

H.R.H Igwe (Engr.) Muodum Nick Obi (J.P)

Omenyili

Igwe Nnobi

Our Ref: _____ Your Ref: _____ Date: _____

13th Sept, 2024

The Honourable Commissioner,
Local Government,
Chieftaincy and Community Affairs,
Government House,
Awka.



Sir,

RE: IN THE MATTER OF NNOBI COMMUNITY CRISES. A REJOINDER FROM THE TRADITIONAL RULER OF NNOBI, IGWE (ENGR) N.M. OBI, OMENYILI NNOBI.

The Igwe Nnobi received with bemused state of mind Mr. Commissioner's directives articulated in the document dated the 4th day of September, 2024 and addressed to President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO). The letter/directive of 4th September 2024 merely copied to Igwe Nnobi was wrong as same was not endorsed "for your information and necessary action". A case of administrative blunder.

In the said directives, Mr. Commissioner deliberately and/or ignorantly closed his eyes to the express provisions of the Nnobi Town Constitution or spirit of fair hearing in dispatching his directives, another case of administrative incompetence.

A breakdown of Mr. Commissioner's directives and its flaws is as articulated hereinunder:

1. With respect to paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the said directives,
 - (a) The Igwe Nnobi expresses his dismay on Mr. Commissioner's exposition of Nnobi Town Constitution, especially the 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution.
 - (b) Sometime in 2022, there was a directive by State Government to Traditional Rulers to submit the various town Constitution to the Government. The traditional Ruler of Nnobi, Igwe (Engr.) M.N. Obi submitted the 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution to Anambra State Government as per the directive.
 - (c) It is wrong therefore for Mr. Commissioner to assert as he did in paragraph 1 of his directives that the present Constitution before the State Government is the non-operational 2011 Constitution.

- (d) It is not in doubt that the 2011 Nnobi Town Constitution was duly reviewed in 2019 which consequently produced the 2019 Revised Nnobi Town Constitution that was adopted by Nnobi People in the Quadrennial Conference of Nnobi held on 31st day of December, 2019.
- (e) Be it known that the Quadrennial Conference of Nnobi People is the only body that was constitutionally vested with the right to review the Nnobi Town Constitution and it sits once every four years. See **Sections 24(c) of NTC 2019**(Section 33(c) of 2011 NTC).
- (f) At the Town Hall Meeting held at Government House Awka on 20th June 2024, Mr. Commissioner acknowledged that 2011 Nnobi Town Constitution was duly reviewed to produce the 2019 Constitution. Mr. Commissioner was therefore wrong to acknowledge the non-existing 2011 Constitution as the Constitution before the Anambra State Government.
- (g) Mr. Commissioner also ordered ndi Nnobi to amend the 2019 Constitution alongside the phantom 2023 draft constitution to produce a more unified and acceptable Nnobi Town Constitution. This is an indictment on 2019 Constitution, Quadrennial Conference of Nnobi People held on 31/12/2019 and the executors of the 2019 Constitution to the effect that the said 2019 Constitution suffered rejection and unacceptable to Nnobi People.
- (h) Mr. Commissioner in arriving at the decision that 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution suffers unacceptability and was rejected by majority of Nnobi People, failed to tell us where and when majority of Nnobi people accepted the 2011 Constitution of Nnobi as the authentic Constitution of Nnobi People. Who conducted the plebiscite that generated the said postulation? The Igwe Nnobi was not aware that you conducted a plebiscite in Nnobi.
- (i) Mr. Commissioner, you also failed to appreciate the fact that upon the adoption of the 2019 (Revised) Nnobi Town Constitution on 31st day of December 2019 by Nnobi People, the 2011 Constitution ceases to exist and cannot be revisited. After all, you cannot go back to yesterday.
- (i) Mr. Commissioner also failed to appreciate that Nnobi Town Constitution clearly provides for the amendment/review of the constitution and Mr. Commissioner cannot, with all due respect, lead us to illegality with his directives. Especially where it was not shown that our constitution is in breach with any State laws.

- (k) The directive by Mr. Commissioner with respect to amendment/review of 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution alongside the phantom 2023 draft constitution is flawed, unconstitutional and may breach the peace and unity of Nnobi people.
 - (l) Having lost the chance to review the Constitution in 2023, the Nnobi people have the opportunity to go again in 2027. This is because Nnobi Town Constitution provided for the procedure and time frame of reviewing/amending the Constitution.
 - (m) The phantom 2023 draft Constitution seek to amend the non-existing 2011 Constitution. Asking Nnobi People to amend the 2019 Constitution together with the phantom 2023 Constitution is directing Nnobi People to engage in illegality.
 - (n) Mr. Commissioner in approving the amendment of 2011 Constitution as you did, failed to advert your mind that the application that sought for the said amendment did not proffer reasons for the said amendment as stipulated by section 13 (2) of the Traditional Rulers Law, 2020 as amended. It then means that the said approval is void and of no effect.
2. With respect to paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of Mr. Commissioner's directives,
- (a) The Igwe Nnobi frowns at the thoughtless and incredible directives of Mr. Commissioner which may end up undermining the peace in Nnobi town rather than helping it to achieve its desired purpose of peace and unity.
 - (b) For instance, Mr. Commissioner stated in paragraph 8 of the directive thus:

"8 The Iwaji ceremony performed on 3rd August 2024 is inconsistent with the Nnobi Town Constitution. Therefore, before the Ashaolu festival, the traditional Iwaji festival must be done in accordance with the constitution of Nnobi (section 131)."
 - (c) Firstly, this directive is outrageous, uncalled for, ambiguous and did not take into cognizance the spiritual connotation associated with Iwaji and Ashaolu festivals of Nnobi.
 - (d) Mr. Commissioner did not stipulate which of the Constitution/draft the said Iwaji of 3rd August offends. **Section 131 of the 2011 Nnobi Town Constitution** (assuming he is referring to same) is not in any way related to Iwaji festival and as such cannot command any sanction with respect to Iwaji festival.

(e) The said section 131 provides thus;

"Section 131. DUTIES OF OKPALA OF NNOBI

(I) *The Okpala of Nnobi shall act in the absence of Igwe of Nnobi presiding over the Igwe-in-Council.*

(II) *The Okpala of Nnobi shall perform other functions as may from time to time be delegated to him by Igwe of Nnobi.*

(f) Where is the said inconsistency that flawed the Iwaji of the 3rd August, 2024? The above reproduced section is clear and unambiguous and does not need a soothsayer for interpretation.

(g) The Okpala of Nnobi may step into the shoes of Igwe Nnobi (in his absence) only with respect to Igwe in Council meetings and nothing more. Nowhere was it written in the above reproduced section that Okpala Nnobi shall perform the iwaji festival in the absence of Igwe of Nnobi.

(h) The above reproduced section of Nnobi Town Constitution was made strong by **Section 27 of the Traditional Rulers Law, 2020 (as amended)** which states thus:

"The Onowu or traditional prime minister shall be the isiichie – head of ndi ichie and shall deputize during the meeting of Igwe in Council."

(i) What we are laboring to say is that even the Anambra State Traditional Rulers, Law 2020 as amended only empowers the Okpala to deputize during the Council's meetings and nothing more.

(ii) There is no deputy Igwe in Nnobi and Okpala Nnobi is not a deputy Igwe. There is a world of difference between Igwe Nnobi and Igwe in Council. They are two distinct bodies duly recognized by the law.

(k) The appropriate section of the Constitution that regulates the Iwaji festival is **Section 177 (1) of 2019Nnobi Town Constitution** and it stated thus:

"IWA JI shall be the responsibility of the Igwe Nnobi and shall be performed at his palace any Saturday in August."

(l) There is nowhere it was stated that Okpala of Nnobi shall perform the Iwa Ji in the absence of Igwe Nnobi. The Igwe may delegate the duty to his son the Prince, Okpala of Nnobi or any of the Ichies.

- (m) Where then is the inconsistency as it relates to Iwaji of 3rd August, 2024 which was performed by Ichie Akudibalugbo of Umuona as delegated by Igwe Nnobi Ichie. Akudibalugbo represents ward 1 in the Council and the said ward 1 (Umuona Village) is the ofor bearer in Nnobi.
- (n) Perchance that the Igwe of Nnobi was wrong (which we do not concede) in delegating the Iwaji festival to Ichie Akudibalugbo, will the obnoxious directive to perform another Iwaji cure the imperfection?
- (o) The answer will be clearly NO. The IWAJI festival is an ancient traditional festival which requires **performance of some rituals. Some of the rituals like cleansing of the land, palace and fortification of the sacred ofor Nnobi cannot be performed twice within the same period.**
- (p) The symbolism and spiritual gains of IWAJI festival cannot also be revoked. The IWAJI festival by the Igwe Nnobi is a revered ceremony that gives the Nnobi people the permission to start eating the new yam. Upon the Igwe's performance of the IWAJI festival on 3rd August 2024, the Nnobi people started harvesting and eating their farm products.
- (q) What happens to the Ichies that have performed their own IWAJI rites in line with the town Constitution after the ceremony of 3rd August 2024 by Igwe Nnobi? Will it not be that the Ichies performed IWAJI before the Igwe Nnobi and thus, running contrary to the wordings and spirit of the same Constitution?
- (r) What of the Anambra State Government directive that the Traditional Ruler of a Community should be the first person to perform iwaji ceremony in a community?
- (s) Mr. Commissioner, it is an abomination and sacrilege to direct that Igwe Nnobi should repeat the traditional and sacred rite of iwaji. It is akin to a call for Igwe to commit suicide.
- (t) A clear act of meddlesomeness manifested itself when the President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO), Barr. Dominic Savio Okpala without authority issued a proclamation to the effect that the annual traditional Ashaolu festival 2024 is suspended. He also suspended some Ichies (members of Igwe in Council) for a period of two years. The President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO) also dictated to Igwe Nnobi and Igwe in Council vide a letter dated 27th July, 2024 to restore the Okpala Nnobi stool or face the consequences.

- (u) It is consequent upon the above that the President General issued the said proclamation **suspending the Ashaolu festival to spite the Igwe Nnobi and create unnecessary pandemonium in Nnobi.**
- (v) It is not in dispute that Ashaolu Festival is a traditional festival and strictly under custom, culture and traditions of Nnobi. It is also not in doubt that the Igwe Nnobi is the custodian of Nnobi Custom, culture and traditions. The *Anambra State Traditional Rulers Law 2020 (as amended)* clearly stipulated that the issues pertaining to culture, customs and traditions of a Community is under the jurisdiction of the Traditional Ruler of the Community.
- (w) The President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO) visibly stepped beyond his jurisdiction when he dabbled into issues pertaining to custom, culture and traditions of Nnobi people.
- (x) The President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO) had earlier disrespected the Igwe of Nnobi and Igwe in Council when he unilaterally reversed the termination of Ichieship of Chief Okwudili Oguejiofor. Chief Okwudili Oguejiofor membership of the Council was duly terminated by the Igwe in Council and the President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization who is the lawyer to Chief Okwudili Oguejiofor kept on recognizing him as an Ichie in NWO meetings.
- (y) This is notwithstanding the provisions of Nnobi Town Constitution which stipulates that Igwe in Council shall be the final authority on the issues relating to the suspension and termination of membership of an Ichie in Nnobi.
- (z) Mr. Commissioner, having found in paragraph 11 of your directives dated 4/09/2024 that the President General's meddlesomeness on the suspension and termination of an Ichie is a nullity and that they lacked the requisite jurisdiction to meddle in the affairs of the Council, why the sudden change of position in paragraph 12 of your directive?
- (aa) Was the termination of Chief Okwudili Oguejiofor Ichieship by the Igwe in Council not on the same pedestal with the alleged suspension that you declared void and nullity?
- (bb) The termination of the ichieship of Chief Okwudili Oguejiofor was in conformity of **Section 130(1) a & b of 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution.**
- (cc) Mr. Commissioner, it is unfortunate that you did not deem it fit to ask the meddlesome interlopers that wrongly sacked the Ichies and cancelled the 2024 Ashaolu Festival to tender apologies to the

people they erred against. Moreso when some of the people (Executives of Ebenesi Brothers Union and Ngo Development Union) that issued the loathsome directives are under the state of leadership INTERREGNUM.

- (dd) Sometime in May 2024, Chief Onyechi Ifezue (Okpala of Nnobi) wrote to Central Executive Committee of NWO wherein he made series of allegation against the Igwe Nnobi and Chief Nonso Okafor (AkusinachiNnobi).
- (ee) The complaint of Chief Onyechi Ifezue centered on the internal activities of the Council which should be resolved internally. Knowing that his complaint is premised on the internal affairs of the Council, he (OkpalaNnobi) deliberately reported the matter to Central Executive Committee meeting of Nnobi Welfare Organization wherein they openly disparage the Igwe Nnobi and Igwe in Council.
- (ff) The Okpala Nnobi had earlier laid the complaint before the Council and the issue fixed for deliberation prior to his subsequent report to Mr. Commissioner and later Central Executive Committee of Nnobi Welfare Organization. This conduct of the Okpala Nnobi in reporting the matter to Central Executive Committee of Nnobi Welfare Organization whilst the matter is been handled by the Council is contrary to **Chapter 4, paragraph M of the Igwe in Council Rules and Regulations 2021**.
- (gg) Further still, Chief Onyechi Ifezue also reported the said incident to you Mr. Commissioner during the Nnobi Town Hall Meeting held at your instance in Government House, Awka sometime in June, 2024.
- (hh) That you Mr. Commissioner thoroughly reprimanded the Okpala of Nnobi for his dastardly actions before pleading with the Council to go and resolve the matter internally.
- (ii) Whilst the Council was still deliberating on the matter, Mr. Commissioner turned around to issue a directive that Okpala's stool should be returned to its position before the Ashaolu festival.
- (ii) It is unfortunate that Mr. Commissioner will make such directive without hearing the other side of the issue or the case of the persons accused of removing the said stool.
- (kk) It is also unfortunate that Mr. Commissioner did not make any effort to know if actually Okpala owned a stool and that the said stool was removed.
- (II) Mr. Commissioner erred in his conclusion that Okpala's stool was removed and order for its return when actually, nothing of that sort happened.

(mm) The directive of Mr. Commissioner with respect to the issue, is wrong, erroneous and breached the principles of fair hearing. The Igwe Nnobi accused of removing the Okpala's stool in the Council chambers was not given the opportunity to defend himself before the directives were issued.

3. Mr. Commissioner, you also directed that the Igwe Nnobi and the President General of Nnobi Welfare Organization should convey a peace meeting of Nnobi People at the town hall on or before the 30th day of November, 2024.

(a) In issuing out this directive, you (Mr. Commissioner) failed to state the nature of the meeting to be constituted, who will chair the meeting, agenda for the meeting and the procedure for the said meeting. A directive ought to be clear, unequivocal, unambiguous, explicit and feasible.

(b) Moreover Mr. Commissioner, you closed your ears to the report and complaint from Nnobi people that the tenure of the said President General and his executives had elapsed.

(c) Like the Executives of Ebenesi and Ngo Quarters, this President General tenure had elapsed since 31st December, 2023 in line with **Sections 62 and 64 of the 2019 Nnobi Town Constitution**. (see also section 60 & 82 of 2011 NTC).

4. Mr. Commissioner, your instruction in paragraph 15 of the directive issued on 4/09/2024 is a clear manifestation of misunderstanding of the said section.

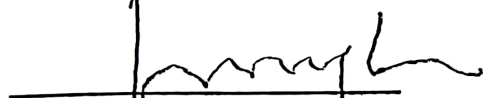
(a) **Section 20 of Nnobi Town Constitution, 2011** reference by you as the premise for the directive did not mandate the Igwe Nnobi to attend meetings of Nnobi Welfare Organization (NWO).

(b) It merely stated that Igwe Nnobi shall deliver an address at the Annual Representative General Meeting and Quadrennial Conference of Nnobi People as patron of NWO.

(c) Mr. Commissioner, you clearly admonished the signatories to the peace committee report at the town hall meeting on the negativity of their report and its defamatory nature. The Igwe Nnobi had already written to them and copied to your office his intention to file a defamatory law suit against them in high Court of justice.

5. All these distractions are mere ploy by the PG to deflect attention away from the issue of rendering financial account of his stewardship to the people of Nnobi in line with the Nnobi Town Constitution and Anambra State Government directive with reference **No.OSPA/LC/CM/3/241 of 25/01/2022.**
6. We drew your attention to the President General's financial recklessness previously but you totally ignored same. It seems like you are not in a haste to act with respect to the President General's financial rascality and financial irresponsibility. The President General of Nnobi is bleeding Nnobi dry.
7. Finally, the Igwe Nnobi advise you to pause, review your directives and possibly reverse same in the interest of peace and good governance in Nnobi.

Kindly accept the assurance of our highest regards.



Ichie Ezeobi Ajaghaku

Palace Secretary

For HRM Igwe (Engr) M.N. Obi (JP, FNSE)

Omenyili, Igwe Nnobi

CC

1. T/C Chairman, Idemili South L.G.A, Ojoto.
2. The Secretary, Igwe-in-council