six zonal structures, a single-term presidency, and a rotational presidency among the six zones.

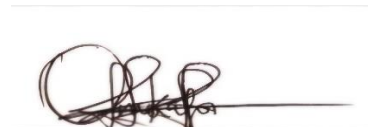
- 1.7. Unfortunately, the conference report was later reviewed, and the ideas of a rotational and single-term presidency were removed. If the single-term presidency had been implemented, Nigeria's democracy, which began in 1999, would have operated differently, potentially preventing the current issues surrounding presidential tenure.
- 1.8. During the event, participants were informed that a Constitutional Amendment Committee was set up by the National Assembly, comprising one senator from each State. They were charged to prioritize Nigerian interests over party affiliations. The committee held a retreat in Kano State, proposing 38 constitutional amendments, including creating a new state.
- 1.9. It was stated at the Seminar that the Anioma as a constituency has been requesting the creation of an Anioma State for over 50 years, a request that is documented and signed. Hence, there was near conclusion that the new State should be Anioma State forming additional State for Ndi Igbo. The creation of the State will be beneficial for Ndi Igbo because out of the 9 Local Government Areas in Delta State, 6 are oil-producing regions, and this will bring additional resources and population to Southeast.
- 1.10. Notably, offices are shared among the six geopolitical zones, irrespective of whether one identifies as Igbo or Southeastern. It was said that '**equity is not equality. Equity is equity.**' It was opined that the Southeast deserves a new state for geopolitical balance.
- 1.11. It was observed that the absence of natural resources, such as large land areas, natural resources and major rivers, is an obstacle that hinders civic participation among the Igbos. This led the Igbos to venture into entrepreneurship and travel outside Igbo land for better opportunities.
- 1.12. The poverty level was observed to be very low in Igbo land because of the apprenticeship spirit, and other tribes were encouraged to imbibe this model.

2.0. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1. The Seminar recommended that for the Igbos to be supported, exist, and progress, all Lawyers of Igbo expansion must find the need to support Otu Oka-- Iwu for the welfare of Igbo Lawyers and the Igbos.
- 2.2. The creation of the sixth State is statutory because it is provided for in **Section 8** of the 1999 Constitution. Accordingly, the South East leaders were advised to unite and follow the constitutional process and request state creation as stipulated in **Section 8(1)** of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended).
- 2.3. Additionally, rather than adopting a victim mentality, Ndi Igbo are recommended to take proactive steps to address this issue and play national politics, putting aside internal divisions and working together to secure the region's future.
- 2.4. The concern about the location of the State is irrelevant to avoid division among Ndi Igbo, the most important factor is the creation of the 6th State for Ndi Igbo.
- 2.5. It was recommended that the Igbos should discuss how to transform their unity by utilizing their skills and knowledge to network with their neighbors and interact across ethnic groups.
- 2.6. It was stressed that as a people, our conversation must transcend politics and focus on integrating infrastructure in the South East to create an economic powerhouse similar to the South. The Igbos should stop playing victim politics, as a strong economy will yield Ndi Igbo significant political power in Nigeria.



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