

SEN. NWAEBONYI IS RIGHT: DR. OBY EZEKWESILI "CAN NEVER BE HERE!"

By *Vitus Ozoke*

Following the recent verbal spat between Dr. Oby Ezekwesili and freshman Ebonyi Senator Onyekachi Nwaebonyi at a Senate Ethics hearing on the sexual harassment allegations by Sen. Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan against Senate President Godswill Akpabio, people's reactions have focused exclusively on the part where Nwaebonyi told Distinguished Dr. Oby Ezekwesili that she was "a disgrace to womanhood"

Well, it's debatable whether a thoroughly distinguished and accomplished woman like Dr. Oby Ezekwesili is a disgrace to womanhood. I will return to that. I want to draw people's attention to the other part of Nwaebonyi's no debatable tantrums. You know what they say about a broken clock - it is correct twice daily. Sen. Nwaebonyi stated some indisputable truth when he said: "That is why you can never be here [in the Nigerian Senate]. People like you can never be here. How can you be?" Nwaebonyi is right; decent people cannot be in the Nigerian Senate. Men and women of integrity, like Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, can never be in Nwaebonyi's Senate. Let's see why Oby Ezekwesili is disqualified from being in the Nigerian Senate.

Dr. Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili is the President of Human Capital Africa and Senior Economic Adviser at the Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative (AEDPI). She is also the Founder and Chairperson of SPPG (School of Politics, Policy and Governance), established by the #FixPoliticsInitiative, which she co-chairs.

Dr. Ezekwesili is a chartered accountant who holds a Master's degree in International Law and diplomacy from the University of Lagos, a Master's degree in Public Policy and administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, USA, and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In 2006, Ms. Ezekwesili was given the national Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR) award.

Dr. Oby Ezekwesili began her career with Deloitte & Touche, where she worked as an auditor and management and financial services consultant. She then served as a founding Director of Transparency International (TI) and as TI's Director for Africa from 1994 to 1999. Dr. Ezekwesili was a Senior Fellow at Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, USA, and was also a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, Germany.

Dr. Oby Ezekwesili was appointed Vice President for the World Bank's Africa Region in 2007, where she oversaw more than 1600 staff members and was responsible for the delivery of projects and economic and sectoral work in 47 Sub-Saharan African countries. Oby joined the World Bank after serving as Nigeria's Minister of Education, where she led a comprehensive reform program within the education sector, including restructuring and refocusing the ministry to attain Education for All (EfA) targets and Millennium



Development Goals. Before serving as Nigeria's Minister of Education, Oby was the Minister of Solid Minerals.

Dr. Ezekwesili is a Co-Convener of the #BringBackOurGirls Campaign. She was a Presidential Candidate in Nigeria's 2019 election and Campaign. She was a Presidential Candidate in the 2019 election in Nigeria. Dr. Ezekwesili is currently the Board Chair of Women Political Leaders (WPL) Brussels.

That is the woman who has been assessed to be "a disgrace to womanhood" by Onyekachi Nwaebonyi, whose only publicly available information reads as follows:

"Sen. Onyekachi Nwaebonyi was born in Ebonyi State, where he spent most of his early years. Known for his active involvement in community activities from a young age, Nwaebonyi displayed leadership qualities that would later influence his career in politics. His education journey began in Ebonyi, where he attended primary and secondary schools before moving on to university. Although the specific details of his tertiary education are not widely publicized, Nwaebonyi is known to have pursued higher education in political science or public administration, equipping him with knowledge for a future in public service and governance."

So, the guy with that credential is disqualifying the lady with those credentials from serving in the Nigerian Senate. When will the hell that has frozen over defrost? But if we take the rookie senator as speaking a strange kind of truth, it speaks volumes about the Nigerian Senate.

And what was this thing part about "Big fool! A fool at 70! You are a fool at 70!"? Isn't that so kindergarten? Those were the only cuss and fighting words we used because our vocabulary was limited. The only difference between this senator's version and ours back then is that even as 10- and 12-year-olds, we called our peers "fools at 40". We said that for two reasons: One, we needed to follow that up with the clichéd "A fool at 40 is a fool forever", and two, we didn't know our ages. The good senator's version is "You are a fool at 70", leading one wondering where he got 70 from. Dr. Oby Ezekwesili is only 61. You would think that with all the money they cart away, a Nigerian senator would do some research and have his facts correct.

Dr. Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili is a gem. She is a blessing not just to womanhood, but to men, all men - including rookie little men in the Nigerian Senate. She is a woman full of grace and adorned with elegance. Oby is class personified. When Dr. Oby Ezekwesili steps her virtuous feet into the filthy halls of the Nigerian Senate, some senator should consider it an honor and a privilege to take off his garment and clean the floor she walks on.