



**Dictatorship must be resisted**

*Professor Munzali Jibril*

Mr Chairman, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. I think this is just a footnote because everything that needs to be said about the problems facing democracy and the prospects of sustaining it in Nigeria has been said. I just want to summarise what I have gained from today's discussions.

I think the most serious problem facing us in Nigeria is the emerging dictatorship that is emasculating the National Assembly, destroying institutions, destroying the political party on the platform of which the present government bulldozed its way into power, destroying any opposition, whether from individuals or institutions. I think this is very dangerous, and we have seen it happened both in Nigeria and other places where one man holds a whole nation to ransom. The clamour for the six-year term for the President is only the first step; if he succeeds in that he is going to change the constitution to make it open-ended and when he is 80 or 90 or when he joins his ancestors, he is going to anoint his first son, or his first cousin or some anointed chosen successor to take over. We have seen this happened in Togo and other places.

This therefore means that, as the consensus has been mentioned several times, there is no other way; we have to resist this emerging dictatorship. The fact that the Judiciary which is supposed to be the final Umpire is corrupt is neither a heresy or an allegation. There are several justices humiliated out of office on charges of corruption. The only ones remaining are those of the Supreme Court, and this is only a matter of time. We have seen High Court judges retired as a result of the election petition tribunals for taking bribes. But if you ask me retirement is not enough for these criminals; they should be jailed for being corrupt. We have seen Court of Appeal justices retired by the government as bad as it is because the cases are so glaring. So the fact that corruption exists in the Judiciary has been established.

The National Assembly has been emasculated and it is docile. This is not surprising because two-third of the members were not elected; they were appointed! A lot of them don't have the courage to stand up to the Governors because the Governors selected them and anointed them and therefore have the capacity to cause a lot of trouble for them or at least to ensure that they don't get the chance to go back. All the checks and balances instituted in the Nigerian Constitution have been rendered useless and effectively a nation of 130 – 150 million people is under the spell of one man of doubtful sanity! I think this is very dangerous.

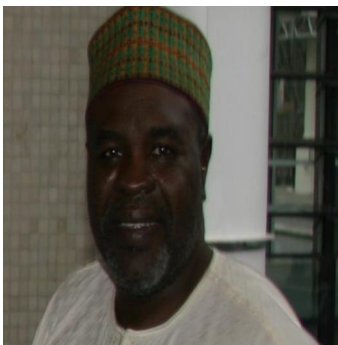
Mr Chairman, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the only solution left for us is to form a broad-based alliances of all pro-democracy progressive forces across the country. This is because they have always use ethnicity, religion and region to break our ranks. Let us unite across these divides and let us – both the leaders and the lead – be prepared to lay down our lives. No change comes cheap. If you want to resist dictatorship so that our children can live a better life than we are currently living, so that if we survive we can live a better life than we are currently living, we have to be prepared to lay down our lives. This is because the regime is brutal and it is prepared to go to any length.

As Chief Mike Ahamba (SAN) said, if you are prepared to give somebody a good punch you must be prepared to take one yourself. Our methods so far have not succeeded; we have been dealing with the people in government as civilised human beings, following all the due process of the law and so on. This will not work any more. Of course it has consequences and we have to learn lessons from the experiences of other countries.

As an example, in the Arab World, they do not care if you rule for 50 years, they don't care if you die and your son succeeds you, but just make a mistake of increasing the price of bread by half a cent and you will have people on the streets and that government must fall that day or else reverse the situation. This is what we must learn to do if we want to move forward.

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

## **ABOUT PROFESSOR MUNZALI JIBRIL**



Professor Munzali Jibril was born in Kano City, Kano State, Nigeria, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1951. He graduated with a Bachelors degree in English/Arabic from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria in 1974. He later did an MA in Modern English at University of Leeds, United Kingdom, in 1976, and a PhD in Linguistics at University of Lancaster, United Kingdom, in 1982.

Professor Jibril taught at the Bayero University, Kano from 1975 to 1991. He also taught at King Abdul'Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He also worked at the Provost of Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA) from 1992 to 1995. In 1996, he was appointed the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC) where he served for five years to 2001.

Professor Jibril is a prolific writer on both national and international issues and has published in both academic and non-academic journals and other media. He has also served the community in various capacities including Chairman, Board of Directors, Triumph Publishing Company, Kano, Member, National Planning Committee for Gifted Education, Chairman, National Planning Committee for Gifted Education, Chairman, English Developmental Programme Advisory Committee, NERDC, Member, Kano State Flood Disaster Relief Committee, and Member, Advisory Committee of the NUC/British Council's Communication Skills Project (COMSKIP).

Professor Jibril was conferred with the title Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) by the Federal Government of Nigeria, January 1999, the Honorary Fellowship of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, FNIPR, December 2000 and the Fellowship of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, FNAL, August 2001.