

J-K GADZAMA LLP

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L-R: Emeka Ngige, SAN, Chairman, Council of Legal Education; Nella Andem-Rabana, SAN, Principal Partner, Lexglobal Partners; Muhammed Mahdi Shehu, Chairman, Dialogue Group (Keynote Speaker) and Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, Principal Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP during the J-K Gadzama LLP 12th Annual Public Lecture held on Tuesday, 24th November, 2020 at J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja.

Editorial

Welcome to the 1st quarter of the year 2021. We are pleased to present this new edition of our newsletter.

Opening this year's edition is an abridged lecture presented by Muhammed Mahdi Shehu, a techno-prenuer and public affairs commentator on the topic of *Rebuilding the Nation, Post Covid-19 Outbreak: The Political, Economic and Judicial Perspectives: 21 Cumulative Years of Democratic Winter, When will the Summer Come? At the Risk of Sounding Harsh.*

The lecture was thought-provoking on the subject of growing Nigeria. There is no better tonic we can recommend to Nigerians in the New Year but this lecture. Also, keeping in line with the firm's enduring tradition to mark the yuletide season and recognize astuteness and industry, the sights and scenes of the firm's 2020 Christmas Carol adorns the newsletter. Legal jokes, law on marble and pictures of other events held by the firm are also included.

This and previous editions of our newsletter are available on our website at www.j-kgadzamallp.com.

Happy reading.

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Rebuilding the Nation, Post Covid Outbreak: The Political, Economic and Judicial Perspectives:
21 Cumulative Years of Democratic Winter, when will the Summer Come? At the Risk of
Sounding Harsh. (abridged)



Muhammed Mahdi Shehu
CEO
Dialogue Group of Companies Limited

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, I took a unilateral latitude to add another dimension to your theme by attaching the phrase: **21 CUMULATIVE YEARS OF DEMOCRATIC WINTER, WHEN WILL THE SUMMER COME? AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING HARSH.** Not out of any disrespect, but so that my key note address will add a tone, tune and RYTHM hoping that it will help to awaken our individual and collective consciences, wake those of us who are in deep sleep and slumber, expose **OUR** collective wholesale and retail pretenses, and living in denials, so that we can avoid the looming tragedy waiting at our door steps and which will consume both the victims of our "acceptable brand" of democracy and the villains and beneficiaries of the abused system.

REBUILDING THE NATION

The key word in the keynote address title is "REBUILDING THE NATION" In elementary mathematics students are taught how to assume a mean, medium and mode values while solving a task. Incidentally with that assumption they arrive at a correct answer. I therefore would like to assume that Nigeria as a nation is a house that needs to be rebuilt. When one is rebuilding a house, it could be for many well considered reasons among which may be:

1. The house is too old to stand the rigors of the moment and no re-enforcement can save it from ultimate collapse. Probably the house was built in a hurry with disproportionate combination of land, labor, capital and managerial skills.
2. Or the house is discovered to have some fundamental structural defects which are

not only at an advance level but are both irredeemable and irreversible such that remaining under its roof by the occupants who are the owners could be risky and perilous. More So no insurance company under rights such a visible risk.

3. Or technological discovery and advancement has overtaken the status of the house. And for it to conform to the realities of the moment it has to be brought down. Since neither changing the fixtures and fittings nor mending the weak portion can solve the problem. Only total reinvention can do that.
4. Or it is the wish of the occupants/owners of the house to rebuild the house in a modern way, enough for everybody with a stake to have an independent apartment for additional comfort and security... Ladies and gentlemen you can continue from I stop by advancing other likely reasons for rebuilding a house. Nigeria is that weak house that needs to be rebuilt.

Did I hear people in this hall saying Yes! Yes! Yes!
In whispers?

ASPIRING TO REBUILD A NATION ON A SHAKEY FOUNDATION

Both the pleasant, not so pleasant and tragic history of governance in Nigeria is well documented and archived for now and for posterity and will not be so appropriate to be dwelled upon now even though there is a linear relationship between the past, present and future in the life of any country and its governance processes. Recapping that history will

send us a painful reminder. But even as such we need a refresher to remind us of:

- a. From October 1960 to January 15th, 1966 it was a period of passionate dream to build a strong and virile nation based on clear understanding of our differences and strength in diversity. The dream turned bitter, sour and unrealizable. And that defined and marked the beginning of our derailment as a nation. January 15th, 1966 to July 1975 is an era in our Life as a nation which represented Military lust for power, abuse of same with impunity, leading to total derailment on account of blind and naive misadventure and eventually laying a solid foundation of a nation that will accept corruption, nepotism, tribalism, ineptitude as an acceptable way of life and living.
- b. July 1975 to February 1976 represents an era with a committed leader standing alone with a vision and commitment to save and develop our nation, but who was betrayed by his own very military constituency who see his ouster as an opportunity to amass wealth, polarize the country along ethnic and religious divides as a way and tactics to continue holding unto power for their personal aggrandizement.
- c. From Feb. 1976 to Oct. 1979. It was yours truly, Gen. Obasanjo who addressed the fellow citizens of Nigeria as Head of State against "his wish and desire". For the remainder he presided over, he was constantly looking over his shoulders for his dear life. He was unstable throughout, he played safe for fear of the masquerades and vicious crocodiles around him. Which he rode on to become world prominent and the rest now history.
- d. From 1979 to 1983, it was a period when power was vested into the hands of small town softly predator with senile tendencies whose views on anything are hardly known. It was a period of ethical re-order, green revolution etc., that never was. It was a period of importation spree handled by a select clique that hijacked power for their own personal benefit. It was the regime that set in the austere economic measures having raked the economy down.
- e. December 1983 to August 1993 was an era characterized by tyranny and policy contradictions as a way and tool of fighting corruption and social ills. The period also witnessed skyrocketed corruption, monumental wasteful spending, high propensity to corrupt and be corrupted, deceitfulness on the part of leadership and deploying of material inducement to silence dissenting views and vocal voices.
- f. Chief Ernest Shonekan's three month was nothing but a period of uncertainty, power play, blackmail, horse trading which almost brought Nigeria to a standstill with no single value addition to both the polity and the economy.
- g. Five years of Sani Abacha is best described as a period of fulfilling a life ambition by Sani Abacha to preside over Nigeria as a military president irrespective of whether the country will grow and develop under him or not. To achieve and realize that ambition he descended recklessly on the national treasury along with his family members and went full swing into looting spree. Having looted what, he must have considered enough for his political ambition, he went ahead to bribe party leaders who went on air to endorse him for transmutation from military head of state to a civilian president. He gauged the unfriendly media. Forced opposition into exile. Those who were opposed to his ambition and had the courage to remain around such as General Yar'adua and Obasanjo were roped into a military coup attempt and ended up in prison. Yar'adua paid the supreme' price of Death in prison while Obasanjo came out by divine intervention on account of Abacha's death.

- h. On account of Abacha's transmutation ambition and hate for constructive criticism, Nigeria started witnessing another circle of political assassinations and unexplained disappearances of vocal and dissenting voices. Such that before it was fully realized, Nigeria had become a center of terror and harvest of death zone. Everybody was under fear. And majority chose to remain cowardly silent except few who had great courage, guts and audacity.
- i. Abdulsalam Abubakar's tenor was that of an unwilling mind who thought personal survival in the midst of plenty is better than delving into the murky waters of Nigerian governance process. Within that time, he neither improved the economy nor help in building the polity. He was a military apologist who played a prominent role in cajoling the entire north for an Obasanjo to take over.
- j. For want of better phrase, from May 1999 to May 2015 which saw the PDP presiding over, one can assert that it was the greatest opportunity that both Obasanjo and PDP had to put Nigeria on the path of propensity, growth, peace, development, cohesion and true Nationalism. It was clear that PDP governance structure soon turned into dictatorship from the president down to the lowest member. Neither the PDP constitution nor that of Nigeria mattered. Contracts awarded, paid for often times fully but abandoned and the money lost with no consequences. Impeachment of Governors on the dark pages of the president's book became the order of the day. Removing Leadership of the two chambers at the behest of Obasanjo became a yearly affair courtesy of "Ghana Must Go Power" threats and blackmail from the executive arm using all forms of terror machineries. Soon Obasanjo became alone loose lion in the bush with nobody to call him to order.
- k. From his antecedents as an 8-year tenor Governor, if President Yar'adua had survived his numerous medical challenges, he would have made Nigeria great perhaps for the first time, or at least made it better again, judging from his courage to admit flaws in the election that brought him to power. Going by his ability to negotiate with the Niger delta militants. Going by his resolve to do away with Obasanjo's domineering nature.
- l. Going by his Audacity to call off General Buhari's (as he then was) call for mass mobilization of people to protest the then elections outcome after reaching out to him for reconciliation. May the soul of Malam Umaru continue to receive Allah's infinite mercy and blessing that saw the coming together of people across political, ethic, regional and religious lines with a stubborn resolve to save themselves and the country from the shamelessness of PDP, evident from the way, manner, style and speed PDP destroyed all the fabrics of governance in Nigeria. Nobody enjoyed this cross breaded goodwill like president Buhari did and perhaps with Nigerians becoming wiser by the day, nobody will ever enjoy that blind trust and good will in Nigeria forever. Millions of people across all age groups including this speaker stood up against PDP and its governance structure particularly at the heat of the campaign. PDP was thoroughly abused, kicked, molested, stripped naked in public, exposed, disgraced, blackmailed, voted out and shamed by the electorates.
- m. Many were confident, with absolute measure of certainty that the pre-election campaign promises of the APC will be fulfilled and Nigeria will be on the road to sanity, prosperity, peace, growth, progress and development. It took more than two years to stop the then newly elected APC government to stop complaining and passing the buck even after winning the elections.
- n. Sadly, more than five years down the line, the success and failure stories continue to dominate the political landscape of

Nigeria. It is either a devalued currency, increasing BOKO HARAM assault, discovery of monumental fraud, stagnated investigations into crimes, labour and industrial strikes, uprising by militias, ethnic and tribal rivalries, trade and labour union threats, banditry, kidnapping and increase in armed robbery etc., One can continue AD INFINITUM.

As if we are a cursed people in a cursed country, or so it seems, sixty years down the memory lane with the exception of few earlier years, and the on-going positive interventions by the Governors of Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno States, and other few Federal interventions and investments in human and infrastructural development, our brand of democracy seem to take a different definition and dimension from the well-intended. Consequently Ours in Africa and more in Nigeria is a democratic governance rooted in serial, multiple and unapologetic electoral fraud, difficult to understand wanton serial killings, maiming and calculated arson, intimidation and disenfranchising of voters, nepotism, primitive stealing and accumulation of wealth, broken promises, lack of mission, plan and vision made worst by a corrupt and compromised legal and judicial system that owns a departmental store where "favourable" court orders and judgements can be obtained by the highest bidders, payable in American dollars, Euro or British Pounds.

Just like one will be kind to remember the slowly implementation of promises towards provision of infrastructure through local and international borrowing dangerous and unhealthy as it is, in addition to other social investments in job creation and provision of working capital on pilot basis. But in concrete terms and putting everything on a balanced and fair scale, one can assert that majority Nigerians expected more than has been achieved so far. This maybe so either because they swallowed all the campaign promises of the APC hook, line and sinker to a point that they saw those promises as coming from heaven and therefore divinely ordained, or they pushed their lucks too far, or they simplified governance and took it for granted, or they were naïve.

I was one of those who openly opposed, and

abused Ibrahim SHEMA when he was a seating governor and even after he left. I contributed financially, material and intellectually to ensure he did not install a lanky. When next I meet him per chance or per adventure, in spite of the criminal charges he is facing, which are yet to be proved and decided, I will apologize to him openly for the measurable and time tested value he added to governance when he held sway as the Governor of Katsina State for eight (8) years. He would go down memory lane as a governor that was largely misunderstood, unjustifiably maligned and misconstrued and is only second to Malam Umaru Yar'adua in terms of physical development, human empowerment and other measurable performances. This is because comparatively speaking, one can now qualify former Governor Ibrahim Shema as an "Angel" if one takes into account the current level of large scale fraud, despair and despondency in addition to total breakdown of infrastructure in Katsina State under a clueless Governor whose views on anything are hardly known and whose jugular veins are being held tight by a heartless, callous and ungodly group of local and village cartel, cabal and complex clique. Such that in spite of more than N1.237 Trillion accruals within 62 months it has been harvest of death, melancholy, economic disposition and uncertainty of the future and outright stealing of public funds.

Indeed declaring a state of emergency and appoint a military sole administrator in Katsina State by Mr. President will be the only redemption no matter how absurd it looks like. Already 8 local government areas have been taken over by bandits while the Gov. and the SSG are feasting on money meant for security.

Let me disgrace and narrate another hypothetical made up story that may not necessarily be true but sadly represents the facts of our situation today. A situation and life that is full of uncertainties, emotional dislocation, hunger, diseases, unemployment, total economic dispossession and exclusion that have sent great majority of the Nigerian citizens into permanent and irreversible economic husbandry.

The story ladies and gentlemen is about Forest Syndrome. There is this story being told about life in the forest. Lion was presiding over and holding court. Leopards, elephants, tigers, hyenas

and other daring animals and reptiles were all present when smaller, tiny and inconsequential animals and such other forest species came to the lion's court to lodge a complaint. Without roll call to ascertain who was present or absent, the lion gave them all the attention required. They related that their population is getting depleted by the day, on account of increasing hunger, unnatural death and low birth rate, in addition to daily unrelenting incessant attacks by other species and human hunters every night and even during the day.

They reminded the lion in court that unless something is done urgently, the situation will lead to hunger, starvation and extinction in the forest. As they reminded the Lion that the bigger animals feed on the smaller ones and if they allow the smaller species to go into extinction there will be no food for them and no more smaller animals to be presided over on, which may mean at the end of it all that dog will eat dog.

Immediately after their presentation the lion in court apologized and made a proclamation that: "From this very moment, until further notice nobody is allowed to hunt in the bush". "All human beings and such other forest cabals, cliques and cartels are to keep off the forest in their best interest and all smaller animals and species in the bush are henceforth under the protection of the lion". "And indeed, will be served three free meals per day". They left happy. Those that were hitherto abusing and cursing the lion in the privacy of their homes and in public began to appreciate and praise him. Because the lion listened to and protected them at the very hour of their need, assured them by way of proclamation and showed his pity and concern by way of the free meals. There is indeed a lesson for human leaders to be drawn from the lion in court. Animal rights movements are in a better position to appreciate the forest syndrome.

You and I, all and sundry, simply continue to watch and helplessly lament Harvest of death which is now a common event in almost all households on account of insecurity, uncertainty, hunger, starvation, disease and complete societal dislocation because the lions in some of our elected and appointed leaders are only scary, greedy and vicious with no listening ear, no pity and no compassion.

There are ongoing wars all over the world now and also within the geographical expression called Nigeria. The many wars are those between the political class among themselves, between political class and the electorates, between farmers and herders, between those in the cities and villagers, between motorist and passengers, between the haves and the have nots, between farmers and kidnappers/rustlers, between the youth and the elders, between senior civil servants and contractors, between cabals and the short changed, between litigants, lawyers and judges between foreigners and locals, between leaders and the led, between traditional institutions and peasants, between traditional rulers and politicians, between digitals and analogs, between marabounds and looters, between clergies/clerics and their congregations, between modernist and traditionalist, between peasants and the working class, between lecturers and students, between those who nurtured, labored and funded political parties and those who were sworn enemies of the parties but yet busy enjoying all the spoils of the parties.

Between political God fathers and their sons after elections. Between the North and the South, between Muslims, Christians and those who choose to worship differently, between agents of change and those for the status quo ante.... all forms of wars. Add yours to my list. Incidentally, all these wars are nothing but a clash between Truth and falsehood. Luckily it is the permanent unchanging rule of God Himself that no matter the circumstance, irrespective of the parties involved, no matter how long it takes, TRUTH will always, always TRIUMPH over falsehood. That has been the verdict of history from ancient antiquity.

Nigeria is a country of multiple contradictions. Endless fuel stations but no fuel. So many mosques and churches but with neither pity nor compassion, blessed with natural resources and environment but hunger hanging all over its horizon, trillions spent By Government on security yet no peace only harvest of death.

Ours is a country where in we feel secure, comfortable and represented only when one of us is in power. We feel represented only when a member of our church, mosque, sect, club, clique,

clan, cartel, cabal, tribesman/woman etc is in charge. We ask for power to shift not willing to accept in whose hands the power lands after shifting. For example, when Karaduwa people were agitating for power to shift from Katsina central to their zone (and there is nothing wrong with that) they were not willing to see power falling into any hand but into the hands of their own. Absolute majority of Karaduwa people will never agree that power have shifted to them were the power to fall in the hands of an indigenous Christian bamaguje from Kafur, Sabuwar KASA, Tsiga, Yari Bori, 'Yargoje etc. when an Igbo man is championing power shift to the south he will never accept power have shifted to him if anybody such as Ogoja, Ijaw, a Benin man/woman or an Indigenous Muslim Igbo were to emerge as the president of Nigeria. Were a Muslim from Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue or Taraba States to emerge as the President of Nigeria in a power shift arrangement, majority Christians from the middle belt will never agree that power have shifted to them.

Where power to shift to the southwest and an Ife man or woman emerges as the president, modo keke people will never agree that power have shifted to them because it is in the hands of their sworn enemies. I wonder how many Katsina people will sincerely believe that power have shifted to them with a Daura man now presiding over or how many Daura people sincerely believed power was with them when late President Umaru, a Katsina man was presiding over. Such has been our mindset, our double standards, our myopic way of seeing and assessing issues and events, which defines the shaky base upon which Nigeria is built on. No country with such an abnormality, with such selfishness and stupidity, harbouring such malice, hate and venom will ever talk of development and growth. There is no basis for seeking to consolidate on anything.

Our brand of Democracy belongs to a class of its own. It is the only brand of democracy in the world where people with very well-known criminal records, where people who served jail terms for high profile crimes, where well known drug barons, where those with forged academic credentials, where historical public treasury looters, where 419ners are elected into public offices to make laws, for the land, appropriate or spend monies and manage human resource, where same characters are appointed or buy their way into

public offices, Where such shameless people eventually make it to the list of people being awarded with National honours for "service" to the Nation, where the same criminals and doubtful characters are called Kings and Princes, waiting for the throne to become vacant and ascend to it. A country with such an outlook in governance must go on soul searching rather than seeking to rebuild, consolidate its democratic gains for growth and development. Nigeria must rediscover itself, reinvent its wheels, change its mindset, heal her multiple wounds and lacerations and finds its focus.

Only in Nigeria's brand of democracy will you find petty criminals languishing in prison for offenses bordering on street fighting, loitering aimlessly, small volume thievery etc while high profile criminals who have looted and still looting the public treasury high, dry and empty are granted court or police bail based on loose terms or even on self-cognizance and eventually buy justice or have a nolle entered in their own favour which means the end of the case for life. Such a country needs urgent healing.

Growth is a by-product of investment. Investment itself is predicated on savings. While saving stems from consumption culture or habit. More than 80% of Nigerians consume all what they earn. That is for those who have an income. Which means they have nothing to save talk less of investing into something. Their marginal propensity to consume is 100%. Hence 100% inability to save or invest. A country with such pathetic outlook is a country that can neither grow nor develop.

REBUILDING A NATION: POST COVID 19

From Adam to date there has not happened an event felt in every house hold, world over, more than the COVID 19 pandemic. No one individual, house hold, clan, village, city, country or continent was exempted from the COVID phenomena. Some people saw and still see it as a biological weapon manufactured in a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan to checkmate Americans dominance, arrogance and exploitation. Others see it as a scientific experimental mistake that unintentionally went global. More people saw it as an acid test by China to test the level of preparedness of nations in times of medical disaster. Yet many more so it as a deliberate attempt by China to force everybody

into submitting to its industries, whose production capacity was getting lower on account of global recession as they were in a hurry to close the gap and could not wait for others any longer. Less aggressive people simply see COVID-19 as just another natural disaster to test the faith of the believers and invite those who don't appreciate God to do so, particularly those countries that have no medical infrastructure but we're saved from the devastating effect compared with those with a claim to health institutions of global standard.

COVID 19 is the singular world event which exposed all of us as equally vulnerable. This brought out the equality between us. Our human weaknesses were brought out to lime light. Strong and weaker nations were brought to their knees. All were terrified, in constant fear, afraid, unsure, traumatized and gasping not only for oxygen but willing to accept any help, even from an enemy, a sworn enemy for that matter. It was such hard times that United States willingly with thanks accepted Cuba's offer for the US marine ships to harbor on Cuban waters with COVID 19 infected crews, sailors and passengers after being rejected by 3 other countries. Cuban doctors played an important role in managing US COVID infected crews. How ironic.

Indeed it was the only phenomenon in world history that sees family members deserting one of them the moment he test positive to COVID 19. Parent's deserts infected children. Children desert their parents. Lovers keep apart. Relatives keep a distance to avoid being infected by fellow relatives. And sadly dead COVID victims are buried in mass graves without funeral rights and with no relatives around. Except those whose corpses were handed over to their relatives, many survivors cannot tell you for sure where the graves of their loved ones are. Such that COVID dwarfed other world documented disasters and made them look like a child's play.

Any wonder that COVID 19 has already entered into Guinness book of record as the worst, most frightening and devastating, manmade or natural disaster in human history. We are still living with the effects because far from being over, it is still very much around and only a life style audit, a lot of prayers and attitudinal change will see us through. With the onset of COVID 19, businesses

closed down, millions world over lost their jobs incomes and savings for those that had it. In no time the savings got depleted and consumed with no replacement date. Bills that were due for settlement were delayed. With some still remaining unpaid and eventually many will not be settled forever. Businesses closed. Industries stood still. Educational and research institutions closed down. Air, sea and land transportations hanged on. Everything was black bleak and grey. The distortions are endless and still harvesting the repercussions.

COVID 19 set in at a time when Nigeria was deep into recession. When our currency was getting devalued and with the American dollar getting stronger on the international stage. It came at a time when our political land scape was at its all-time shaky with so much uncertainty. With increasing unemployment, battling with decayed infrastructure, rising cost of commodities, food and other essentials of life and increasing crime rate. With industrial and labor unrest, agitating for self-determination, resources control, threat of brake away, vandalization of public assets, increased treasury looting, kidnappings, ritual killings, banditry etc. such that COVID 19 phenomena is the last stroke that broke the camels' back in a manner of speaking.

With that situation all revenue projections of Nigeria on whose basis our budgetary plans and hopes are hinged gave way to the reality of the moment. This is more because we rely totally, completely, and entirely on one single commodity for survival. The great oil. Such that when the international demand and price of oil crashed on account of low demand everybody felt it in Nigeria and we are still feeling and will continue to feel it for all times to come. Projects lined up for execution will have to be scaled down or in some Cases completely halted. All plans were affected. Everything was facing a genuine frustration. With dwindling oil revenue, unfavorable balance of trade in a consumer country like Nigeria, whose debt burden is on the increase, only a miracle will save us. Even without COVID 19 we were in trouble politically and economically. With COVID
o u r n a m e i s s o r r y .
What we all require under the circumstance is going back to the drawing table to identify our priorities, prioritize them and articulate them in an implementable and realistic manner. But that

will not be achievable under our brand of democracy that so far translates into spending more than 70% of the revenue on less than 2.5% of the population.

There is so much waste extravagancy, affluence and vanity in our brand of democracy. Our democracy is too expensive to allow for any growth and development. Most of Our politicians are greedy, selfish and heartless when it comes to money. They are only after what today brings and to hell with tomorrow. They see politics as a way to amass wealth, exert influence, send fear and blackmail on those answerable to them etc.

Politicians in other climates work towards building their countries with minimal expenditure incurred on them using public funds. With presidents, prime ministers and other elected public officers paying rent for the official residences they occupy, paying for the food they consume. Some with no official vehicles, using public transport system to work and other personal engagements. Flying economy class when traveling locally or internationally. Collecting neither pension nor gratuity. Those who are lucky have only one official car with strict usage code. With a prime minister going to the office on bicycle. In short a purposeful political class is the bed rock on which a nation can be built or rebuilt. With our brand of democracy rooted into huge cost at all levels and our political class still not willing to let go their firm grip on the political space, and the economy. With many of them recycling themselves from one political, or appointed office to another over the last four decades, one begins to wonder from where do we start to rebuild the nation called Nigeria.

A country with shrinking resources, whose population is increasing disproportionately. Witnessing rising unemployment with disillusioned citizens and a banking sector that is largely seen to be conniving with greedy businesses and even criminals in public service to short change the public. Please give me light and space to breath. I am short of adjectives to continue narrating our endless ordeals as a Nation.

OUR ECONOMY AND THE POLICIES GUIDING IT

The most honest and complementary economic

personality is he who admits that it is difficult to accurately qualify and classify the Nigerian economy and the policies driving it at both micro and macro levels. What one will not contest is the seeming and glaring consistently inconsistent and contradictory policies whose shape keep on changing like an amoeba. There is neither harmony nor synergy among and in between the institutions that manage the economy. Like In the security outfits, it is competition, envy, treachery and setting of deliberate traps for failure. If the Nigerian economy presents it's self to you as blue color in the morning, mid-day it will turn into maroon. By evening the color will change to grey and to everybody's bewilderment by midnight it will transform into yellowish color. Those who will witness the following day will wake up to see multiple colors as in rainbow. Such has been the confusion associated with the Nigerian economy from independence to date with slight variations from one regime to another.

Which explains why our economy refused to grow in spite of having all that it takes to grow. Every regime that comes on board has its different set of visions, agenda and mind set which are often times unrealistic, not properly articulated and marshaled out for success. The would be economic managers of that regime end up submitting to the whims and caprices of their masters forgetting or fully aware but ignoring the fact that strong economies are the by-products of continued improvement of good policies on ground even if put in place by adversaries or even by enemies.

At it stands today our economy in its entirety is in a big trouble. It has always been so even in boom times. But it is worst now because it is a single product reliant economy. A product called oil that is fast becoming out dated and of lesser importance in production industries, automobiles and operating of heavy-duty machineries. In less than 10 years from now it will be a liability to explore oil because there will be no market for it.

Almost all counties in Africa, Asia, Middle East, and North America have discovered oil and gas deposits in commercial quantities at the wrong time. Contemplating Rebuilding our Nation will be a futile effort and will only make sense if we put our economy on a sound putting. Otherwise we stand a high risk of building in the air which fits into a definition of madness. (1st episode of Larry

King live). Investment that generates wealth is a function of savings. Savings itself is the function and rely on degree and level of consumption. Where the marginal propensity to consume is 100%, it simply means there is nothing to save. When nothing is saved it simply means nothing will be invested. When nothing is invested it means by implication others will produce and we will consume at whatever price because as spectators we have no say in fixing prices of commodities, goods and services. Nigeria is a consumer nation. Our cost of production owing to high level of corruption is too high to compete with other foreign producers whose economy is well regulated and operating within rules. Which explains why Nigeria is being considered as a consumer nation with trillions of import bills annually. Sadly, we import as low as candles, matches, tooth picks and juices. You can add to my list.

AS COVID-19 SUBSIST

Indeed, the onset of COVID 19 has created another dimension to our economy. Our foreign reserves are barely enough to accommodate six-month import bills. Our balance of trade is unfavorable in the language of the economist. Our production capacity is oscillating between zero to 30%. To come out of the huge challenges posed and still being posed by the COVID 19 scourge requires huge investment in infrastructure, agriculture, resuscitation of collapsed industries, employment generation, health care etc. sadly we don't have the financial capacity to do that. The only viable option, very dangerous as it is, is to keep on borrowing from China, world bank, IMF, Paris club, ADB etc. based on ungodly and exploitative terms and conditions that will mortgage the future of our current and next generations thereby turning them into slavery again from which they will never be free from debt thus continually becoming a laughing stock among the comity of nation. Debtor nation's voices hardly make any impact. What an impossible way to rebuild a nation. Some may ask.

These and many other unmentioned reasons pose a huge challenge in rebuilding our nations to the level or quality we aspire to. We have survived crisis, traumas, and tribulations and escaped by whiskers and miracles. For how long we will continue being that lucky and saved by miracle no one can tell. I warn that we must not push our luck

too far. We need service centered politicians who will ransack and restructure the civil service for positive, effective and measurable service delivery. We need economic policies that are realistic, achievable and measurable being driven by sensible, articulate and futuristic managers who work in synergy, understand when to slow down, when to accelerate and when to completely stop and return to the drawing table for consultations and new ideas. Put together and most importantly we need a judicial and Justice system capable of interpreting our laws to tally with the realities of the moment. Who will not compromise on account of pressure from politicians and who will not give room for blackmail? The choices are hard but we have no option other than them if we want to survive the current and future moments.

Only in Nigeria will you find less than 350 people who borrowed monies, totaling over N5Trillion from shareholders' funds in commercial banks, diverted that same to contest elections and bought private jets and exotic properties at home and abroad, refused to repay that money and turn round to become Senators and House of Representative members. Some became Governors, Ministers and Ambassadors. Worst still, they are the same people making laws for all Nigerians to obey. Yet at their various constituencies they are heroes who are untouchable. A country with such characters and docile follower ship should sink its head in shame. No country in the world will go through what Nigeria went and still going through particularly in the last 21years without that country disappearing from the face of the earth and whose name will disappear even from the world map.

African countries have a stubborn history and record of poor, unreliable and dysfunctional or complete absence of social safety nets. Among them Nigeria is the worst in spite of its enormous wealth. Let a Nigerian fall sick or get involved in an accident or find himself in the midst of man-made or natural disasters such as fire outbreaks, armed robbery or theft, kidnapping etc, and he is completely on his own. The lucky ones are those who receive relief materials days, weeks, or months after the disaster and incidence. Forget about any compensation.

The meaning is simple; Nigerians are the most porous citizens in the world that are left on their own completely. Left to chances, wishful thinking, lamentations and fate. A country with such stubborn weak and inadequate social safety nets is a country better watched from a distance.

One will be tilting towards elementary psychiatry to begin to tout the idea of rebuilding a nation when corruption has eaten and continue to eat deep into our daily lives, making it difficult for us to grow as a nation. When more that 70% of the revenue earnings of Nigeria is spent on recurrent needs of less than 2.5% of our population. When more than 80% of the so called 30% capital allocation is out rightly and scandalously mismanaged and stolen by majority of the elected politicians and their friends and families, political appointees, senior and junior civil servants and other democratic hangers on. When even the crumbs left for the common man are eaten up by the dogs of the politician. This much was disclosed recently by the ICPC who have recovered over N35 Billion. From politicians all over the Country meant for constituency projects.

Any country that promotes and defends human rights while ignoring and rewarding human wrongs is a country doomed. Our brand of democracy seems to care more about rights of human beings to do as they wish.

But careless or so it seems, on the large scale of unimaginable human wrongs being committed. An individual will organize mass murder of innocent people while worshipping in a Church, Mosque or Shrine and on arresting such group or individual, human rights champions, media houses, social media influencers and such other media nuisance etc. will begin to shout on his/their right to life. Civil society organizations will begin to beat the drums of war. Vocal lawyers will offer pro bono services to defend them. Worst still people in governance negotiate with the criminals, pay them huge sums of money, pose for public photographs and assure them that all the heinous crimes they committed in the past are forgiven by state which means to hell with families of the victims. With all these aberrations, we are still naively as a people and as a Nation made to believe that we have achieved enough in our democracy and even hoping to consolidate on it.

Police brutality, real, imaginary and over blown is as old as the police institution. But so also is corruption in both the public, private and voluntary sectors. Looting of public treasuries is also as old. Armed robbery, ritual killing, sexual abuse, intimidation and corruption in our educational institutions is even older that police brutality. If only we stop the double face and picking which institution to attack.

We must stop the pretenses of putting on the face of Moses and hanging the heart of pharaoh. What about creating hash tags to stop corruption, looting of public treasuries, armed robbery, sexual abuse and harassment in our educational institutions, ritual killings etc. police brutality is just one of many challenges facing Nigeria, yesterday, today and if care is not taken tomorrow and forever . We must not subject the police to indignities and blackmail because they are voiceless. We go to the same markets with them. They are affected by bad governance in the same way we are. They are human being just in the same way we are. They chose to become police in the same way other people chose to belong to other professions. We must not push the police to a point when they will return the guns, the uniforms and the baton back to the armory and call it off. That will be the beginning of insomnia across all ages.

From which angle do you begin to rebuild a nation whose security outfits are not in synergy but competing to undermine one another translating to a country that is at a high risk? Any Country whose security architecture is SHAKEY and porous is a country whose environment and territory cannot be trusted for business and any serious and meaningful economic activity. Any country whose heads of security outfits are divided along personal interest at the detriment of National interest is a country whose future cannot be guaranteed?

If all recent reports and revelations by the print, electronic and social media platforms on the wrangling, growing polarization of some of Nigeria's security outfits is correct or have some element of truth, then we are in a big trouble and only God can save us. A country in such security turmoil cannot think of rebuilding a nation without harmonizing its security architecture.

Such has been the governance and cumulative democratic winter that we have been witnessing in Nigeria particularly in the past 21 years. Even with hopes coming from the well-focused governance styles in Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe and Borno states, there still exist preponderance of fear, uncertainty and gloom written all over the horizon. This democratic winter continues to defy all warm clothes. It is getting colder by the minute, by the hour, by the day, by the week, by the month, by the year. Indeed, all through.

In our own fantasy, imaginations, naivety and collective carelessness, we have been enslaved and agreed to remain perpetual slaves of the incorrect and deceptive assertion that only politicians in a democracy can lead us to growth and development.

Far from that misleading assertion, preponderance of politicians particularly Nigerian politicians under our own weird brand of democracy have meant nothing to us but agents of agony, promoters of pain, dealers of trials and tribulations, who drive animalistic pleasure in the suffering of the very people they claim to be representing. Their stock in trade is sending and forcing majority citizens into permanent economic husbandry leading into melancholy, disease, depression and death. The exceptions are few and can be counted on finger tips in a country with 200 Million people. Sad. Pity. Disgusting.

As For those who still thrive, sleep and swim in corruption I have a good news for them by way of going down memory lane courtesy of Transparency international global corruption index report. Where is Mobutu Sese Seko of former Zaire who alleged to have stolen over \$5Billion of his country's wealth. Where is Mohammed Suharto of Indonesia who stole \$35Billion. Where is Ferdinand Marcos of Philippines who stole \$10Billion. Where is Alberto Fujimori of Peru who stole \$600M. Where is Jean Claude Duvalier of Haiti who stole \$800M. Where is Arnaldo Aleman of Nicaragua who stole \$100M. Where is General Sani Abacha. Where is Idi Amin Dada Uganda. Where is Mohammed Farrah Aidid. Where is Hissan Habare.

Where is Daniel arap Moi. Where is Bignone Reynaldo of Argentina. Where is Tsang Donald of

Japan. Where is Bhutto Zilkifil Ali of Pakistan. Where is BA Maw of Burma. Where is president Suharto of Indonesia. Where is haile Selassie of Ethiopia. Where is Razak Najib of Malaysia. Where is Toto hidekim of Japan. Where is KAMAZOU Banda. Where is ? Where is? I can continue Ad INFINITUM.

The questions are rhetorical. We all know the answers even if we pretend not to. Many of them are dead never to return and are only remembered on account of their greed and the injury they inflicted on people, polity and ecology. Those alive are languishing in prison. Those alive but free are battling with one form of medical challenge or the other Diabetes, Hypertension, Angina Pectoris, Arthritis, Dementia, Elementary Neurosis, Mental derailment etc., that all their stolen monies cannot heal them from.

These people were lion leaders in their days. They ruled and presided over people in utmost disregard to laws, common sense and good conscience. You are correct if you call them the lions of their times. At their peak, they ruled, looted, mismanaged, intimidated, bribed, neutralized vocal voices, exiled many, emasculated others, killed yet many as if tomorrow was not coming. When death came there was no resistance. They had to submit Willy Nilly.

That was good riddance to a stupid rubbish. Those who are still alive are today the most vulnerable. They can't even defend themselves. Such is life.

Same fate awaits the past, current and future looters of Nigeria's common wealth. We wish them a thousand years alive like the Jews always wish themselves. So that they can harvest all that they sowed and still sowing.

When it comes to considerations or taking a critical decision, the politician always asks one question: will it be popular? The diplomat will ask: will it be diplomatic; the Economist will ask: will it be economical? The banker will ask: will it be profitable? The Accountants will ask: will it balance, the Lawyer will ask: is it just, fair and equitable? A coward will ask: is it safe? The investor will ask: is it rewarding? A consumer will ask: will I get value? But people of conscience will ask: is it right? And once they are sure it is right,

they will go ahead to do it irrespective of the consequences. This is the right time to ask ourselves as followers certain questions, including rude ones, on the way and Manner we are being managed and mismanaged along with our human and material resources, and we must insist on a genuine answer and use same to determine our fate.

This is the right time to ask those who claim to be leading us certain fundamental soul-searching questions and demand for an answer which we must use to carry out personality and mental medical audit so as to establish the mental and psychological state of mind of those crafty politicians who portray the face of Moses during electioneering campaigns and present the heart of pharaoh after winning elections. This is the right and perhaps the only time to ask the following questions. The Nigeria current federation arrangement is not working and is responsible for the desperation for leadership at the center because the center is where everything is determined, must we continue with it? Should we change the power configuration to make the center unattractive? Should we reinvent Nigeria back to the shape and pattern of everybody's wish and imagination? Should we go our separate ways and form smaller countries where everybody will feel belonged? Shouldn't we seat on a roundtable, brake kola nuts and share our collective resources in a peaceful manner without going to war. If we don't answer these questions and many more now, they must be answered in the very near future. Sadly, those who will raise and answer them will most likely prefer to go to war because they have never been caught in a war situation and have failed to learn the lessons from countries that have an ongoing war situation.

REBUILDING A NATION: JUDICIARY TO THE RESCUE

In periods of turmoil, upheavals, crisis, trials, tribulations, traumas, social, economic, political and global uncertainties, only a well functional and solidly built judiciary would have the capacity to remain cool, calm and methodical. Learned and unbiased justices can withstand all rigors because by their training and calling they have the capacity to quickly or slowly remember how the nation they stay in came into being. They are aware more than anybody the complexities and

horse trading that took place as the country evolved and continue to evolve into a strong or loose nation. They know more than anybody that only an unbiased application and interpretation of laws of the land can save any nation from disintegration. They therefore play or are supposed to play a critical and epicentral role in nation building. Nation building is rooted into protecting, promoting and projecting constitutionalism. It is about guarding jealously and ensuring the protection of human rights and commensurate punishment for human wrongs no matter the social or economic status or political affiliation of those involved. Because suppressing human rights weakens economic development. Ignoring human wrongs is even worst.

Indeed Nation building has everything to do with Respect for rule of law and maintenance of law and order at all times. Only a solidly built and unbiased judiciary is capable of doing the painstaking task of building a Nation. Only they are trained and have the time tested skills to understand the issues that are in contention which are being contested. Only they can put those issues placed before them for adjudication in historical contexts, in cultural perspective, situate them within the operating laws and articulate them in a succinct manner on a balanced scale of Justice, equity and fairness.

No matter the economic circumstance of a nation, only a solidly built and unbiased judiciary can help in stabilizing the nation's economy. Because of all professions, they are the only institution trained and capable of enforcing of and upholding contracts, enforce business ethics and ensure business codes are adhered to. Disputes will always arise among people who live, work and transact businesses together. Only an impartial judiciary can ADDRESS those disputes, ensure fair play which ultimately allow businesses to flourish and grow in addition to building confidence and stronger relationships within business owners. When labor or industrial disputes arise only a solidly built judiciary can come to the rescue by way of an unbiased interpretation of the relevant laws on the basis of cause rather than political or other relationships and affiliations.

When citizens and Governments are aware that their judiciary is populated by experienced

independent minded jurist, they will uphold contracts because they know damages will be awarded against them. When citizen business community and other commercial interest from elsewhere are aware of an even handed judiciary, they will most likely feel free to invest their resources, time, energy skills and acumen in the Nation's economy.

Where a Nations judiciary is weak and inadequate and easily compromised by internal and external influences, there are high possibilities and chances of the other arms of government to capitalize on that shortcoming and meddle into its affairs through so many other means which may include but not limited to cutting and shrinking their finances, firing judicial or court officials or even overturning their decisions or entering unnecessary *nolle prosequere*. With that happening, citizens will lose confidence and trust in the entire judicial and governance Systems which is a sure way to all forms of upheavals and eventually anarchy.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you may think that the rosy picture painted above in-respect of the epicentral role of the judiciary in nation building or rebuilding a nation is absolute and final. Far from that, there are multiplicity of views and opinions, uncomplimentary as they are, from the horse's mouth, from inside the inner part of the temple of justice, that continue to create doubt as to whether it is safe for us to put all our eggs in the basket of the judiciary, thinking that only them hold the key to solid building of a nation or rebuilding a nation. As a Muslim I am told by the bible writers and the scriptural contents that I am a canal man who will not be able to understand the message of the bible because I am not spiritual. That is the topic for another day.

In legal parlance a non-lawyer is considered unlearned. Every other professional is not considered learned by the empire of legal practitioners and judges. Therefore, giving other people's opinions on lawyers and judges will not be taken serious nor will it be weighty in the eyes, ears, minds and psychology of the "learned men and women" either on the bench, at the bar, wearing silk or in ordinary black and white robes.

"The problem with the Nigerian judiciary is that some dishonorable people not cut out to be judges

got into the system and, after that, made it to the highest level of their judicial careers. Another major factor the problem has festered is that many Nigerians do not want the truth to be told. Whoever dares to tell the truth is marked down for persecution. Members of the Bar often narrate horrible stories or tales of certain high-ranking judicial officers who act as courier of bribe, but, they are never ready to come out with details."

He further states:

"Such a person is engaged at a fee to reach out to judges in order to influence decisions in certain sensitive cases. At times, the bribe they collect for and on behalf of such designated judges never come to their knowledge, not to talk of its being delivered to them. It is also alleged that some legal practitioners, in addition to their legitimate fees, demand fees from the clients purportedly to influence the judge or judges handling their cases. It is the activities of these wicked legal practitioners and retired judges who can rightly be described as interlopers that have given the Nigerian judiciary a negative image." Per Justice Isa Ayo Salami

"What has been the perception of the public? I call it perception because, unlike verifiable reality that exists, perception may not be true. Sadly, however, in the performance appraisal of institutions, perception is what fuels satisfaction or discontent on one hand, and motivates legitimacy or distrust on the other hand."

"When the sex for marks Professor from OAU, Ife was exposed, the University authorities promptly probed and suspended him until he was jailed by a court! The University Professor and ASUU did not threaten nor blackmail the University Authority, Judiciary nor Government in defense of their erring colleague!"

"But every time a Judicial Officer is nabbed committing a crime or indulging in corruption you find Lawyers shamelessly ganging up to harass and blackmail the Government in his defense as if becoming a Lawyer or a Judge comes with inbuilt immunity from investigation and prosecution!"

"Say no to a Rogue infested Judiciary because the Judiciary is meant to serve as the last hope of the common man and not the comfort of the Big

Thieves and the Corrupt!!!" *Per Justice Isah Ayo Salami*

The dismal outcomes and inconsistencies of some decisions emanating from Nigeria's judiciary speak to why there is so much distrust of our legal system. In July, 2017, a Pankshin Magistrates' Court in Plateau State sentenced one Lavwet Kelap, 40 years, to two years imprisonment for stealing a goat valued at N40, 000. In pleading guilty, the accused urged the court to be lenient with him. He informed that he committed the offence due to the ailment of his son whom he claimed was on admission at Shendam General Hospital.

Now, let's contrast the above with the case of Cecilia Ibru, former Managing Director of now defunct Oceanic Bank who was accused of granting bad loans running into N100billion as well as granting non-performing loans to seven companies amongst other charges. On October 8, 2010, Ibru pleaded guilty to three amended charges aftermath of a plea bargain arrangement with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The court convicted her and sentenced her to six months imprisonment on each of the counts, but, the sentences to run concurrently. The court also ordered her to forfeit shares in 298 unlisted and blue-chip companies, all valued at N191.4 billion. She also forfeited 94 choice properties in Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Abuja, Delta and Rivers States, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. The court further directed that she should be returned to a private hospital from where she was brought to 'continue with her treatment until she is fit to return to prison'. She served her term out in the highbrow hospital.

Akingbola also had a pending case before Justice Habeeb Abiru of the Lagos High Court. When the trial started, the prosecution led evidence to the effect that Akingbola diverted over N30billion from Intercontinental Bank for his personal use without documentation. Evidence was led to also show that he illegally transferred various sums to his wife and crony companies. By the time the case went to the Court of Appeal and back on an interlocutory appeal which failed, and the substantive case drew to a close, Honourable Justice Abiru was elevated to the Court of Appeal. The case went before Honourable Justice Adeniyi Onigbanjo to commence de-novo.

In July, 2013, five months after Justice Onigbanjo started, His Lordship was moved from the Criminal Division to the Civil Division of the same High Court, and the case was re-assigned to Honourable Justice Lawal-Akapo. On the day scheduled for arraignment before the new court, an objection was taken on issue of jurisdiction. For seven months, the matter was again delayed till the court of Appeal ruled that the Federal High Court and not the Lagos High Court had jurisdiction.

With respect to the case that was struck-out by Justice Archibong, it ended-up before the Supreme Court, and it was not until May 2018 that the apex court held that Akingbola had a case to answer. The court directed that the case be remitted to the Federal High Court to be presided over by another judge.

In the case of James Onanefe Ibori, he was charged in December, 2007 for theft of public funds, abuse of office and money laundering. By December, 2009, a Federal High Court sitting in Asaba, Delta State, discharged and acquitted Ibori of 170 charges of corruption. In April, 2010, the case was reopened on allegation of embezzlement of 40 billion Naira (US\$266million). He fled Nigeria following which the EFCC sought the assistance of Interpol. By May, 2010, he was arrested in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and subsequently extradited to the United Kingdom and charged before the Southwark Crown Court, London. By April 2012, the UK Court sentenced him to 13 years imprisonment and also confiscated 2 houses in the UK, a house in South Africa and fleet of Porsche cars.

I have referred to the above three cases to show that while we may all too easily argue that the fault in botched prosecution lies in police investigation, there is much about the law and interpreters of the law that are seriously a conundrum for justice. Beyond the challenges of delayed justice (which itself is justice denied), the judiciary is enmeshed in controversies of corruption. When citizens no longer see the legal system as a space for the achievement of justice, it exacerbates discontent, deepens inequality, corruption, social injustice, erodes democratic principles and normative values of democracy, and prompts citizens to resort to self-help.

When reification of persons as against respect of the principles of law has become the norm, it becomes unjustifiable to claim that the rot that has become pervasive in the Nigerian system is what has affected the legal profession. That obviously will be begging the question. The judiciary should have been the institution to stem the tide. In terms of checks on impunity, the most formidable influence that Nigeria has at the moment is the media. Beyond identifying issues and setting the agenda for public discussions, the media has been the prime watchdog of the society. Often time, I hear many deride the media by asserting over sensationalization and generally criticizing 'media trial'. What we fail to realize is that the gaps and disconnects in the system constrained the resort to media trial in the hope that it would whip up public support against perceived violations and ensure that issues are not swept under the carpet. Sadly, the media tool is grossly inadequate for its lack of capacity to prescribe sanctions or offer any remedy for whatever wrong that might have occurred." *Per Prof. Olariwaju A. Fagbohun (SAN) Vice Chancellor, Lagos State University (During the 1st 2019 annual lecture in Honour of Pa Tunji Gomez former Chairman Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Lagos State Branch).*

CONCLUSION REBUILDING A NATION: BEYOND POLITICS, ECONOMY AND JUDICIAL SYSTEM, IT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, let me end this my short Keynote Address with my very honest position and take on this all-important subject matter of rebuilding a Nation. No matter how selfless and well-intended our political actors and actresses are. No matter the strength and resilience of our political institutions and structures. No matter how sound and strong our economic policies are. No matter the brilliance and synergetic nature of those managing our economy. No matter how much our economy is protected. No matter how reliable and dependable our justice system is. No matter how honest and sincere our lawyers in pursuit of Justice, equity and fairness are, in course of their practice in court or their attitude in public and private lives. No matter how well informed, well learned, honest, sincere and incorruptible our judges and other judicial officers are. No matter the trust they earn. The bottom line is that

Building or rebuilding a nation is everybody's business. It is a collective responsibility.

Three groups of people can build or rebuild a Nation. They are all identified and recognized by the Holy bible, Holy Quran and an all-important subject matter in Greek political philosophy, legal line ups and foundation for growth, cohesion and social stratification. The Greeks classified all people in any society as either, fools, tribalist or citizens. Only when a society, country or nation is populated by majority citizens that a nation can be build or rebuild. When a country or nation has more of fools and tribalist populating it, building or rebuilding that nation becomes a difficult and near impossible task. Fools are those who think only about themselves alone. And to hell with anybody other than them. Tribalist are those who swim, sleep, think and dream in their tribes only. Other tribes don't matter. Citizens are those who think of the welfare, security, safety, wellbeing and happiness of others first and always before their own. Do we have more of fools, tribalist or citizens in Nigeria. Our ability to answer this question honestly, honorably and sincerely will determine our journey towards rebuilding the Nation called Nigeria.

Let me end with Biblical St. Augustine's prayer, the only prayer he utters in both his public outings and private life, throughout his life time thus "Lord, not that I urge you to shield me from trials and tribulations, No! But to give me the will power to withstand them as they come." Amen. Amen. Amen.

PHOTO SPEAK

J-K Gadzama LLP 12th Annual Public Lecture held on Tuesday, 24th November, 2020
at J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



A cross section of the participants



Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama anchoring



L-R: Nella Andem-Rabana, SAN; Emeka Ngige, SAN;
Muhammed Mahdi Shehu and Akinlabi Akingbade



A cross section of the participants



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving the welcome remarks



Muhammed Mahdi Shehu keynote speaker addressing the participants



Emeka Ngige, SAN addressing the participants



A cross section of the participants

PHOTO SPEAK

J-K Gadzama LLP 12th Annual Public Lecture held on Tuesday, 24th November, 2020
at J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



Nella Andem-Rabana, SAN addressing the participants



Dr. Sam Amadi addressing the participants



Mr. Akinlabi Akingbade addressing the participants



Nella Andem-Rabana, SAN (3rd left); Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (middle); Muhammed Mahdi Shehu (4th right); Emeka Ngige, SAN (3rd right) and Mr. Akinlabi Akingbade in a group photograph with the participants



Mr. Emmanuel S. Oluwabiyi asking a question during the session



Muhammed Mahdi Shehu receiving a plaque from Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Nella Andem-Rabana, SAN receiving a plaque from Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Mr. Akinlabi Akingbade receiving a plaque from Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Dr. Sam Amadi receiving a plaque from Mr. Francis Oronsaye



Mr. Mohammed Monguno giving the vote of thanks

LAW ON MARBLE

A law is valuable, not because it is a law, but because there is right in it.

Henry Ward Beecher

Law without justice is a wound without a cure.

William Scott Downey

An unjust law is itself a species of violence.

Mahatma Gandhi

The final test of civilization of a people is the respect they have for law.

Lewis F. Korns

This is how bad laws are made: You compile a bunch populist sections, then cleverly hide in them some draconian ones, which ultimately become the central laws.

Ali Sabamba

No man is above the law and no man is below it; nor do we ask any man's permission when we ask him to obey it. Obedience to the law is demanded as a right, not asked as a favor.

Theodore Roosevelt

The aim of the law is not to punish sins, but is to prevent certain external results.

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

Laws, like houses, lean on one another.

Edmund Burke

Law is the rudder of the ship of state.

Austin O'Malley

It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive.

Earl Warren

PHOTO SPEAK

Capacity-Building Training for state Counsel and Investigators in various Government Agencies in Adamawa State by J-K Gadzama LLP, under the Auspices of the Adamawa State Government



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN addressing the participants



Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama and Sarah Atumga anchoring



Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN addressing the participants



Prof Paul Idornigie, SAN (left); A. K. Jingi Esq., Hon. Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice Adamawa State (2nd left); Prof. Maxwell Gidado, SAN (3rd left); Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (middle) and Dr. Cyril Obika with participants during the event



Dr. Cyril Obika addressing the participants



Mr. Francis Oronsaye addressing the participants



A. K. Jingi Esq., Hon. Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice Adamawa State addressing the participants



Kowoabo Takoji receiving her certificate of participation from Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (middle) and A. K. Jingi Esq., (3rd right) with Nigerian Correctional Service Personnel



A cross section of the participants

LEGAL HUMOUR

- One day in Contract Law class, the professor asked one of his better students, "Now if you were to give someone an orange, how would you go about it?" The student replied, "Here's an orange."

The professor was livid. "No! No! Think like a lawyer!"

The student then recited, "Okay, I'd tell him, 'I hereby give and convey to you all and singular, my estate and interests, rights, claim, title, claim and advantages of and in, said orange, together with all its rind, juice, pulp, and seeds, and all rights and advantages with full power to bite, cut, freeze and otherwise eat, the same, or give the same away with and without the pulp, juice, rind and seeds, anything herein before or hereinafter or in any deed, or deeds, instruments of whatever nature or kind whatsoever to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding...'"

- As the lawyer awoke from surgery, he asked, "Why are all the blinds drawn?" The nurse answered, "There's a fire across the street, and we didn't want you to think you had died."

- A woman and her little girl were visiting the grave of the little girl's grandmother. On their way through the cemetery back to the car, the little girl asked, "Mummy, do they ever bury two people in the same grave?" "Of course not, dear," replied the mother, "Why would you think that?" "The tombstone back there said... 'Here lies a lawyer and an honest man.'"

- Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, an honest lawyer and an old drunk are walking down the street together when they simultaneously spot a hundred dollar bill. Who gets it? The old drunk, of course, the other three are fantasy creatures.

- "How can I ever thank you?" gushed a woman to Clarence James, after he had solved her legal troubles. "My dear woman," James replied, "ever since the Phoenicians invented money there has been only one answer to that question."

PHOTO SPEAK



L-R: Mr Panam, Head of Chambers of Elisha Kurah & Co.; Mr. Eli Munum; Mr. John Y. Madaki and Mr. Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama at Elisha Kurah & Co. Chambers, Kaduna on Wednesday, October 15, 2020



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN receiving an award for Meritorious service from the President of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC), Chief Emeka Obegolu JP at the 2020 ICMC African Mediation Conference



L-R: Hon. Justice Tijani Abubakar, JSC; Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; Hon. Justice Abdullahi Mustapha, OFR, former Chief Judge of the Federal High Court and Hon. Justice Adamu Jauro of the High Court of Yobe State, at the Supreme Court Complex, Abuja



L-R: Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama; Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; Mohammed Bello, FCT Minister; Akinlabi Akingbade and Darlington Onyekwere during a courtesy visit at the minister's office, Abuja



Chukwuma Ekomaru, SAN (left); Miannaya Essien, SAN (2nd left); Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (3rd left); Emeka Ngige, SAN (2nd right) with other members of Class 85 during a dinner held in honour of Hon. Justice Sam Oseji, JSC (middle) on his elevation to the Supreme Court.



L-R: Mr. Oke Akobunde and Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN during the 2020 Plateau Governors' Cup at Lamingo Golf Club in Jos at Hole 8 sponsored by Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



L-R: Hon. Justice H. A. Nganjiwa; Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and Hon. Justice Taiwo Obayomi Taiwo during the Federal High Court's 2020/2021 Legal Year Ceremony



L-R: Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; Jean Chiazor Anishere, SAN (conferee); Babatunde K. Ogala, SAN (conferee) and Dipo Okpeseji, SAN (all of Class 86) at the Supreme Court during the conferment of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN)

NEWS FROM THE FIRM

- Miss Okondu Chika Victory, Miss Adeleye Fadekemi Grace, Miss Bala Michelle Zichat, Miss Atumga Sarah Jeta, Miss Obishai Catherine Amaka, Miss Eboson Cynthia Kelechi, Adewuyi Paul Adedepo, Esq., Ede Collins Chibuike, Esq., Adedamola Seriki, Esq., Iteshi Bright Afamefuna, Esq. And Edikan Jerry Akpan, Esq., completed their NYSC programme with the firm. The firm wishes them success in their future endeavours.
- Miss Shilobah Hannah (of Crescent University Abeokuta), Miss Stanley Amanda Benibo (of Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge), Miss Ebube Ubachukwu (graduate of University of Sussex) and Umar Geidam (of Queen Mary University, London) completed their internship with the firm in November, 2020. The firm wishes them success in their future endeavours.
- Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama joined the firm as an Associate. The firm wishes him a fruitful stay.
- The firm held its 12th Annual Public Lecture on Tuesday, 24th November 2020 at the SMA Belgore Conference Hall, J-K Gadzama Court chaired by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad, CFR. It was a hybrid event, attended both physically (keeping in line with the Covid-19 regulations) and virtually. It was indeed a remarkable event.
- The entire management and staff of J-K Gadzama LLP congratulate our Founding Principal Partner, Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN on his conferment with an award/plaque of meritorious service by the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC) having served as member of its Governing Board. We pray him more lofty heights to attain.

sed consequat.
consectetur adipiscing elit.

PHOTO SPEAK

J-K Gadzama LLP Staff End of Year Party and Christmas Carol at J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



A cross section of the guests



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with guests and Partners of J-K Gadzama LLP cutting the Christmas cake



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with guests cutting the Christmas cake



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN cutting the Christmas cake with Partners and Associates of J-K Gadzama LLP



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and family cutting the Christmas cake



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN cutting the Christmas cake with support staff of J-K Gadzama LLP



Mr. Darlington Onyekwere and Mrs. Anyanwu Elizabeth reflecting on the year 2020



A cross section of the guests

Our Founder/Managing Partner's New Year Message

J-K GADZAMA LLP

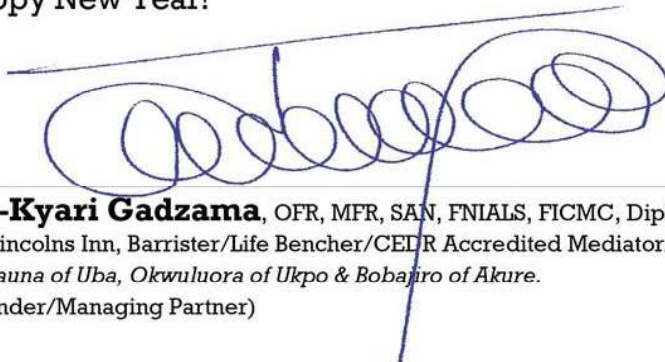
We are here, in spite of the many trials of the year 2020. The past year was indeed murky and turbulent in arguably all ramifications of our existence. However, rather than dwell on the travails of 2020, we must elect to take the positives with us into this beautiful new year.

To esteemed clients, I thank you for your patronage. Despite all the witnessed challenges, with you standing by us, we soared and conquered. We surmounted the troubles while keeping the standards. As we take on this New Year, we are galvanized by the victories of the past and committed to surpass expectations regardless of future challenges. I pray that this New Year ushers in pleasant tidings for you and your loved ones.

To the general public; a new year is a powerful occasion by which we reflect on our gratitude for the past and express hope for the future. It also represents a chance to welcome a fresh start to invigorate our enthusiasm for chasing goals and dreams. With a warm heart and buzzing joy, I hereby use this medium to wish everyone a wonderful and prosperous new year.

It is my sincere prayer that this new year brings hope, inspiration, success, joy and peace to every person, household, institution, as well as all nations around the world. It is also my avowed belief that the year 2021 shall provide succor for the troubles of the past, while acting as a springboard for future exploits.

Happy New Year!



Joe-Kyari Gadzama, OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FICMC, DiplCARb, FCI Arb, Chartered Arbitrator.
(Of Lincolns Inn, Barrister/Life Bencher/CEDR Accredited Mediator/Regulatory Consultant)
Sardauna of Uba, Okwuluora of Ukpo & Bobajiro of Akure.
(Founder/Managing Partner)

UPCOMING EVENTS

AND CONFERENCES



International Bar Association Annual Conference at Paris
17 - 22 October, 2021



J-K Gadzama LLP 6th Annual Hon. Justice Chuwudifu Oputa, JSC (Rtd)
Professional Training and Mentoring Programme for
Young Lawyers, 2021



J-K Gadzama LLP 13th Annual Public Lecture at the J-K Gadzama Court,
Abuja, 2021



Celebrating a Legal Everest @60. Lecture/Book Presentation/ Celebration
marking the 60th Birthday of Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN
at the J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



OUR PEOPLE

PARTNERS

1. **Joe-kyari Gadzama**, OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FICMC, DipICArb, FCIArb, Chartered Arbitrator
Founding Principal Partner
2. **Prof. Tahir Mamman**, OON, SAN
Senior Consulting Partner
3. **Akinlabi S. Akingbade**, ACIArb, ChMc
Partner/Head of Chambers
4. **Dr. Cyril Obika**, ACTI, ACIArb
Partner
5. **Geraldine O. Mbah**, ACIArb
Junior Partner
6. **Francis O. Oronsaye**
Junior Partner
7. **Darlington Onyekwere**, ACIArb
Junior Partner
8. **Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama**, LL.M (Warwick), MCIArb. (UK)
Junior Partner

SENIOR ASSOCIATE

John Echezona Unachukwu

VISITING ASSOCIATE

Ignatius Ozoilo, Pg. Dip., LL.M

ASSOCIATES

1. Chimdindu Onyedim-Etuwewe, ACIArb
2. Agbo Mark Chidi, MCIArb. (UK)
3. Anyanwu Elizabeth Nkechi, ACIArb
4. Christopher Osejie Okougha, ACIArb
5. Musa Jerry Ombugadu
6. Amazing Ikpala, ACIArb
7. Adegbemisoye A. Olasubomi, ACIArb
8. Gatida Haruna Tsammani
9. Adewumi Pelumi Olusegun
10. Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama, ACIArb, AICMC

JUNIOR ASSOCIATES

1. Okondu Chika Victory
2. Adeleye Fadekemi Grace
3. Balla Michelle Zichat
4. Sarah Jeta Atunga
5. Adewuyi Paul Adedapo
6. Iteshi Bright Afamefuna
7. Obishai C. Amaka
8. Cynthia Kelechi Eboson
9. Edikan Jerry Akpan
10. Martha Babatunde
11. Nafeesah Lawal
12. Adanma Egesie
13. Michael Chukwu

PRACTICE MANAGER

Mrs Daramfon Ayeni

OFFICE MANAGER

Sunday Ali Dzarma

LIBRARIAN

Eniwonmi Ojo, CLN, ACIArb

ICT PERSONNEL

Olalekan Rahman Olasehinde, CNSS (UK), CCNA

Livingstone Daniel

ACCOUNTANT

Ifeoma Juliet Nwankwo, BS.C (Hons.), ACA

INTERNS

Amanda Stanley Benibo

Hannah Shiloba

Ebube Ubachukwu

JURIS CONSULT

1. Hon. Justice Alfa Modibbo Belgore, CJN (RTD), GCON
(FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA)
2. Hon. Justice George A. Oguntade, J.S.C (RTD), CON.

SENIOR CONSULTANT

Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN, PhD, FCIS, FCIArb, C.Arb



Who are we?

The Vox Populi Foundation for Leadership was founded in the year 2010 and was incorporated in the year 2012 by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FCI Arb. (UK) (of Lincolns Inn, Barrister/Life Bencher/CEDR Accredited Mediator). The Foundation is a Non-Profit making institution formed to deepen the understanding of democracy by carrying out structured programmes that promote positive leadership qualities and ideals in the society. This is because we believe that a society can only evolve when the people have the opportunity to contribute to the process of governance and have a voice in the creation of policies and laws that affect them as a people.

How do we do this?

We sincerely believe the best way to achieve this goal is to pursue initiatives that look at proffering solutions to the issues that interfere with governance. We look at utilizing the immense manpower of youths and able bodied people who are hungry to bring about a change in their society through direct engagement with society in a volunteer signup process, which is one of the mechanisms we intend to employ to secure citizens participation. This process of inclusion we believe will foster and build a common front that will enable people to improve on their understanding of what leadership connotes in their everyday lives and reinforce their commitment towards creating a better society.

Governance

Created with gifts by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama, the foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization, with its own Board. The trustees of the foundation set policies and delegate authority to the Director General and senior staff for the foundation's operations. Zonal volunteer Heads in the 6 geo-political zones explore opportunities to pursue the foundation's goals and formulate strategies for action.

Location

The Foundation is headquartered in Abuja. It conducts its activities through an increasing pool of volunteers from across the country.



ADDRESS: 1st Floor, Plot 1805, Damaturu Crescent
by Kabo Way, Off Ahmadu Bello Way, Adjacent to Garki International
Market/Mall, P.O Box 20304, Garki II, Abuja, Nigeria.
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Our Vision

to promote, protect and safeguard the tenets and ideals of democracy leadership & good governance in our society.

What is Our Goal?!

to encourage citizens to participate in governance & support a platform that will inspire proactive leadership that will drive the free flow of democratic ideals and social justice.

Sign-up to Join and receive our e-mail Newsletter and Special Notifications
Your information will be kept confidential and used solely for our communications

Required Information

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____@

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: _____

Upon completing the information sheet, you can detach and send to our address above or you can email us on

info@voxpopulifoundation.org

for further enquiries, call us on

+234 (0) 815665619 and +234 (0) 8091320558

follow us on <http://facebook.com/voxpopulifoundation>

&

tweet us @vpfoundcast

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MAIDUGURI

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DUBAI

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LAGOS



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LASSA


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Askira/Uba LGA, P. O. Box 33,
Lassa, Borno, Nigeria.

This publication among many other
articles and news from the firm are accessible online on the office website.

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 J-K Gadzama LLP

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**DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this Newsletter is not
legal advice. Please consult a lawyer for legal assistance.**