

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC) AT THE
END OF ITS TOWN HALL MEETING FOR CENTRAL ZONE HELD AT IJAW
HOUSE, YENAGOA, ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2022.**

The Ijaw National Congress (INC), the umbrella Socio-Cultural Organization for all Ijaws worldwide held its Town Hall meeting in the Central Zone, on the 24th of September 2022 at the Ijaw House, Yenagoa.

The Theme of the Town Hall meeting is **IJAW UNITY AND SENSITIZATION**.

Welcoming the delegates and participants to the Town Hall Meeting, the Chairman, Ijaw National Congress, Central Zone, Dr. Doodei Week emphasized the importance and need for sensitization of the Ijaw Nation in the face of current realities. He also wished everyone a successful deliberation.

The President of the Ijaw National Congress, Professor Benjamin Ogele Okaba, noted that this is the 2nd in the series of Sensitization Town Hall meetings, having held the first session in the Eastern Zone of Congress.

He described the Ijaw Nation as a Nation blessed with abundant Natural Resources, capable and hardworking people, but it is being subjected to deprivation and marginalization over the years by the Nigerian Nation.

The President noted further that the Ijaw Nation is currently surrounded by those perpetuating evil and called on all to be very careful and vigilant.

In his address, the Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, who represented the Governor, H.E. Sen. Douye Diri in the occasion said, he is saddened by the current realities faced by the Ijaw Nation. He emphasised the need to recalibrate the relationship between our Traditional Rulers and their subjects. The Governor discouraged in strong terms, the negative attitude of rewarding bad and unacceptable behaviours within their domains. The Governor charged the Traditional rulers to protect their territories against the in flocks of miscreants, especially from other ethnic Nationalities.

The Governor also called on Politicians to stop arming and mobilising youths for their selfish gains and tasked the youths not to allow themselves to be used to perpetrate evil by selfish politicians. The Governor further said that all leaders in Ijaw Land, are first Ijaws before becoming Politicians, and the Ijawness in them must be above everything else.

Finally, he commended the leadership of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) for their foresightedness, and for joining him to resolve a seemingly difficult problem among the ex-agitators that almost engulfed the Ijaw Nation and the country at large.

In his keynote address, His Royal Majesty, King Bubaraye Dakolo, Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom and Chairman, Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council spoke on the Security of the Ijaw Nation. He noted that the current security situation in the Ijaw Nation and the country at large has taken a very dangerous dimension.

He condemned the spike in kidnapping, piracy, armed robbery, and cultism in the Ijaw Nation and seeks an end to these vices.

King Dakolo called on Traditional Rulers to take full custody of their domains and also urged them to imbibe the spirit of reconciliation.

King Dakolo decried the way the wealth of the Ijaw Nation has been taken away since 1958 and given to others, while the Ijaw people are left to wallow in poverty and deprivation.

He emphasised the need to make Ijaw Nation secured and safe from external aggression.

The second speaker, Mrs. Rose Aken John Oduene, spoke on the topic "Ijaw Unity". She emphasised the need for more engagement of Ijaw people, especially the leaders at all levels, and to foster love among them.

She divided her presentation on Ijaw Unity into 3 parts, the Past, the Present and the future of the Ijaw Nation.

She noted that in the past, Ijaws were always their brother's keepers and always had the principle that what is owned by my brother is for all of us.

But today, people only consider themselves and their immediate family in all they are doing.

Mrs. Rose Aken John Oduene, said she has great fears about the future, especially if nothing is done urgently to address the above issues. She called for more interaction such as this Town Hall meeting.

The speaker also called the re-introduced Water Resources Bill an evil, while also condemning the PIA and even the Land Use act which were deliberate efforts to impoverish the Ijaws, being the Ethnic Nation with the largest contribution of oil and gas resources to the Nigerian Nation.

She commended the Leadership of the Ijaw National Congress for this wonderful Town Hall Interactive Meeting.

Giving his vote of thanks, the President of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) Prof. Okaba used the opportunity to list out some crucial upcoming events, which he urged all Ijaws to fully participate in. These included the upcoming Population Census, Voters Registration and Elections.

Finally, the President declared that no other group or agitators will add one inch of Ijaw Nation land into their map as we are a Nation by ourselves, with defined territorial boundaries.

THE MEETING ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS

1. The meeting urged Traditional Rulers to take effective control of their domains and to check the current spike of insecurity in the Ijaw Nation.
2. That the Ijaw Nation is contiguous with defined territorial boundaries and can NEVER be a part of any other group(s) or agitations.
3. That the Ijaws in strong terms condemn the Re-introduced Water Resources Bill and call for the amendment of the PIA.
4. That the Ijaw National Congress (INC) still insist that the 3% provision for Host communities, the definition of host communities as any area in Nigeria and beyond, which may include Niger Republic, and the allocation of a whopping 30% provision for the exploration of frontier basins in the PIA as totally unacceptable to the Ijaw Nation.
5. The Ijaw Nation frowns at the delay by the federal government in resolving the issues concerning the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and called for the Immediately re-composition of a substantive Board for the NDDC, in line with the NDDC act.

6. The meeting also resolved to sound a note of warning to people of other Ethnic Nationalities perpetrating insecurity in Ijaw territories, Nationwide and to inform them not to misconstrue the hospitality of the Ijaw people for weakness. That would be a great mistake.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Long Live Ijaw Nation

SIGNED for Ijaw Nation by:

1. Professor Benjamin Okaba, President, Ijaw National Congress
2. Alabo Nengi James, Vice President 2, Ijaw National Congress
3. Dr. Week Doodei, Chairman, Western Zone, Ijaw National Congress
4. Engr. Ebipamowei Wodu, National Secretary, Ijaw National Congress
5. His Royal Majesty, King Bubaraye Dakolo, Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama Kingdom and Chairman, Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council
6. Mr. Gabriel Benamaisia, The Clerk of The National Representative Council (NRC) of the Ijaw National Congress.
7. Chief Dr. Ebizimoh Okolo, Chairman, Abuja Chapter of Ijaw National Congress