

Obstruction Of Waterways/Drainages: Commissioner On Rampage

...As Billion Naira Guest House Goes Down

The Rivers State Government having warned that it will not relent in its determination to demolish any structure that obstructs the natural waterways no matter whose ox is gored has carried out this threat to the letter. In line with this stand therefore, the Hon. Commissioner for Environment Barr. Kingsley Chindah elected to tour some designated areas in the city while monitoring the last environmental sanitation exercise.

In his team were officials from the Ministry and Obio/Akpor Local Government Council respectively all of whom went straight to the PAC Express Guest House at Rumuokwurushi on a tip off and demolished the 200 metres offending fence erected by the proprietor Chief Sampson Ovuah on the "Ntawogba" waterways in defiance to the earlier instruction by the community and the Ministry of Environment. At that instance, Chief Ovuah almost lost the whole guest house.

The Commissioner disclosed that in addition the proprietor who hails from Ibaa community in Emohua LGA will be prosecuted within the week.

In the same vein, some of his workers who tried to challenge the monitoring team were arrested.

HRH Eze (Sir) Engr. B.N. Nwogu, traditional ruler of the community and pioneer chairman of Obio/Akpor LG Council said he was the one who invited the state government when the proprietor proved adamant and went ahead to block the waterways.

A community leader of the area, Chief Sir Nelson Wali also supported the action of the government, appealing that even if his own building was found obstructing the drainages it will be pulled down. The Government, Eze Nwogu noted should consider opening the drainage once again, to return it to the wide river they used to enjoy when they were growing up.

The Senior Special Adviser to the Governor on Pollution Control

By Joe Kalu and Paschal Agbada

Barr. Dickson Umunnakwe in reaction said the erected structures on the natural waterways were not part of the beautification agenda of the State Government on water fronts.

He said the fence was causing blockade and flooding of the entire area especially whenever it rains, adding that there was no political undertone as alleged in some quarters. Rumuokwurushi Youth Forum official, Mr. Nyema

to the receptacle has commenced in Port Harcourt and its environs and urged all households to comply with the directive which is in the public interest.

He also disclosed that in addition to the free refuse bags being distributed one could also purchase at any local shop.

The commissioner charged residents to strictly maintain the 6pm-12midnight dumping time as offenders will face the full wrath of the law, explaining that

exercise that will come up every second Thursdays of the month to enable the public officers clean up their offices and its surroundings.

The Commissioner disclosed that Environmental Health Officers would henceforth not be going for inspection at the companies but would be confined to house-to-house inspections and urged the public to cooperate with them, warning, "we shall not tolerate a situation where the health officers are accosted, harassed or intimidated in the course of their duties".

He however, advised them to be polite with the public and admonish offenders where necessary warning against any act of corruption while discharging their duties as it will be viewed seriously.

He used the opportunity to commend the effort of the Obio/Akpor Local Government Council which he noted took up the challenge posed by offenders and appealed to others to follow suit, hoping that the existing synergy was going to improve in the interest of our environment.

Barr. Chindah also expressed the Ministry's appreciation to the members of the press for their support.

"Again, and again and again, we keep saying thank you for your support and we wish to sincerely express our gratitude to all of you who participated in today's monthly environmental exercise particularly, the press crew".

Alhaji Nyenusa E. Umaru, Chief Imam of Elelenwo Central Mosque used the opportunity of the team's presence to appeal that a nearby record store which always blared its loudspeaker should be called to order as the disturbance infringes on their daily activities.

He commended the State Government on its efforts to keep the environment clean and affirmed the cooperation of the Mosque in this regard.

"The government did well in coming to handle the situation before it got out of control", he said.



Kingsley Chindah

Azuenwu and "Ikwerre Bu Otu" Peace Movement President Comrade Igwe Prince Ihunwo led the demolition team that brought down the high level fences and the bar of the hotel.

Briefing the press, the Hon. Commissioner for Environment, Barr. Chindah announced that the bagging of refuse before taking it

the idea was to help the evacuator maintain a clean environment, adding that the cost of each bundle of bags that has 20 pieces is sold at between N300- N500.

The Commissioner announced further that apart from the first Saturday monthly environmental exercises that his ministry has also introduced another monthly