



The death of Fatima is the real APC betrayal

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ON Sunday, a pregnant woman and her children were killed at Isulo, Anambra State, along with six others identified as northern Nigerians. Initially, she was identified as "Fatima" but media reports later put her name as Harira Jibril. Fatima was one of her four children (the others were Khadija, Hadiza and Zaituna) killed along with her. Like several murders in recent times, the killings were captured on video by the psychopaths as a trophy. One does not need to see such a video to understand that an evil that can kill a woman and her children in such cold blood is pregnant and nursing a baby simultaneously.

The spate of killings emerging from that region of Nigeria is most intolerable. Nothing justifies any of it. I do not know it for a fact that the Indigenous People of Biafra/Eastern Security Network, whom most people accuse, are the ones behind the rising cases of gruesome murders but I do know that whoever is behind all of these incidences has lost control and can no longer rein in the maniac tendencies of their foot soldiers. Those who killed Harira Jibril, her children and those other northern compatriots went overboard to prove they lacked a conscience.

Before any IPOB apologist jumps at me with their usual defence that insecurity issues permeate Nigeria and the South-East region is not unique, I like to remind them that two things can be true at the same time. Yes, there is a massive insecurity problem confronting the whole country. Yes also, the spate of killings in the South-East has its own unique features of malevolence that must be addressed on those exact terms. Was it not the other day "they" killed a soldier and her fiancé, Private Gloria Matthew and Warrant Officer Audu Linus? On that same Sunday that Harira's death was reported, they had also beheaded a state house of assembly lawmaker, Okechukwu Okoye. Unfortunately, the lines between state-sponsored violence and the malice of a people who have found power without a concomitant sense of responsibility and accountability have long blurred. We are left with a set of killers whose madness has no discernible logic. What kind of folly drives anyone to kill a woman and her innocent children? To what end is all the barbarism?

It is terrible enough that some raging bands of killers have taken over certain states in Nigeria, it is truly frightening that the government seems thoroughly helpless. They cannot seem to control the noisome pestilence now raging through the country. From security issues to the economy, we are far worse off now than where we were when the retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari's regime took over power promising to address the insecurity problem urgently. At the time, Nigeria confronted one known set of terrorists. Today, acts of terrorism have become banal. The national redemption they promised has been betrayed many times over. Harira's death is another one of the series of their betrayals. What we are seeing is the fallout of their massive incompetence, lack of judiciousness and utter contempt for the complexity of Nigeria and the concomitant

competing interests that consequently arise.

Among some of our fellow citizens, the chants of "betrayal" as a response to the unfolding politics of the All Progressives

Congress have become something of a trite observation. Supporters of APC presidential aspirant, Bola Tinubu, weaponise the word against his opponent, Yemi Osinbajo, as if that is the only way to characterise their relationship as political rivals. From the plebians who glue the shards of their thoughts together with pieces of broken English to the supposedly high-minded intellectual, they all amazingly regurgitate "betrayal" like they were hand-fed with the term. The problem is not that they are entirely short of vocabulary but that they take national politics for Telemundo drama. Unfortunately for

their myopia, that is not where the betrayal that imperils Nigeria lies!

Just so we are clear, I do not care about either candidate (or even any of the one million aspirants gunning to run on the platform of the APC). The supposed fight between both aspirants is not my circus and neither one is my monkey. None of what is between those aspirants will improve my life and I am unmotivated to care about the outcome. What I do find telling is how political contest gets conjugated into a single story of "betrayal" when far more severe moral issues overwhelm us. Part of the malaise is an overexposure of the public to the cultish nature of the APC politics—the issues are never about social progress; every activity is oriented towards offering their fealty and always being seen as maintaining loyalty to their feudal lord. When you piece all of the instances of the accusations of "betrayal" and the rather compulsive swearing of allegiance to their godfather, the picture that emerges is pathetic. These people are beholden to a cult of personality. Their deep emotional investment in sustaining the pyramidal structure of the APC has blindsided them to any other possibility other than a life of subservience.

Their insistence in talking about the "betrayal" of one politician by the other in the face of all that beleaguers Nigeria is itself a betrayal of their limited understanding of the larger purposes of politics as means of improving our lives. There is

indeed a betrayal but it goes beyond the frivolous accusations being bandied against Osinbajo. Between 2014 (when the APC got into the presidential race with their candidate who would eventually become president) and now, we have not made any real progress. We have, in fact, regressed so badly that the entire eight years of the APC is a massive waste of the time of our lives. The betrayal lies in how every single promise of economic development and moral renewal of Buhari's regime remains undelivered. The death of Harira and her children is, for me, another grand betrayal. How does anyone see their unfortunate fates in the hands of maniacal gunmen and "betrayal" still registers as one politician contesting his counterpart?

Nigeria is presently at the stage where we have so come to terms with the evident impotence of Buhari and the inefficacy of his entire regime that we cannot even be bothered to hold him accountable for the increasing precarity of our lives. We seem to have reconciled ourselves to a presidency that picks its teeth while the country crumbles. For a man who came into power at a crucial phase in the life of the nation—a time some people genuinely believed enough in the possibility of Nigeria making a turn toward progress to mobilise themselves toward his electoral victory—Buhari betrayed the faith that people invested in him both morally and materially. If his vice, Osinbajo, is guilty of betrayal, it has nothing to do with competing against his fellow politician who would not have hesitated to throw Osinbajo under the bus if the price was right. Such contests between the men are the nature of politics and anyone who expects any more decency than that from men of their pedigree is probably too naïve to be commenting on politics. No, the true betrayal by Osinbajo is how much of what he represented as a professor of law and a pastor quickly dissipated in Aso Rock. Both he and Buhari turned out to be a mega scam. They are the real betrayal, and the fate of Harira shows that it is a most costly one too!

On a final note, I hope that the police at least apprehend the killers of Harira, Fatima, Khadija, Hadiza and Zaituna Jibril. Since those murderers allowed themselves to be featured in a video, there should be a way to track the phone from where the clip originated and hopefully find other leads. I hope the killers are brought to justice and quickly too. I hope they face painful deaths as a punishment for what they did. Since I read the sad news, I have been in deep despair. What manner of evil is this one again and when does it end?

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Salvo

"The siege, break-in from the roof and arrest of Sen Rochas Okorochia by EFCC operatives, are a telling example of the weakness of the Nigerian state. A lawmaker refusing to honour invitation and shutting the door against law enforcement officers? Imagine for one minute a US Senator refusing to honour an invitation from the FBI. Also..."

