

Stop Treating Our People As Second Class Citizens, Ijaw-Apoi Tells Edo State.

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17 December 2017

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The Ijaw Apoi people in Ese Odo local government area of Ondo state has called on the Federal Government to urgently intervene in the impending tension between the Ijaws and Binis in Edo state before it escalate into a serious crisis.

Addressing a press conference in Sabomi, the Kalasuwe of Ijaw Apoiland in Ese- odo, condemned in strong term the way the people of Okomu-Apoi Kingdom and other Ijaw clans in Edo state are being treated as second class citizens by the Edo state government and its monarch.

The community said, Okomu Apoi people are not subject to any traditional authority, also alleged marginalisation of Ijaw people in Edo state.

Reading the speech on behalf of the Ijaw Apoi traditional council and the people , the Barate of Igbobini, Femi Iji ,said that it is sad that the Okomu Apoi people are marginalised politically, traditionally and administratively.

While conderming the continued denial of the Ijaw people their inalienable rights to rule themselves on the basis of the false unfounded history by the Bini people, Iji said they are not happy that the Ijaw people in Edo state are being treated as second class citizens.

According to him, “We declare and confirm that the ancient Okomu-Apoi is an autochthonous kingdom, of immemorial existence as part of the Ijaw Niger Delta ethnic nationality and not subject or subordinate to any other traditional authority including the Bini kingdom and its monarchy.

“That the Edo State government should accord the traditional ruler of Okomu-Apoi its appropriate recognition in the First Class status, including other Ijaw kingdoms, as it has done for the other traditional rulers among the Bini, Ishan, Afenmai, Agbor and other ethnic groups in the state.

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“That it is so inhuman that the Ijaw territory that produces the wealth of the state, particularly of its abundant oil palm and rubber plantations, extensive forest reserves and crude oil production, which serve as the mainstay of the state economy, could be so unconscionably marginalized in terms of infrastructural development.

“We therefore call on the Edo state government for urgent redress in the interest of humanity. We also call on the Federal Government to urgently intervene in the brewing crisis between the Ijaws and Binis and urge that the Edo state Government do justice to

all for the much cherished peace.”

The Ijaw ethnic groups in Ondo however said their intervention became imperative to set the record straight and to appeal to the Edo State government to give sense of belonging to the Ijaws in the state like they enjoyed in Ondo state.

They said “Our intervention herein is to set the records straight in confirmation of the autochthonous status of Okomu kingdom, being an integral part of the Ijaw-Apoi and the aboriginal riverine Ijaw ethnic nationality.”

“The Ijaw ethnic nationality in Ondo state, compared to Edo, enjoys local political independence having a Local Government of our own; a permanent seat in the state House of Assembly; a permanent representative in the state Executive Council; permanent secretaries in the state civil service among other positions at the state level.

“Our children have several times represented the state in the House of Representatives of the National Assembly and have been appointed to the position of the Vice Chancellor of the state owned university, ambassador, High Court judge, Minister of the Federal Republic and presently the Deputy Governor and Governor of the state, among other top positions.

“The Bini people and the Edo state government need to take a cue from this civilised way of treating minorities.

“Our last visit to Okomu left a sour taste in the mouth in the crude marginalization of the ancient kingdom where there is not even a public primary school.