

M E M O R A N D U M

From: Dr. Barinem Nubari Kiobel  
Hon. Commissioner  
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism  
Rivers State.

To: Rivers State Council of Chiefs  
Thro' His Royal Highness  
Eze Chukuemelam Obi II  
Chairman, Rivers State Council of Chiefs,  
Rivers State  
Nigeria.

Subject: MY INNOCENCE AND PLEA FOR RELEASE FROM UNLAWFUL  
DETENTION OF ME - A CIVIL COMMISSIONER WHO LAWFULLY  
CAME OUT ON INSTRUCTION TO CARRY OUT MY CIVIC DUTIES

Your Royal Highnesses,

On Wednesday 18th May, 1994, all Civil Commissioners of Rivers State were summoned by the Military Administrator of Rivers State Lt. Col. D.M. Komo to go back to their respective Areas to enlighten the people, speak to the people on ward delegate election to ensure that the Constitutional Conference election goes on smoothly. This I was doing.

On Thursday 19/5/94 I received an invitation letter from His Royal Highness HRH. J.P. Bagia requiring me to attend a meeting with Gokana Elders and Chiefs on Saturday 21/5/94 at 10 a.m. In honour to HRH call and to use the occasion to address Gokana leaders on need to fully participate in the delegate election for the constitutional conference.

I came in from Port Harcourt that morning. Arriving at the meeting scene, I met only one Chief Nalelo whom I greeted and sat down waiting the arrival of other invitees. I noted that as a serving Commissioner, I have to go out and come in when others came for protocol reasons. I left for my home at Kpor, later was invited to have brief talk with my village for some OMPADEC development projects and to use the opportunity to address on the Constitutional Conference. After brief meeting with my village, I immediately

Gokana has commenced. The motor cyclist came back reporting to me that he could not get access to the Palace. That Youths have filled all the area and road. Asked why, he told me that Ken Saro Wiwa was passing to see Mr. Ledum Mittee at K-Dere in Gokana on a private visit. He was stopped by the Military men close to the meeting scene and taken away inspite of protest by the Youths.

That as Ken Saro Wiwa was taken away, the Youths suspecting that people attending the meeting arranged with the Military that morning for the arrest of Ken Saro Wiwa swooped on the Palace Hall surrounding it and that fighting was going on.

As Rivers State government spokesman for the area, I immediately rushed down to the scene. Before I arrived Ken Saro Wiwa was already taken away, the Military was no longer there. I only met groups of youth more than two thousand. Trying to speak to them, stones were hauled at me, I was slapped twice. I immediately entered my car and went to Bori to report to the Army Commander.

At Bori I met Chief Kemte Giadom whom together we reported to the Commander. Having agreed that any further military presence would escalate the tension, the Commander being fully aware that because of my peace moves since my appointment, I am highly respected in the area asked me to go back and to speak to the people assuring them that:-

1. Ken Saro Wiwa is not arrested or killed as suspected;
2. That he personally accompanied Ken Saro Wiwa to Chara where he was allowed to go to Port Harcourt on his own which he did.

On above note, I returned to plead with the youths again to disperse to their homes assuring them of the safety of Ken Saro Wiwa. On my way from Bori, I met one respected member of MOSOP one - Barisuatam. I pleaded that he should abandon anywhere he was going

led to Chara and asked to go to Port Harcourt. He Barisuatam accompanied me.

Drawing close to the scene we saw smokes of burning fire. We later discovered it was cars of our elder statemen. Furiously I and Barisuatam risked our lives to penetrate in<sup>to</sup> the meeting arena to actually see what has happened. We found the Palace destroyed. I pleaded to them, I am government official representing them. That they should let me see the people who were attending the meeting. I was told that they can only allow me to see the Gberemene of Gokana.

I demand to be allowed to see him. He was brought out from the shrine while I stood about twenty feet away. The Chief demand to speak to me privately but he was not allowed. He became annoyed and was forced back into the shrine while I was beaten up. I was ordered to go away now - You Komo and Abacha agent. I immediately left to the main road where my car was packed, damaged on the side I escaped for my dear life to Kpor my village.

As I was trying to narrate my ordeal to the people, I was informed that the Youths were coming for me. I immediately went into hiding. With all roads closed I could not pass to report to the Administrator, but early enough I arrived at Port Harcourt at 1.30 a.m. of 22/5/94.

By 6 a.m. of 22/5/94, I was leaving for the Administrator's house to report when I met His Royal Highness HRH. J.P. Bagia and one boy.

Up to this moment I had no knowledge of killing. I was not there. It was from the Gberemene of Gokana I learnt he was sure of the death of Mr. Albert Badey. I went to report to the Administrator and obtain permission for a security officer to accompany me to UPTH where His Royal Highness informed me that Alhaji Kobani and Chief Francis Kpai were receiving treatment.

On arrival at UPTH we were told that they have been discharged. Address was given to us to check them up. We went to report to the Administrator who authorised me and the Chief Security Officer - Government House to go and see them and obtain statement. I engaged the officer who accompanied me to the scene of the incidence at Giokoo so that we may obtain correct story.

Arriving at Giokoo, there was full military presence and bush combing which led to discovery of some burnt bones, and a burnt Volkswagen found miles inside the bush suspected to be used to burn my beloved elder statemen. This is to prove how aggrieved I am noting that my leaders whose one of the purpose of the meeting called for was to organise a suitable date for receiving me as their son honourably appointed as a Commissioner to represent them.

On our return from Gokana on the 22/5/94, I went to report to the Military Administrator. He was on press conference. I waited and accompanied him to his residence from where I was asked to see the SSS Chief.

The SSS Chief took me away for interrogation, detained me. Later obtained statement from me before I was later passed to SIIB on same date and detained till today.

Your Royal Highness, I am appealing to you to plead for my release because:-

1. I am completely innocent. I don't know why I am detained innocently having not played any part or even fore-knowledge of anything happening without informing for precautions.

I wondered in my detention why my Administrator who appointed me, assigned all Commissioners to go home and supervise, to ensure Consitutional Conference delegate election goes on smoothly in respective areas could not find time to listen to me before ordering me to be detained innocently without any cause or proof of involvement

Please ask the Administrator to order my immediate release.

By this request I am placing the responsibility of my life and the life of innocent remnants of Gokana and entire Ogoni into the hands of the Rivers State Council of Chiefs.

Your Royal Highnesses, you must take immediate action to save my life and that of innocent Ogoni's and the people of Gokana in particular now facing total massacre of the young, the old as bullets are being used to comb the bushes.

The Police and the Chiefs are capable to carry out all detective jobs; use of gun to comb bushes only succeed in killing more innocent citizens.

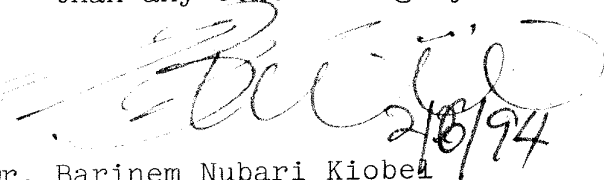
I have told the Police that the Gokana people have their means of detecting culprits and this can only be achieved through the co-operation of His Royal Highness and his Council of Chiefs. The advice have not been taken seriously.

"Now that all Gokana Chiefs, sons, daughters, aged men and women are being shot at as birds and bush animals resulting in mass killings, arrest of the innocent citizens, are we achieving result of identifying the culprits?"

**To sum up, I demand that:-**

1. Your Royal Highnesses ask the Administrator to release me immediately because I am innocent;
2. Ask the Administrator to order soldiers out of Gokana so that people can move freely and Chief with the help of police could work together peacefully;
3. The Chiefs are more capable of handling the matter judiciously and should be given the responsibility. "Or should Chiefs not be respected in Rivers State again?". Or I take my life if you fail me;
4. My Royal Highness being an illiterate have not been bold as

5. I very strongly condemn killing of our beloved illustrious sons - Chief Edward Kobani, Mr. Albert Badey, Chief Samuel Orage and T.B. Orage. I deeply mourn for them because I need them more than any other being my advisers in office.

  
2/6/94  
Dr. Barinem Nubari Kiobel  
Hon. Commissioner  
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism  
Rivers State.

2nd June, 1994.