

# CALL YOUR FCT MINISTER TO ORDER



I do hope this meets you well. I would like to write again as promised to call your urgent attention in dousing the state of deep political divide in Rivers State. As you would recall, I had earlier addressed a press conference four weeks ago when the political crisis started in Rivers State, appealing to you to personally handle this matter. I thank you for the action which you took at the time, including urging the Governor, HE Siminalayi Fubara and his predecessor in office, Mr. Nyesom Wike who is today a Minister in your government to sheath their swords. However, let no one be deceived, the situation is not yet over and things seem to be degenerating by the day. Both the Minister and the Governor are my sons and that informs my particular interest to ensure that peace returns as soon as possible to Rivers State. Besides, Rivers State is very important to the stability of the Niger Delta and the overall national economy. Therefore any breakdown of law and order there will not be in the overall interest of all. I am very sure that your security and media people could have kept you abreast of what we see happening every day. First and foremost is the fact that the Governor of Rivers State has since gone on to apologize to the people of the State over what he considers to have been how the political intrigues created anxiety and tension in the state when it occurred. As a former Governor, you will agree with me that this is gentlemanly and commendable of the Governor. However, I am surprised that the public utterances by the Minister, Mr. Wike and other related developments do not give an impression that he has moved much forward in resolving this matter. On one occasion, he stated that "impeachment is not a military coup", a total outrage when all hands are on deck to consolidate this democracy under your leadership. As a matter of fact, if anything at all, the continued press statements and interviews by the Minister of the FCT leaves no one in doubt that nothing is okay. In fact, in his recent interview held on Friday, 24th November, 2023, the Minister charged to one of his group of guests that the Governor is ungrateful, concluding that "I cannot stand ingrates". He continued stating how he had helped the Governor to become what he had become today and threatening publicly that he would continue the fight if the Governor "changes the structures which I left in the state." Related to this is the report that was in the public that members of the Rivers State House of Assembly loyal to the Minister trooped to Abuja to hold a retreat which is obviously intended at enabling them stay out home to strategize and re-strategize with their principal. Mr. President, I want to seek your clarification, why is the Minister keeping structures and for what purpose. I recall that in his days as a Governor, he had attacked the concept of god fatherism as totally unacceptable. As a matter of fact, this made him to fall out with his predecessor, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi, the immediate past Minister of Transportation, whom we know was not even directly interfering in the affairs of the state. So, what purpose are the structures supposed to serve when there is a governor in place? This is a question that he owes you and all Nigerians. If all governors who as a matter of right, insist on allowing their favoured candidates as successor, insist on controlling them, insist on controlling the State Assemblies, insist on controlling the structure which they left behind, what manner of confusion will we have in Nigeria?

To further put them against the Governor and possibly drag you and your political party, the APC, we are now receiving breaking news that "27 Members of Rivers State House of Assembly (all of whom are PDP like the Governor) decamp to the APC. The question is what is going on? In his state, at a relatively young age of 55 years, my son Wike had been a Minister of State, Minister in Federal Ministry of Education, before serving as Governor for 8 years and now Minister of FCT. So what does he need a structure for? This is very curious. If strong politicians such as yourself and other former presidents never talk about controlling structures, so how can a minister be threatening a governor not to touch a structure he has left in place. This is a bad precedent and if other Ministers in your government follow this trend, then it will be total confusion! Another very disturbing development is the interview granted by the Minister at another occasion on Thursday, 23rd November 2023 that made the front page of almost every newspaper to the effect "I have no intention to contest election in 2027". At the age of 96 and half years and having spent 70 years in politics in this country, I have never heard such an audacious statement being made by a Minister insisting that he has no ambition to contest against his principal who occupies the highest office of the presidency of Nigeria. This is a minister that has been in office for only 4 months with a very huge portfolio, more than perhaps 80% of his colleagues and from an opposition party, the PDP, talking about not interested in contesting against the man who appointed him. This will hardly happen under someone like President Obasanjo whom I often disagree with and even former President Goodluck Jonathan who some accuse as too soft. Having served in the Federal Executive Council myself under General Yakubu Gowon, to some of us, the Office of the President is highly exalted and a minister serving in the Federal Executive Council cannot therefore equate as whether he will be contesting against him in 4 years' time or not. As a member of your cabinet, you may need to call this minister to order to face the work in the quietness which is demanded of him. He should focus on his office and know that he is just one among a cabinet of 48 persons, besides the Vice President and yourself. The country has enough problems which your government must sit down to solve. The FCT itself is full of challenges all over and he has more than he can chew and therefore avoid these distractions. I have to speak out because unfortunately those in my category who I sometime say have already collected our boarding passes and seeing this country evolve through thick and thin are very few, while some others are not willing or ready to talk about issues, I have been too active and owe it a duty to add my voice to these issues which need to be corrected. I wish you and your government the best and pray for your success.

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