

To: The President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

ARISE NIGERIA
8b Coldharbour Lane
London
SE5 9PR

NEVER AGAIN...Another Nigerian Killed Abroad

Arise Nigerians!!!

In June 2007 Mr Osamuyia Aikpitanhi (23) died on board the Spanish airline Iberia, while being forcibly deported from Spain.

In March 2008, British Airways officials and the police subjected Mr Ayodeji Omotade to torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and went further to eject 135 passengers (overwhelmingly Nigerians) for protesting the cruel treatment of a Nigerian who was being forcibly deported.

And in September 2008 Ekene Ojide (31) a Nigerian living in China was beaten to death by operatives of a private Chinese security firm after an alleged minor argument had ensued between them.

The late Ekene's elder brother Basil Ojide who travelled to China to collect his brother's corpse said the Chinese company and its authorities forced him (under duress as it were) to sign an agreement in accepting monetary compensation before the autopsy report was released to him.

It was also alleged that Nigerians who witnessed the murder and reported to the police were locked up and threatened to have their residential permit revoked if they testified against the security staff.

We as Nigerian citizens are horrified by this trend of barbaric human rights abuse and creeping culture of impunity. We are particularly outraged by the present case where it is alleged the Nigerian embassy in China took no formal action to provide assistance to the bereaved family or request an explanation from the Chinese authority.

The attitude and quality of consular service by Nigerian embassy officials towards Nigerians abroad is generally rated as a disgrace. We are usually embarrassment, disappointed or aggrieved each time we approach any of our embassies seeking consular support, protection or service. For the majority of Nigerians in the Diaspora, our experience of dealing with Nigerian embassies is tainted by tales of woe, crass incompetence, complacency and even a conceited, misguided perception of their duty to our compatriots. Nigerian embassies that ought to positively project the image of Nigeria, promote our national interests, protect and support Nigerians, are mostly an outpost for pampered political cronies, devoid of any patriotic mission, merely wheeling and dealing.

It is our view, therefore, that unless our home government makes it a state policy (or prioritising it) to insist that all Nigerians be treated with respect and their lives not be cheapened or degraded, we will continue to witness events such as this case of late Mr Ojide. It is common practice for foreign missions and the foreign office of nations around the world to see it as part of National assignment to proactively protect the interest of their citizens and when difficulties arise to ensure that citizens are continuously informed of the interventions and progress made in negotiating/discussing with relevant authorities. We can never accept the case of Nigerians being treated differently or less favourably than others under any circumstance.

In view of the foregoing, and the ominous silence of the Nigerian Ambassador to China on the brutal Murder of our compatriot under his watch, we the members of Arise Nigeria, (an organisation committed to amongst others; "to continually mobilise, organise, and improve the Nigerian polity, sensitise and generate democratic ideals and awareness in Nigerians and to provide for the expression of the political consciousness and concern of Nigerians issues pertinent to the development of Nigeria") hereby respectfully request the President of the Federal republic of Nigeria to do the following, in the service of human rights and his constitutional obligation to protect the integrity of Nigerians:

1. formally request the ambassador to publicly explain his actions
2. Sanction any erring staff whose duty it was to deal with this case
3. demand assurances from the Chinese government that Nigerians living in China be treated with respect just as Chinese citizens in Nigeria are well treated
4. demand explanation from the Chinese government on the alleged torture, cruel and inhuman treatment of Nigerians who where detained as witnesses to this murder
5. that all those Nigerians so subjected to degrading and inhuman treatment receive a formal apology from the Chinese government and appropriate, prompt and effective compensation therefrom
6. that Nigerians at home and abroad be kept informed of government intervention in this case and in all future incidences involving Nigerians living anywhere in the world with one difficulty or the other

We are by this notice calling on all Nigerians to join in this campaign effort to protect, defend and uphold the human rights and dignity of Nigerians worldwide, and that NEVER AGAIN shall any one of us suffer human rights abuse or loss of life with impunity. Whatever indignity that is done to a Nigerian any where, is an unacceptable violation that must be punished. Our government must demand and insist upon the reciprocal protection of it citizens world wide as we grant unto others in Nigeria.

We trust that our President shall promptly act upon this petition for protection, safety and security, and the defence of the human rights of Nigerians whether at home or abroad.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

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