

# Reps Discover 10,000 Ghost Workers' On Customs Payroll

A stunning revelation has been made by members of the Committee on Customs and Excise of the House of Representatives who are currently investigating redundancy and alleged corruption in that sector.

The discovery revealed that over 10,000 workers or employees of customs representing about 50% of the entire work force are

either 'ghost workers' or overtly redundant.

According to the report by Business Ventures Watch, BVW, one of the groups submitting memoranda at a recently organized public hearing by the House Committee, the immediate

By  
Wilson Uchendu

Controller-General of Customs, Jacob Buba Gyang who is now Gbom Gwom, Jos illegally serviced an overhead budget based on a total work force of 20,000 whereas only 10,000 were

said to be actually on the job as at April 2008.

Another odious allegations made against the Nigerian Custom Services were that the top management clandestinely supported the importation of illegal fire

arms into the country as well as that of prohibited or contraband goods by unlawfully aiding their clearance.

In a sworn affidavit in favour of his submissions, the representatives of the Business Ventures Watch,

BVW, Hon Shola Kola maintained that the Nigerian Customs services corruptly paid a whopping N5.4 billion as a fee for a mere consultancy project as well as other over inflated contracts as allegedly awarded.

## Perm. Sec. Warns Against Rumour Mongering

By  
Chris Jonah

The newly appointed Permanent Secretary to Government

House, Mr. Oguru Fortune Oguru has warned civil servants working in the Rivers

State Government House to shun and eschew rumour mongering, truancy and lateness to duty, in other to ensure maximum productivity.

Addressing civil servants in his maiden meeting with staff of Government House at old auditorium, in Port Harcourt, the new Permanent Secretary told the staff to practice due process by always following service rules and regulations in

the discharge of their duties and follow official channels of communication so as to get response to their request.

But Mr. Oguru reminded the staff that reliance on rules could invite hatred. "When you apply rules as they are meant, you can no longer be a friend to everybody, so, whatever you do, should be backed by service rules and regulations".

The Permanent Secretary assured the civil servants that

he would operate an open door policy so as to ensure an enabling working environment for the workforce and enjoined the staff to be straight forward and open in their dealings, and promised that hardworking staff would be rewarded.

"If you allow rumour to thrive, it would affect the quality of work and slow down governance" he said.

## Stop Tarnishing Image Of Government

### ...Wujah Advises Ogbowu

By  
Our Reporter

The National President of the Niger Delta Youths Alliance for Peace and Development, Comrade Samuel Wujah (JP) has advised Hon. Elemchukwu Ogbowu to go and reconcile with the state Governor Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and stop tarnishing the image of the present administration in the state.

Reacting to a recent statement credited to Hon. Ogbowu in the *National Network* based in Port Harcourt with the caption "Elemchukwu Ogbowu spits fire, says no rest for Amaechi for murdering sleep, he surrounds himself with opponents, was let off EFCC hook by me, must reconcile with Odili, others, biting more than he can chew, G.U. Ake is a bad influence, greedy, hates riverine people, etc ... "Why I took G.U. Ake to court, why Uche Secondus, Ake deny Odili, follow Amaechi." Comrade Wujah described the former lawmaker and two time commissioner in the state as the cause of his dilemma as according to him Elemchukwu Ogbowu betrayed and abandoned somebody he calls his friend and brother when his services were most needed and wondered why he should now resort to casting aspersions on government. He tasks him to borrow a leaf from Chief Secondus and G.U. Ake whom he said discovered the truth and tread on it adding that the former Governor Dr. Peter Odili is coming back to join hands with the government.

The National President also used the medium to thank the State Governor for setting up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which he said went a long way to reconciling the aggrieved minds in the state.

He appealed to all those still running from pillar to post to forget the past like the governor has done in order to take Rivers State to greater heights.

He expressed happiness and gratitude to God for the developmental strides the Amaechi government has recorded since its inception on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2007 with the help of the Supreme Court and described the on-going massive road construction, demolition of illegal structures, and declaration of state of emergency in the education sector as a welcome development.

On the Niger Delta problem, Comrade Wujah said God is in control as peace is gradually returning to the region but

decried the high level of marginalization meted out to the people of the region and called on the Federal Government to give to the people all that are due to them.

As a way of ensuring lasting peace in the region Comrade Wujah said he was on tour of all the states in the region as he has already visited Ondo, Imo, Abia, Delta and Bayelsa. He said that his meetings with the militants had shown that the boys were ready for peace.

At Primabri in Bayelsa State to be precise, the president said the militants welcomed him and his entourage and have accepted to lay down their arms.

At Ubima his home town Comrade Samuel Wujah told our reporter that the community is at peace contrary to speculations.

According to him as soon as Amaechi became the Governor of Rivers State he ordered that all the aggrieved persons be reconciled, an order he said, he did not hesitate to carry out as the CLO/Youth leader of the community and that as it is today, according to him both Omehia's group and Amaechi's group are working together. He pointed out that contractors working in the area walk round the community unmolested and described as frivolous and callous the purported statements by some persons that the Governor was pursuing the Ikwerre agenda at the detriment of the riverine people stating that no tangible project is even going on at Ubima the governor's hometown whereas numerous projects have

been completed or nearing completion in the riverine communities.

Meanwhile, the National President of Niger Delta Youths Alliance for Peace and Development Comrade Samuel Wujah (JP) has described the newly created Niger Delta Ministry headed by a son of the soil (Chief Uffot Ekaete) as a welcome development but said the people would hold the minister responsible if no meaningful achievement is recorded.

On the appointment of a new Managing Director for the NDDC he said he was optimistic that the governor would surely chose the best for the people and lauded the state governor for promising to use the resources available to the development of the state.

In a related development, a political figure in Ikwerre Local Government Area Hon. Abongo Ogozor has called on the former Governor Dr. Peter Odili to join hands with the government of Chibuike Amaechi (his foster son) to move the state forward appealing to all those in exile to return home.

He particularly described the statement credited to Hon. Elemchukwu Ogbowu in the *National Network* of May 11-17 2009 as a blanket statement full of rubbish and therefore asked Hon. Ogbowu to show evidence of where he let the governor off the EFCC hook.

The truth of the matter according to him was that Hon. Ogbowu and his group never believed Amaechi would become governor Hon. Wujah appealed to him to seek reconciliation rather than worsen the situation knowing full well that he betrayed his brother.

Hon. Ogozor however used the medium to commend the state Chief Executive for his people-oriented leadership and called on those on exile to return home or else they may not be able to recognize their houses due to massive on going development in the state.

The duo of Samuel Wujah and Abongo Ogozor also described the present administration under Governor Amaechi as all embracing, detribalized and people oriented while Chief LongJohn Dimkpa also joined in thanking God for bringing Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi as governor of the state.

Chief LongJohn Dimkpa is the current secretary of the Ubima Council of Chiefs.

## University Hostels: NDDC Reads Riot Act To Contractors

... Deliver Before November Or...

The Niger Delta Development Commission has ordered contractors handling various students hostel projects in Universities across the Niger Delta Region to deliver before the end of this year or incur the wrath of the Commission.

Acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, Pastor P.Z. Aginighan who gave the order said the warning has become necessary because of what he described as the unacceptable slow pace of work on the projects by some of the contractors.

Pastor Aginighan, who was answering questions from newsmen shortly after inspecting one of the hostel project sites at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, stated that the Commission has already

put machinery in motion to recover every kobo mobilized to any contractor who fails to deliver at the end of the deadline.

He said by December this year, the projects would not only be completed, commissioned and equipped but handed over to the University authorities.

The NDDC boss therefore urged the contracting firms to redouble their efforts by increasing their workforce and working round the clock, adding "a prize awaits performing contractors while indolent ones would be sanctioned".

On why the emphasis on University hostels, Pastor Aginighan explained that the hostels were singled out for executive attention because education holds the key to the emancipation of the people of the Niger Delta region.

"Education is very critical in realizing the Seven Points Agenda of Mr. President concerning the Niger Delta", he said.

To ensure that the projects were executed according to specification, the Acting Managing Director appealed to the University Authorities to request their works Departments to monitor the projects and report non performing contractors.

In his speech, the Vice Chancellor of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Professor B.B. Fakae thanked the Commission for the project, saying that it will bring great relief to the problem of hostel accommodation in the institution when completed.

The NDDC has about two students hostel projects in each of the nine states of the Niger Delta region.

## Gov. Amaechi's Special Adviser Kidnapped

By  
Paschal Agbada

Kidnappers in the Niger Delta region appear not to be prepared to respect any person anymore. The more worrisome aspect is the fact that the kidnapers keep getting more daring with each passing day.

The latest incidence of kidnapping shocking as it is now is the kidnap of the Special Adviser to Governor Amaechi on Budget, Mr. Ngor

Augustine.

According to the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Mrs. Rita Abbey, Mr. Ngor was kidnapped last Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> of May, 2009 at about 8pm in Port Harcourt.

The PPRO however, said that the police high command was leaving no stone unturned as the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of

the command had initiated high-level investigations into the matter.

Mr. Blessing Wikina, the Acting Chief Press Secretary to the Governor when contacted confirmed the incidence as *Beam Checks* gathered also from the Police angle that this is one case the police in Rivers State have foresworn to unravel no matter the odds.



## Former EFCC Boss Ribadu Invited By US As Guest Speaker

countries of which Nigeria is prominently one.

The letter inviting Ribadu was signed on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2009, by the Chairman of the House's Committee on Financial Services, Barney Frank.

By  
*Paschal Agbada*

Ribadu according to the letter has been formerly requested to be part of the House's hearing planned for May 19, at 10.am

Strictly, the hearing will tend to explore the topic "Capital Loss, Corruptions and the Role of Western Financial Institutions". The hearing will also try to proffer solutions on ways of curbing and preventing

such practices. Furthermore, it plans to institute a framework that will put in place best practices by these institutions and their officials.

According to the invitation, Mallam Ribadu will address the hearing audience on a wide range of issues which include, how to measure corruption, how western financial system facilitate corrupt practices, pressures or dangers that "on-the-ground" anti corruption advocates and

watch dogs face towards amelioration and reform of corrupt practices in the affected countries.

The letter in part reads "The purpose of this hearing is to explore the extent and effects of official corruption in developing countries and to determine whether and to what extent western financial institutions have facilitated the transfer of wealth derived from corrupt practices.

"The hearing will seek ways to deter such practices if necessary and will aim to develop a set of best practices for financial institutions as they examine capital flows from such countries".

## NDDC Donates 3 Refuse Disposal Trucks And 40 Bins To Abia State

The Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has donated 3 (three) Refuse disposal trucks and 40 (forty) waste bins to the Abia State Government as part of efforts at ensuring a clean and healthy environment.

Donating the trucks, the Acting Managing Director of the NDDC, Pastor P.Z. Aginighan who was represented by the Director, Youths, Sports, Culture and Women Affairs, Dr. Uche Nwele said the Commission was mindful of the environmental hazards posed by waste in the state.

The Acting Managing Director noted the collaboration and cordial relation between the Abia State Government and NDDC and assured the people that the Commission would further the collaboration through the provision of rural infrastructural development and programmes that would empower the youths and women and redirect their energies to both constructive engagements and job creation.

He commended the government of the state for the peace and calm in the state which he said has created an enabling

environment for the NDDC to work in the state, adding that the state was strategic to the survival of the Commission and the Niger Delta region.

In his speech, the Governor of Abia state, Chief T.A. Orji who was represented by the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment, Chief Mrs. Jemimah Ola Kalu said the donation had opened a new channel of benefiting communication between the state and NDDC.

"We are happy and grateful for this quick intervention, it will go a long way in assisting us handle and manage waste

and ensure a cleaner Abia state".

The Governor promised to ensure judicious use of the trucks and waste bins, adding that it would further compliment the State Governments efforts in its Urban renewal efforts and effective waste disposal.

In his response, the General Manager, Abia State Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. Cosmas Ndukwe thanked the NDDC for the donation, noting that it would take care of its most challenging refuse outlets within the State capital and Aba.

## PDP Woos Ohakim

By  
*Paschal Agbada*

Indications pointing to the fact that Chief Ikedi Ohakim, the Governor of Imo State has been under serious pressure to cross over to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is heightening.

In fact, the speculations was so rife over the weekend that some newsmen decided to take the gauntlet and meet with the governor to clarify issues.

While fielding questions from media men therefore, Chief Ikedi confirmed the speculations stating that actually there had been overtures from the ruling PDP for him to return to his former party.

It would be recalled that prior to the primaries in 2007, Ohakim then, a member of the PDP had lost out to the likes of Ugwu and Ararume prompting his having to seek political relevance in an alternative political party which turned out to be the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) under whose umbrella he won the gubernatorial elections in the state.

If he is persuaded and he cross carpets, he would then

become the third governor to have moved over to the PDP after the 2007 elections.

In Zamfara State, Governor Aliya Mahmud Shinkafi did cross carpet to PDP from the All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP). In the same vein, Isa Yuguda, Governor of Bauchi State equally defected to PDP, still from the All Nigerians People Party (ANPP).

However, it is important to note that in Imo State, the dominant Party is the PDP which has 26 members of the State House of Assembly coming from the party out of the 27 members. Chief Ohakim and his party the PPA only managed to produce one member.

PDP's dominance of state according to *Beam Checks* was instrumental to Chief Ohakim becoming the Governor as it was alleged that PDP having not somehow totally endorsed Ararume, and the zoning formula not predisposed to favour any other zone from claiming the governorship saddle preferred Ohakims

soft mien which made them feel he could be easily swayed to come over after all PDP was his original political clime.

However, two years into the top plum job and no news of his coming over, it therefore became apparent that PDP would definitely not be sleeping over the development.

Irrespective of PDP's pressure, Ohakim had spoken to reporters last Saturday while on a visit to Lagos saying that PDP was not only the party trying to woo him to their side. According to the Governor, some other parties have been fighting tooth and nail to have him in their fold.

Parties like the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), The Action Congress (AC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and others are reported to be closely watching the developmental strides and efforts of the 'Ochinanata' (he who rules at childhood) with a view to snatching him from his party the PPA.

The governor in his closing remarks hinted that

the party on whose platform he made it to the governorship post, the PPA is still insisting he stays back citing his harmonious relationship with the party's top hierarchy as being cordial and something to rely on for further cooperative activities.



Ribadu

## Uzugbani Ekpeye Triumphs Over Rival

By  
*Joe Kalu*

From all indications the only recognized socio-cultural organization in Ekpeye land that has the peoples' mandate is the Uzugbani Ekpeye.

This is because the unfolding development recently does not seem to favour its one and half year old rival "Uzugbani Ekpeye Logbo".

In a recent meeting of the Conference of Ethnic Nationality of Niger Delt Region (CENNDR) held

in Calabar the Cross River State Capital, the Uzugbani Ekpeye Logbo delegates were disgraced out of the venue.

Dr. Obuzor led delegate list was not only recognized but was asked to go home and ensure that the illegal body was merged into theirs and everybody given the opportunity to contribute his/her quota.

In a press release by "Uzugbani Ekpeye" Publicity Secretary Mr.

M.I.U Ogbugo and made available to the press, CENNDR said it recognized the older body because not only that it has history but was a registered body with spelt out aims and objectives concerning the development of Ekpeye land.

Efforts made to reach out to the rival body for reaction proved abortive as its President General Mr. Joel refused to talk to the press.

## NEWS

## Judiciary, Pillar Of Nigerian Unity ~Gov. Ohakim

The able Governor of Imo State, Chief (Dr) Ikedi Ohakim has posited that if not for the bravery of the Nigerian judiciary, the Federation called Nigeria would have since disintegrated like

India.

Disclosing this recently at Abuja while receiving an Award of Excellence bestowed on him by the Magistrates Association of

Nigeria, the governor noted that right from the date of amalgamation of various nations into what is known today as Nigeria, the judiciary has stood its ground and has remained the last hope of the common man.

"The importance of the first level of court (magistracy), cannot be over-emphasized. I urge all groups to join hands to uplift the judiciary, as government alone cannot do everything. It is only with good condition of service that the judiciary can be motivated to work hard.

Governor Ohakim has changed the face of judiciary in Imo State by improving the welfare of its staff and by increasing their

By  
Chris Jonah

salaries. He also provided housing and vehicles loans.

Good accommodation has been provided for the magistrates and judges in the state and all courts renovated as well.

Presenting Governor Ohakim's citation during the ceremony, Mrs. Anyadike said it was because of Ohakim's devoted attention to the plights of magistrates that the National Body decided to honour him. The Award of Excellence was presented to him by Hon. Justice Ishaq Bello from the FCT Magistrate Court Division.

Among dignitaries at the occasion include President of Court of Appeal Hon. Justice Umaru Farouk, who

represented the Chief Justice of the Federation, Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Michael Aondoakaa (SAN), Mrs. Latifat Solami, the outgoing Chairman of Magistrates' Association, Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Imo State, Barr. Ken Njemanze (SAN), Hon. Ibejiako of the National Assembly and Mr. Henry Ekpe, the Chief Press Secretary and others.

Meanwhile, Governor Ikedi Ohakim has described the menace of erosion in the South East as a calamity that needs urgent attention. He made the remark at Government House when Dr. Hassan Lawal, Minister of Works, Housing and

Urban Development visited him.

The governor opined that to tackle the problem, his administration has embarked on the dredging of the Naworie Rivers and has embarked on several other erosion control projects in the state.

He thanked the Federal Government for favouring the South East in its 26 roads intervention projects.

Dr. Hassan said he was in the state to inspect and supervise the on going federal projects. He assured that road projects in the country would be made motorable and safe for citizens of Nigeria as President Yar'Adua has zero tolerance for abandoned projects.



Gov. Ohakim

## Traffic Law Enforcement Unit Means Well

Contrary to negative report against the Ministry of Transport, Traffic Law Enforcement Unit says it actually means well to the public. According to Elder Karibi George Tolofari Monitoring Officer Incharge of Marine Base Unit, the aims and objectives of the body is to ensure free flow of traffic for the benefit of the road users.

According to him, the MOT equally helps in reducing road accidents.

By  
Joe Kalu

On why some offending drivers are taken to the psychiatric evaluation, Tolofari said it was because some drivers actually behave so irrationally that one tends to first get a psychiatric evaluation report on the driver before prosecuting him.

He further disclosed that when it is discovered that the person is normal he will then be directed to the Government bankers Zenith Bank for payment of a stipulated fine.

The monitoring officer also used the opportunity to announce the appointment of a magistrate to prosecute the offender and indeed give him a chance to defend himself and the option of going to serve the state in prison.

On the behaviour of some of the MOT boys, Elder Tolofari said his boys are responsible trained officers who would not go contrary to laid down rules.

"They are no touts neither are they mad men who

~Tolofari

would want to jump into a moving car.

They only impound or arrest those who flout the traffic laws".

He advised motorists to be patient on the road, adding that when everybody join the queue it is better and orderly and people will reach their destination on time.

But that if they run into other drivers lane it will not only cause traffic jam and delay but could equally cause accident.

Mr. Tolofari also agreed to the suggestion of odd and even number policy that operated sometime in Lagos State whereby vehicle with even or odd number plates operate alternately on days of the week if that will help the state.

He also accepted that broken down or disuse vehicle add to the road congestion but disclosed that his unit have embarked on their removal to clear the roads and make them motorable.

He also used the opportunity to thank the State Governor Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi for occasionally coming on board to assist them which according to him shows support to what they are doing.

"The Governor means well to his people and his determined to improve the peoples' welfare at the same time and in all sector and anybody who does not meet up his pace gets thrown out by the wayside".

## Looming Mass Rally: PDP Lamports NLC

The Peoples Democratic Party, PDP has cautioned the leadership of the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC not to yield to the temptation of planning an organized mass rally in Nigeria.

The National Vice Chairman of the party, North-West Zone, Dr. Danladi Sankara made this known at the weekend while addressing newsmen in Kano, Kano State.

The PDP Chieftain stressed that while the workers deserve increment in salary and improved welfare package, the planned mass rally would do the country no good as hoodlums and unscrupulous people could capitalize on that to cause massive disorder.

The PDP Chieftain equally maintained that there is no concrete reason for the NLC to even embark on national strike

or protest of any sort since President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua seriously takes the interest of the workers at heart.

Sankara said "You will also agree with me that the President has proven focus, vision and capacity to offer

By  
Wilson Uchendu

the nation a new lease of life. Therefore it is my expectation that the organized labour which is an articulate segment of the society should be wary of enemies of the nation who

can go to any extent to engineer disaffection in its ranks to take confrontational posture against the Federal Government" he stressed.

He cautioned NLC to seek all avenues of

amicably resolving existing disputes with government instead of resorting to the retrogressive act of taking to the streets and causing damages to government properties.

## RSG Woos Foreign Investors In Manufacturing

The Rivers State Government has appealed to Lebanese businessmen resident in Rivers State to consider investing in manufacturing and agriculture in the state, since the opportunity exists and the state has the capacity of generating more employment than any other state of the federation.

Addressing the visiting Bishop of the Maronite Church, Lebanon last week, Bishop Bechra Rai and Bishop Alexius Makozi, of the Catholic

By  
Chris Jonah

Diocese of Port Harcourt in Government House, Port Harcourt, Governor Chibuike Amaechi said the Lebanese entrepreneurs are recognized worldwide for their active participation in business, and urged them to bring their expertise to bear in other areas of economy of Rivers State.

Rivers State Governor who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government, SSG, Mr.

Magnus Abe said the good reputation of Lebanese as entrepreneurs and investors should be shifted from the high technical business areas that require fever workers, to manufacturing and agriculture to engage more hands and reduce unemployment in the state.

The State Chief Executive noted that the biggest challenge facing Rivers State is the lack of profitable engagement of the teeming youths.

The visiting lebanese commended the state government for their efforts to restore peace in the state and pledged the support and cooperation of the Lebanese community in the state to the present administration.

Rt. Rev. Alexius Makozi the Catholic Bishop of Port Harcourt Diocese in his remark, thanked the state government for their cooperation and cordial relationship with the church.

The leader of the South-South caucus in the House of Representatives and member representing Ikwerre/Emohua Federal Constituency, Rivers State, Chief Igbonule Andrew Uchendu at the weekend led other parliamentarians within the caucus to bemoan the ongoing excruciating and difficult experience meted out to some members of the National Assembly, especially Hon. Ndudi Elumelu, also a member of South-South caucus and Chairman House of Representatives Committee on Power.

It would be recalled that three House of Representatives members—Hons Ndudi Elumelu, Jibo Mohammed and Paulinus Igwe, including Senator Nicholas Ugbane are at present in the custody of the men of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC for their role in the alleged N5.2 billion fraud in the Rural Electrification Agency (REA).

Also Hon. Elumelu and nine others including the lawmakers mentioned above are currently facing trial over the issue before an Abuja High Court presided over by Justice Abimbola Banjoko.

However, commenting on the development, Chief Uchendu indicated doubts on the possibility of Elumelu's involvement in the alleged fraud having known him as a man of impeccable personality.

## Alleged N5.2b Fraud: Uchendu Decries Elumelu, Ugbane's Incarceration By EFCC

Also, Elumelu and Ugbane are chairmen of the House of Representatives and Senate Committees on power respectively and it is on record that their committees saddled with the responsibility of probing the power sector by the National Assembly did an outstanding job by uncovering a lot of irregularities and unbridled corruption alleged to have been perpetrated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo administration. Billions of dollars were said



Chief Andrew Uchendu

to have been spent on the Power Sector by Obasanjo regime without commensurate result.

With all these impressive records, Chief Uchendu therefore opined the Elumelu could not have done what they are accusing him of and so charged him to do everything within the ambit of the law to decisively rise against his traducers and protect his hard-earned integrity.

Chief Uchendu said "As chairman of the South-South Parliamentary Caucus, to which Hon. Elumelu most brilliantly belongs, we express great regret that this allegation is against one of us. We will encourage him to do everything within his powers to prove his allegation false, because we do not believe that he will engage in untoward activity, particularly, when he was saddled with the responsibility of sanitizing the power sector by the House"

However, Chief Uchendu explicitly maintained that as distinguished federal lawmakers who believe in the rule of law, they had no intention of interfering with investigations by the EFCC or that of the law court, rather they expect due process to be strictly adhered to".

Asked why Elumelu,

By  
Wilson Uchendu

Ugbane and others were refused bail since such could have been done based on self recognition, Hon Uchendu stressed that the decision lies within the jurisdiction of the court.

Reacting to the incarceration saga, Hon. Dayo Akbionso of Action

Congress, (AC) representing Kosofe Federal Constituency of Lagos State said that in democracy what his colleagues need to do is to prove their innocence or not "so that they could be exonerated or discharged or even condemned as the case may be". He equally maintained that being individual members of the

National Assembly, the onus lies on them to defend themselves over the matter and that it has absolutely nothing to do with the image of the National Assembly.

Beam Checks gathered that the House of Representatives in its bid not to appear partisan, swiftly avoided comments over the issue on the hallowed floor

## The People Groan

### ...As "Mother Excellency" Strangulates Abia

By  
Joe Kalu

Over six months now since the Abia State Executive Council was dissolved, it has not been easy to constitute another allegedly owing to the fact that "Mother Excellency" Mrs. Eunice Kalu, mother of the former Abia State Governor Orji Uzor Kalu is yet to approve the list submitted to her by the king makers.

This according to our competent Government House source is an indication that she is still the one calling the shots with one of her sons Mascot Uzor Kalu who is the Chief of Staff, Government House Umuahia.

The source disclosed further that the Governor Chief Theodore Orji would have tried his best in the development of the state if left alone to function.

In a chat with newsmen over the weekend at Umuahia Mr. Chinedum Ndunaka, South-East Coordinator of the Progressive Forum of Nigeria, PFON confirmed the report, and added that the Governor is trying his best but that his best was not good enough.

He made it known that the governor's impact is only felt at Umuahia, the state capital.

The PFON leader lamented the absence of infrastructural development and flight of industries in the state owing to bad governance and roads.

Hear him; "Roads in Aba like Ngwa, Obohia, Uratta Port Harcourt and Ama Ogbonna are terribly bad especially this rainy season with floods entering and submerging peoples' property whenever it rains, yet we have a government in place".

He also stated that companies like International Glass Industries Meturlogical Company, Guinness, Seven-up and Lever Brothers are some of the multinational companies that have gone moribund and are leaving because of bad roads and other necessary infrastructure.

Mr. Ndunaka also mentioned the activities of touts as another menace in the state.

He said these group of people harass and intimidate the citizens at will and sometimes extort money unnecessarily at any given opportunity from unsuspecting members of the public.

Reminded of the reconstruction work going on at the Port Harcourt Owerri Road, the PFON stalwart said that was a rehabilitation work instead of the much talked about dualization of the road.

He also lamented the untoward activities of the Abia State Environmental

Protection Agency, ASEPA, which he noted is suffocating the citizenry.

"I am sure the edict establishing the agency did not say, they should go and collect revenue from the citizens without rendering any services". He pointed out that the task force of this agency harass and molest the people at the slightest provocation in their bid to extort money. The PFON boss attributed all these to bad governance and lack of vision by our leaders, a situation his organization is out to correct.

He disclosed further in answer to a question that though they don't hear much about the Okija Shrine influence in the governance but that it does not seem to have disappeared totally.

He made it known that PFON commends the leaders when they do the right thing and criticize equally when they do not perform. "For instance he said. It is appalling to note that for over six months now local government workers and teachers in the state have not been paid their salaries yet there is constant statutory allocations to the state".

Aba South LGA Chairman Hon. Okezie Erundu and his Aba North LGA counterpart, Hon. Ifeanyi Ikwecheghi were said to be too busy to see our reporter when he visited. Our investigation also confirmed that the crime rate in the state has soured.

No day passes in the commercial city that one doesn't hear of a crime committed or those that face the jungle justice.

A resident of the Enyimba city disclosed that once it is night fall no pedestrian passes the waterside area else the intruder will be maimed with his/her valuable gone or killed out rightly, and yet "Ochendo" as the governor is fondly called is proudly beating his chest as the best performing eastern state governor.

## Woke Calls For Promotion Of Ikwerre Dialect

The Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Popular Savannah Hotel in Port Harcourt Chief F.N.J Woke has called for the promotion of Ikwerre dialect which he said was fast disappearing from the tongues of parents, sons and daughters of the Ikwerre ethnic nationality warning that if urgent steps are not taken to address the ugly trend the precious Ikwerre dialect (Onu-Iwheroha) may be a thing of the past.

Chief Woke who stated this when members of the Ikwerre Media Practitioners Association of Nigeria (IMPAN) paid him a courtesy visit regretted that some parents no longer speak the dialect to their children instead they prefer English language in every manner of

communication with the entire household and appealed to Ikwerre Journalists to help in sensitizing the people on the need to hold the dialect in high esteem.

The most pathetic of it all according to Chief Woke is that some grown up Ikwerre sons and daughters including children cannot speak the dialect fluently as it is also common this days that the people use English language in all their deliberations even in family meetings and called for a change of attitude.

He tasked the Ikwerres to borrow a leaf from the Kalabaris, Igbo's, Ijaws, Yoruba and the Hausas to mention but a few whom he said hold their mother tongue in high esteem pointing out that he is not

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totally against the use of English language by the people.

He used the occasion to call on the people of Ikwerre ethnic nationality to be their brothers keeper and shun acts capable of disuniting them.

The political chieftain also called for support to the present administration stressing that Ikwerre people have contributed immensely in the development of the state and the nation at large and appealed to them to put all their differences behind them and see governor Amaechi as their son whom he said had made the people proud.

Chief Woke condemned in strong terms the allegation that the governor is favouring the Ikwerres more instead he

said the people were losing taking into consideration the magnitude of land sold to both the people and government.

He however described himself as one who have sympathy for writers and promised to be of assistance to Ikwerre Journalists and therefore thanking them for the visit.

Meanwhile, chairman of IMPAN Esotericist Monday Wehere and his Vice Uche Atuzie had earlier briefed Chief Woke on the aims and objectives of the association and called for his support.

It would interest our esteem readers to know that Chief F.N.J Woke has served as the first Deputy Chairman of PDP in Rivers State and is a friend to notable politicians in the state and