

I am the change!

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Events in Nigeria continue to draw home the ignominy and paresis of hope in its current leadership as constituted in the three arms of government. In a nation boasting one of the largest defence forces in Africa, there is no indication of intelligence to inform a pre-emptive intervention to forestall or squash the wanton destruction of innocent lives as has repeatedly taken place in recent years.

If social media feeds can be believed a leader commenting to the effect that the perpetrators of this onslaught were “defending themselves” when in fact the evidence speaks to the contrary, certainly leaves much to be desired. The Nigerian Army and its allied forces overran innocent citizens in the South East of Nigeria to overwhelm IPOB interest groups. Sadly when the lives of citizens in Benue state were endangered and snuffed out, the commander in chief would consider the situation so insignificant that the police were sent to investigate. It is not apparent if any arrests will or have been made.

The last three years has seen the problem of the so-called Fulani Herdsmen take root and fester with no indication this would abate. The chief herdsman in actions certainly louder than his reticence has not demonstrated candour in assuaging the tension these conflicts have generated across the country

All *human* lives matter – certainly more than plants or cows!

Imagine a situation where a non-indigene in the Northern states of Nigeria considers establishing an agrarian or nomadic endeavour and decides to impose such habitude on local communities. There would be no end to the aggravation they would experience regardless of the benefit this might bring to that community. Indeed the idea of Biafra agitators indicating a desire for separation from the rest of Nigeria generated a febrile reaction from so called Northern fundamentalists, to the degree the rest of the country seemed in fear for lives and livelihood of those in these regions.

The problem of Fulani herdsman finding grazing field in the middle-belt and south/southeast has arisen in recent years due to their indiscretion and arrogation of authority that has made them a dread to communities they visit. Little wonder some state governments are considering new measures to manage this unfettered risk they pose. Whilst modern society are advancing in ways to manage livestock, illiteracy and inequitable distribution of wealth continues to subjugate these herders to nomadic existence. Deployed by their masters unwilling to invest in alternatives the argument is put forward that it is their way of life and the Federal government is obliged to enable access! One could probably sympathise with their plight but for the terrorising activities they have been known to engage in.

The Nigerian puzzle

Nigeria as a nation fundamentally comprises people groups with diverse origins and cultures. The fact remains that the choice to coalesce was fundamentally rooted in an understanding of this difference and an acceptance of the non-supremacy of any group with equanimity and mutual regard.

It was therefore sad to learn of the Benue killings, an act of disregard for the rule of law and fundamental human rights. The Fulani herdsman, now, representing a terrorist group by their actions, argue their cows were stolen. They however also declined to respect purported new laws of the state enacted following grievances of locals who in their own right considered their continued passage detrimental to their livelihood. Their actions have become so frighteningly familiar across the south/southeast that it leaves one with chills wondering where the next calamity would come from. Statistically it is more likely than not, given the evidence that this will not just go away without a definite and lasting solution. The fact is that such carnage is becoming too frequent.

Of Elections and electioneering

With an election year fast approaching. The reality is that there is a dearth of leadership worth that name. There are also no safeguards in place for the

protection of innocent citizens given the inequity and ineptitude of so-called guardians of justice embedded in government. And there remains a group whose sense of entitlement and collective unconscious is primordial and libidinal. Indeed democratic processes are only effective where hegemonic affronts can be effectively extirpated from society by a people group. Failing so, it is fair to say this would be a kakistocracy, where the lowest of the low are elected to rule, but of course allows cabals to hijack government and over run the state with their agenda. It is remarkable that on the two occasions the "north" has fielded candidates we have been saddled with leadership akin to those ["One chance" Molues](#) pretending to be moving soon but never really departing. And even when the journey does begin, they breakdown so frequently you the commuter gives up on the journey - of course you never ask for your money back! That is their ploy. It is also the case even when "Southerners" are in office the north continues one pogrom or another, all in agitation for dominance?

Back to the point on Nigeria's calamity as a nation; what is the change needed? Who is the change? And when is the change etc.? It is necessary to re-echo these lines of enquiry to re-assert a sense of purpose and direction.

Every campaign is riddled with promises. Like a suitor courting his bride, she is promised heaven on earth and indeed, diamonds forever! But the reality dawns after a few years of marriage. This Government did raise the hopes of many a Nigerian. Sadly there was little choice at the time. It would appear Buhari's own desire was to attain the office of presidency by every means possible and probably serve his egoistic designs on Nigeria. That is probably one reason it was impossible for Buhari to call a spade a spade and deal with the effrontery of rabble-rousers decisively. It also explains the grandiose proposal in his New Year message to extend a railway line to Niger Republic at the taxpayer's expense. If this was to look cool to our Northern neighbours, he certainly has achieved that but to what end? Who are his constituents? And was this a part of his electioneering campaign or party manifesto? It is increasingly impossible to see a greater good from what appears to be the makings of a despot. I do wish him well but if the entity called Nigeria, currently threading water is to regain steam, polarising attitudes and dispensations should not be the norm. The office of the president must be seen to be esteemed and above

fear or favour.

INEC with 'No neck?'

Could it be the electoral commission is to blame? Shouldn't it be that every candidate to put to public scrutiny through processes such as open debates and publication of their track records in serving their local communities including their physical health status. The argument that their medical records are private certainly holds no grounds as they are seeking to be the number one citizen of the state. *Why is it the cost of nomination for candidates run into millions making it impossible for any honest person to put them self forward for election without running into debts?* Clearly this gives room for money bags to "Pay the Piper" and therefor dictate the tune!

INEC may consider reviewing the cost of nomination to bring it in line with reality such that an individual is able to purchase their nomination form within the framework of an honest income without embarking in financial escapades that essentially makes them subservient to moneybags. Parties forwarding a nominee should show evidence of membership contributions sufficient in itself to meet the required nomination fee or whatever is the expectation. Contributions to parties by members must and should not exceed a certain amount to minimise the risk of individuals hijacking the party voice.

One man-one-vote should be seen to be operative from within the party and then only can we expect this to be replicated in the wider society.

There are numerous questions for which the truth is never sort or considered. Little wonder we are left with the charlatans putting themselves forward with the clear knowledge *they will get their monies back.*

The change needed

There must be brilliant minds across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Education equips us to a degree but a SMART approach is necessary to overcome the dastardly schemes that continue to undermine our pursuit of good governance. The

arguments on numerous media fora in the past few years became so tunnelled that it was impossible to challenge the evidence for competence without being seen as fatalistic about Buhari and his government. But the signs were always there!

In my opinion, neither PDP nor APC can be relied upon to salvage Nigeria. They are the problem. Whilst some may argue they therefore need to be part of the solution, I would ask, can the leopard change its skin? The premise these parties were formed and their constituent leadership embody corruption. Majority have soiled their hands and hold the wealth of the nation in their pockets haven enriched themselves and continue to do so. With the current [National Assembly leadership](#) comfortably receiving salaries and allowances beyond the dream of the most hardworking entrepreneurs, professors or professionals, they are certainly not serving the common man's interest. Go to their constituencies and check what they contributed **before** assuming office and what difference they have made since elected. This fact is clearly demonstrated by the events since this dispensation.

A smart approach is that people align themselves in their various groups, based on common human values and not tribal or religious factions; and formulate a political agenda, mandate and support persons or people groups, deploy platforms and promote their mission. We put our money where our mouth is and put a stop to the deceptors that have continually held the nation to a ransom. They have not moved us an inch forward despite their years of involvement. Marginalisation by stealth and wealth has made it also difficult for younger generations to step up. When people are starved, they sadly would sell their 'One vote' to the highest bidder. Also when people abuse the office of state to their political advantage they become entrenched in their electoral manipulations - and would do anything to preserve the status quo

The criteria for nominating any individual to local, state or national office must change. Charity begins at home. Developing future leadership begins with being the example they wish their wards to reflect.

Let your slogan be "I am the change!"

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