

Convicted Boko Haram Chief Insane, Says Father

A distraught father of the convicted Boko Haram spokesman, Ali Sanda Konduga, yesterday denied his son's involvement in the activities of the Islamic sect, saying he has been a mental case since childhood.

At a press conference in Abuja, the elder Konduga condemned the summary trial and conviction of his son at an Abuja Magistrate's Court. He said the family thought had he would face a proper trial with legal representation.

• 'We'll appeal judgement'

From Kunle Akogun
in Abuja

tation "for us to explain the unfortunate circumstances surrounding his mental health."

Saying that the family had decided to appeal Konduga's conviction, the Second Republic parliamentarian, who was the leader of the defunct Great Nigerian Peoples Party in the House of

Representatives between 1979 and 1983, stressed, "Ali Sanda Konduga has faced mental challenges since his childhood and it is unfortunate that we now find ourselves in this situation."

On why the family failed to arrange legal representation for Konduga before his conviction, the septuagenarian said, "I never knew of his arrest until he was paraded on television

and arraigned in court."

The elder Konduga, however, apologised to Senator Ali Ndume, who was mentioned by his son

as one of the sponsors of the clandestine organisation and is currently in detention, as well as the entire elders of Borno State

"for the pain and embarrassment caused them on account of the purported claims of my son."

"We plead for understanding of all as we strive to ensure the review of his unfortunate and improper conviction without a counsel representation."

Fraud: Magistrate Decries Delay Tactics by Ogun PDP Stalwarts, Counsel

By Olawale Olaleye

the health of his clients noted with disappointments, attempts by the PDP stalwarts and their counsel to waste the time of the court.

The judge who claimed knowledge of the antics warned the PDP stalwarts not to make the court go tired of its patience

because attempts to continually waste the "precious time" of the court would no longer work.

She noted in strong terms that "it's most unfortunate that ministers in the temple of justice are the ones delaying early determination of the case whereas the public is sometimes misinformed that delay is caused by the courts."

Anyaoku: Africa's Democracy 'Still a Plant of Tender Growth'

Former Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, has said "democracy in Africa is still a plant of tender growth and so needs care and strengthening, and needs strengthening urgently."

Anyaoku said this on Saturday while delivering the opening address at the Chinua Achebe Colloquium on Africa held at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, United States.

Speaking on the "general issue of strengthening democracy in Africa", Anyaoku said, the issues connected with the building and consolidation of democracy in Africa today stem from two related sources - "the legacy of the old politics and the needs of the new."

Under the old style of politics, he said while opposition parties were not banned outrightly, the citizenry were made to perceive them as illegitimate organisations operating against the national will and interest.

This, he said, was made easy by the fact that the notion of political opposition did not exist in any indigenous African lexicon.

Anyaoku added that the campaign against opposition parties was usually coupled with various forms of oppression, which made opposition figures to defect to the ruling party.

He said while the old style politics which dominated the continent for three decades was now over, its legacy would take sometime to undo.

He added that this had cast a long shadow over the present efforts to build democracy in Africa.

According to him, in some

From Tokunbo Adedjoja
in Providence, USA

African countries, including those which had made transition from one party system to multi-party politics, opposition parties were still made to feel that they exist more on the surface.

The former diplomat further noted that the consultations that ought to proceed between government and opposition which would have helped, immensely, "to facilitate consensual government do not take place."

He also noted that chief among the challenges of consolidating democracy in Africa was the issue of governance, adding that it was the absence of good

governance and visionary leadership that was responsible for the political instability, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption and economic underdevelopment that had become widespread on the continent.

At the colloquium, which was an assemblage of reputed international scholars and distinguished diplomats, including former US Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Walter Carrington and his wife, Dr. Arese, the former scribe of the Commonwealth also paid tribute to Professor Achebe describing him as "a special African whom I am proud and honoured to call a compatriot and a fellow Igbo".

Four Malians Die in Accident

From Adibe Ememyonu
in Benin City

Benin Teaching Hospital mortuary, while the injured passengers were being treated at the hospital and a private clinic along Sapele Road, in Benin City.

THISDAY learnt that none of the passengers was identified to be a Nigerian. "Many of the passengers are from Mali and none could speak English," a source at UBTH said.

Consequently, the source revealed, officials of the State Security Service have been drafted to investigate the origins of the passengers and their mission.

Four persons identified as Malian nationals yesterday lost their lives, while 11 others sustained injuries, in a motor accident which occurred along the Benin/Agbor road.

The accident was said to have involved a commuter bus belonging to the "The Young Shall Grow" group and another vehicle whose particulars could not be immediately ascertained.

It was gathered that the commuter bus was trying to overtake a trailer when another vehicle hit it from behind.

As at press time, the bodies of the dead passengers were deposited at the University of

BRIEFLY

ANPP Youth Leader Killed

Another top politician was yesterday killed by suspected Boko Haram members in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital moment after his marriage. The politician, Alhaji Modunga Borif, until his death was the youth leader of All Nigeria Peoples Party ANPP in Mafoni ward of Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC). He was also the Chairman of ex-Councillors forum in the state.

According to eyewitness, Modunga was shot dead at about 1030am with two of his friends just about 40 minutes after his wedding.

Almajiri Education

The Anglican Bishop of Afikpo Diocese, Ebonyi State, Rt. Rev Paul A. Udogu yesterday faulted federal government's alleged expenditure of billions of naira on Almajiri education as well as the introduction of the Islamic Banking System in the country. In his Presidential Address/Bishop's Charge presented during the 2nd Session of the Synod of the Diocese at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Afikpo at the weekend, the Anglican cleric alleged that the federal government through the Minister of Education, Prof. Rukayat Rufai, was spending Billions of Naira to train future "Islamic fanatics", insisting that Almajiri education was not acceptable to his Church.

Awolowo Mourns Ojukwu

The Obafemi Awolowo Foundation has condoled with the widow of late Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, his entire family and the entire nation "on the sad loss of this great Nigerian." A statement signed by the foundation's Executive Director, Dr. Olatokunbo Awolowo Dosumu, described the late Ojukwu as "a leading Nigerian political figure, a fine officer and gentleman and one of our trustees."

Poly Students Hail Ajimobi

Governor Abiola Ajimobi of Oyo State on Friday received a standing ovation from the students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan for reverting their tuition fees back to what they were paying before it was increased by the Adebayo Alao-Akala's administration early this year. The governor, who is the Visitor to the institution, had gone there for the 27th convocation ceremony for the award of diplomas and prizes for the 2009/2010 graduands. As the governor was alighting from his vehicle, he was met by the students who were dancing and hailing him for coming to their rescue.

Harvest Thanksgiving

The adult annual Thanksgiving Service of the Assemblies of God Church, Isolo, Lagos holds today at the church's premises at No. 3, Metropolitan College Road, Off Ire-Akari Road, (Metro B/Stop) Isolo. A statement from Mr. Hope Njoku and Mr. Chimezie Anyanwu, Chairman and Secretary of the Harvest Committee respectively, said the programme would have as its theme "Celebrating God's Wondrous Works". A power-packed sermon will be conducted by the host pastor, Rev. E.C. Okeremgbo (Asst. Lagos District Superintendent).

Grace 2011

This year's Grace programme of the Household of God church, Oregun, Lagos comes up on Sunday, December 11, 2011 at the church's auditorium. Top dignitaries expected include Governor Peter Obi of Anambra state and Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe. The event will feature the Karis Award, which will be given to ace goal keeper of the Green Eagles, and the Enugu Rangers football team, Mr. Emmanuel Okala. Also, four charitable organisations will receive donations of N500, 000 each. They are, Pacelli School for the Blind and Partially Sighted, Sunshine Foundation, Little Saints Orphanage, and Spinal Cord Injuries Association.

PREPARING FOR PAYMENT...



• L:R Mr. Sam Okojere, CBN Assistant Director/Project Assurance Manager PSV 2020, Mrs Eunice King of Nigeria Inter Bank Settlement System and Mr C.C Efegi, Branch Controller CBN Uyo, at the CBN one day public sector enlightenment forum on end-to-end electronic payments which held in Port Harcourt... recently