



**IF PEACEFUL CHANGE IS IMPOSSIBLE,
VIOLENT CHANGE IS INEVITABLE**

His Excellency Alhaji Adamu Modibbo

Mr Chairman, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. I wish to thank you all, particularly the organisers for giving me the opportunity to stand up and say a thing or two about our dear country. I thank most sincerely the paper presenters, particularly Chief Mike Ahamba (SAN) because his paper is the one I am most interested in because of the process I have gone through in the last two years.

I think we ought to look at, not only the current problems plaguing our nascent democracy, in terms of corruption, incompetence of the regime, connivance of the Judiciary, Legislature and the Executive in ruining our country. We also need to look at what is left as an option to the common man. This is because it is said that if you make peaceful change impossible, then violent change is inevitable.

Mr Chairman, my concern is, no matter how bad a situation is, if you can have a change of leadership, then there is a hope that the new leaders can change the situation. But here we are in Nigeria, we are pushed to the wall, there are lots of problems going on but are not allowed to change our leaders. It is a known fact that Obasanjo and Atiku did not win the 2003 election but they are still in charge. Boni Haruna did not win election in Adamawa State but he is still in charge. If you take away our own right to vote for our leaders then what remains and that is the thing that bothers me the most. As young as I am Mr Chairman I will not want Nigeria to go through a revolution because I have read in the textbooks how dangerous going through revolutions are. I would not want my people to go through revolution and I would not want to go to the streets, but if we cannot be allowed to change our leaders peacefully through transparent electoral process then we Nigerians do not have any option other than to invoke any means legitimate or otherwise to change these leaders.

Mr Chairman, the changes that took place in Georgia, Philippines, Ukraine and other countries in Europe did not take place through the due process of the electoral system, but yet ordinary people came out, stayed in winter, in freezing conditions and forced a government out. What are we doing?

Mr Chairman, I also get worried when we sit down and abuse Obasanjo, Atiku and others. Every aspect of our government is bad and I will give you a couple of examples. Of course Obasanjo represents the Executive and Atiku, as Asiwaju said, is shamelessly building a University worth more than three billion naira in Yola. Where there are no Primary and Secondary schools. Who for God's sake will go to the University?

The Judiciary is not anything better, and the Legislature is not anything better either. The National Judicial Council nominated some justices to the Supreme Court. The Senate is supposed to conduct public hearing. This happened to me – Justice Ikechi Ogbwagwu of the Jos Court of Appeal who sat on my case, as well as other justices, were nominated. We petitioned against their confirmation by the Senate and we submitted the petition on Thursday. On Friday I travelled out of Abuja because we were told to appear at the Public Hearing on Tuesday. When I returned to Abuja on Monday, I was reliably informed that the Senate organised a secret hearing to confirm the justices of the Supreme Court. The astonishing thing is that everything took place within 45 minutes! Professor Osugbo, the Chairman of the Committee, is still there, whoever wishes to confirm this can verify from him. If he thinks that I slander him, he can take me to court. I was also reliably informed that this was done in collaboration with the National Judicial Council.

In addition to this, two weeks later, the same committee conducted a public hearing to confirm the Grand Khadi of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). However, confirmation of Supreme Court justices was secretly and hurriedly conducted within 45 minutes – four justices, meaning that each justices took averagely 11 minutes! So what are we talking about?

These are some of the problems we are facing; we cannot change the government by election, we cannot query the appointment of people to our Supreme Court and it is the Senate that is doing all this, then what hope do we have? In my opinion, the only option left to us is to go to the streets!

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for listening.

ABOUT HIS EXCELLENCY ADAMU MODIBBO



His Excellency, Alhaji Adamu Modibbo was born in Yola, Adamawa State. He was the All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) Gubernatorial Candidate for Adamawa State in the 2003 election.