

RSG NEWS

Amnesty: Amaechi Forgives Repentant Militants In Rivers

Barely 24 hours to the expiration of the 60-day Federal Government's Amnesty to militants in the Niger Delta, Rivers State Governor, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, says he has forgiven all militants who have genuinely repented of their evil deeds and surrendered their arms before the expiration.

Governor Amaechi who made the declaration at the formal handover of arms and ammunitions by Farah Dagogo, the overall Commander of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), said although every Niger Delta shares in the spirit of their agitation, he was totally against arms struggle.

He thanked the repentant militants for the honour they have done to Rivers State, the Niger Delta and President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, in accepting the Amnesty offer, assuring them that the governors of the Niger Delta States would follow-up the terms of the Amnesty and make the Federal Government keep its side of the bargain.

"We join you in the fight for our oil wells", he said, insisting that "no efforts will be spared in ensuring that the ex-militants are rehabilitated and accorded needed vocations".

Also speaking at the event, the Minister of Defence, Major General Godwin Abbe (rtd) called on the ex-militants and their followers to give

peace a chance to enable government take a detailed analysis of their classification and needs, with a view to addressing them.

General Abbe who said the ex-militants would be invited for further discussions assured that post-amnesty rehabilitation procedures would commence immediately from October 5th, 2009.

In his speech, Farah Dagogo said the handing over of the arms was not a celebration in any way as he was under the directive of MEND to lay down the arms, so as to give peace a chance.

"In line with conditions attached to this amnesty offer, we are surrendering all weapons under our direct control, we are accepting this amnesty with the hope that it will usher in a time spirit of reconciliation exemplified by dialogue", he said.

Farah, whose group laid down different types of arms ranging from anti-aircraft launchers, GPMG, AK 47, Mark 4, etc, appealed to those determined to fight on to "consider first the option of dialogue" and prayed for a just and peaceful Niger Delta.

Soboma Jackreece (a.k.a Egberi Papa) and Christian Don-Pedro who also spoke at the event apologized to Governor Amaechi for the wrongs they have done to the state at various times, but stressed that they were not criminals, but youths determined to ensure that the Niger Delta people live a decent life.

Gov. Amaechi's Wife Tasks Children On Nigeria Unity

As the Nigerians across the world mark the 49th Independence anniversary of a sovereign state, wife of the Rivers State Governor Dame Judith Amaechi has challenged the youths and children to rise up in unifying and realizing the dreams of the Nigeria's founding fathers.

Dame Judith Amaechi stated this during a Children Party marking Nigerian's 49th Independence anniversary at Government House.

Mrs Amaechi said that despite the challenges facing the country, the youths and children have the potentials to turn around the fortune of the country.

According to her, "the road to nationhood no doubt has been quite challenging but we hold tenaciously to the fact that we have a dream, a dream where our children, our future leaders will turn around the situation of our great nation for the better and complement the vision of Nigeria founding fathers.

Mrs. Amaechi restated the state government determination to provide enabling environment for the children and urged them to reciprocate government's effort by shunning acts capable of destroying their future, "our children are indeed the beneficiaries of governor Rotimi Amaechi's administration as evident in the provision of infrastructure and urban renewal of the city to give them serene environment and opportunities comparable to their counterpart across the world".

She advised children to obey their parents and take their studies seriously.

The governor's wife thanked the children and their parents for praying for her during her absence due to a domestic accident and pledged her determination to place their interest in the scheme of things.

The children's party featured chorography, quiz and dance competition.

Highpoint of the event was the cutting of the anniversary cake.



Rivers State Governor, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi (right), sharing a moment together with his Deputy Governor, Engr. Tele Ikuru and former Military Governor of Rivers State, Mr Fidelis Oyakhilome at the Liberation Stadium at the 2009 Independence Day Anniversary on Thursday, October 1, 2009 in Port Harcourt.



Rivers State Governor, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi presenting a trophy to Miss Utin Utibeima of Jephthar Comprehensive Secondary School, as the winner of the Secondary School Match-past, part of the celebration of the 2009 Independence Day Anniversary on Thursday, October 1, 2009 in Port Harcourt.



Minister of Defence, General Godwin Abbe (rtd) (right), Hon Magnus Abe, Secretary to Rivers State Government, during the handing over of arms and ammunitions by Mr Atke Tom to the Presidential Task Force on disarmament.



Assorted arms surrendered on display.



Dame Judith Amaechi and the Children of Rivers State cutting the 49th Independent Anniversary cake of Nigeria at Government House, Port Harcourt.

Rivers Economy Picks Again

...Expert

Less than 16 months after economic activities in Rivers State experienced a sharp decline due to an upsurge in criminal activities, the economy has picked up, giving an indication that all is well again.

Consequently, businesses that were closed as a result of the insecurity in the state may soon re-open just as more international organizations indicate interest in resuming operations in the state.

In a recent rating released by Fitch, a reputable credit agency, on the strength of economic activities in the Niger Delta, the agency gave an all-clear rating to Rivers State as the only state in the Niger Delta with a long term foreign and local currency rating that is stable and can sustain economic activities at the moment.

On the national front, it credited Rivers State with an AA- long term rating, a factor which guarantees that international business transactions can be conducted in the state with a minimal expected loss ratio.

The ratings for Rivers State, the agency maintained, reflects the state's revenue base supported by oil related income, in addition to its potential to boost tax revenue through improved collection procedures that involves tax payers and companies operating in the area.

In its assessment of the level and capacity of the state's investment programme, Fitch says "Rivers State has the capacity to maintain acceptable coverage ratios stressing that "the bonds with maturities of five to seven years would help smooth repayment burdens across budgets and increasing planning capacities" which may arise out of operating deficits.

This rating, which is an added impetus towards the efforts of the Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi-led administration to run a transparent government, is the latest indication that the state government's investment in security is paying off and that Rivers State is the best place to do business now.

It would be recalled that in the recent past, security fears had propelled some negative economic movements within the Niger Delta and this all-clear signal from Fitch would lead to a turn-around in the fortunes of the region, especially Rivers State, which has a more stable economic growth indices as at September 25, 2009.