

Bring Back Our Girls, Yes But What Of Our Country?



For the better part of the last two weeks, the international campaign in the media for the World Powers to assist the Nigerian Government to take swift, decisive and effective measures to rescue the over two hundred young school girls kidnapped on gun points by the dreaded armed Islamic Insurgents Boko Haram has heightened.

The global campaign started by some patriotic but highly connected Nigerian women have reached such a commendable degree that real World leaders like the United States President Mr. Barack Obama and the British Premier Mr. David Cameron have made several media interventions indicating that their respective countries were willing to offer critical military and scientific assistance to the Nigerian Government towards rescuing those girls. For once Nigeria has entered the international media focus even though it was for the very wrong reason because of the unfortunate rating of Nigeria as the festering ground for terrorism and all kinds of criminalities.

The pivotal involvement of such credible people like the former minister of Education and World Bank Vice President for the African region Mrs. Oby Ezewesili among other key officials of the United Nations office in Nigeria and of course the active collaboration of the organized civil society community and representatives of the local and international media in Nigeria has ensured that the intensive campaign aptly titled with the catch phrase of 'Bring Back Our Girls' has assumed larger-than-life stature globally to such an extent that many more citizens of the World in distant and remote nations have taken the initiatives to launch their own brand of Bring Back Our Girls Campaign all aimed at attracting international attention to the plight of these little girls kidnapped over three weeks ago by these terrorists.

The phenomenal role being played by users of the social media of Tweeters and the Face Book have also in no small measure contributed in sensitizing Nigerians and foreigners all over the World on the necessity for taking immediate, comprehensive, safe, effective and efficient actions to effect the rescue, release and return in safety of the over two hundred school girls in the captivity of the armed Islamic insurgents.

The campaign to get back our girls is worthwhile and praise worthy. Indeed this primitive and cruel action of these terrorists in abducting these young Nigerian girls and the purported threat on the social media of YouTube of the leader of the terrorists- Abubakar Shekau to sell these girls into slavery as his religion allows him to so do, has galvanized broad-based support from a cross segments of the usually fractionalized Nigerian societies to rally round under a united platform to demand action towards effecting the rescue of these abducted girls. Campaigning in the South East; North West and South West and also the oil city of Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta have added their valuable voices to the global call for these girls to be rescued rapidly before more harm come their way in the captivity of these brutal and sexually depraved terrorists.

The ongoing Bring -Back- Our -Girls Campaign has become one of the few unifying forces for a country eternally fragmented into ethnic and religious primordial camps made possible and sustained by the political elites who use these divisions among Nigerians to gain political relevance and negotiate for their own selfish and commercial interest.

It is a universal fact that apart from football matches in which the Nigerian national teams are involved, this ongoing campaign to free these kidnapped girls of Chibok in Borno state and the flame of patriotic flavor and passion building around it has surely become a strong unifying force which must and should be sustained long after these abducted girls are found. But here lies my worry. As soon as this girls are rescued or as soon this scenario of Boko Haram is effectively brought to an end or minimized operationally, Nigerians will still cling on to their medieval and primitive ethnic and religious cleavages and primordial agenda of tribe and the fight for political succession. There is no guarantee that the Judiciary will professionally and expeditiously handle cases involving high profile terrorists masterminds and the unprofessional conducts of both the police and officials of the justice sector are some of the set backs that have foisted this situation of insecurity and anarchy in Nigeria. Will this snail speed justice delivery be transformed in the spirit of this ongoing campaign around the issue of kidnap of these school girls? I have my doubts.

From the above postulations comes my next logical concern and interrogatory. Can we bring back our country from the strangling and suffocating hold of buccaneering and divisive reactionary forces bent on using everything within their reach to destabilize Nigeria? Will the rescue of these girls stop these anarchists who have stated without fear of contradiction that they will destroy Nigeria if the current President Good Luck Jonathan fails to field a Northern Candidate as the Presidential flag bearer of the PDP and if he succeeds in getting a second term in next year's poll?

This questions are crucial because only few months ago, a lot of Nigerians came out to the streets of

Nigeria and around the World under the banner of 'Occupy Nigeria' to press home the popular opposition to the planned move by the current administration to hike the purchasing pump price of petroleum products. But as soon the Nigerian state gave the assurance that it would not proceed with the anti-people's measure of withdrawing the subsidy on fuel, those Nigerians who practically slept on the streets of Nigeria for weeks until their reason for the agitation was achieved, immediately went back into the comfort of their rooms and Nigeria returned to the business-as-usual mode even as pump price of fuel went up in different parts of Nigeria except Abuja.

How can we sustain the campaign and transform it into the catch phrase of 'Bring- Back -our -Country' soon after we achieve a successful rescue of these girls abducted by the violent insurgents?

Going forward, we have to do the following. First, Nigerians in overseas who are truly desirous of seeing that Nigeria develops and become truly a democracy should work out transparent measures and strategies of supporting the pro-democracy and pro-development activities and mandates of credible organized civil society community in Nigeria so these organizations can effectively mobilize Nigerians both in the rural and urban communities to own the process of governance and become active participants in the running of their affairs. Good Governance has taken flight in Nigeria and if democracy must take a pride of place in Nigeria and serve the collective interest of all Nigerians, then the Nigerian based local Non-Governmental organizations with identifiable offices in towns, cities and rural communities in Nigeria must be supported by way of donating funding support for these groups to engage in the process of enlightenment of Nigerians to stand up to be counted as good Nigerians.

The current laissez-faire and 'I-don't- care attitude' of most ordinary Nigerians who see government business as not their immediate concern must be changed progressively through massive mobilization and sensitization using the media as effective sources of campaign and these events take a lot of financial and human resources which most of these civil society and non-governmental groups operating with lean resources can not afford.

Besides, most donor organizations from Europe and America have consistently offered funding assistance to only few local groups set up by friends of these foreign embassy officials in Abuja and Lagos and this clique has made it impossible and impracticable for funding assistance to trickle down to other credible groups that have no friends in these foreign embassies based in Nigeria.

Nigerians abroad who are doing well and wish Nigeria well should also support through donations in cash and kind the activities of community based organizations to carry out the education, information, training and sensitization of the rural dwellers on the need to safeguard transparent and good

governance even at that micro level. It is a fact that less than 15% of Nigerians are fully aware of their human rights constitutionally guaranteed and what the supreme body of Nigerian law say should constitute the fundamental principles and objectives of government policies. These are the steps we need to take at the local level to begin the process of bringing back our country.

The next national campaign we must undertake is to vigorously wage a war against impunity and corruption at all levels. There is corruption in all segments of our society and the most painful aspect is the widespread corruption in the Nigerian judicial arm. Recently, a Federal High Court freed some Lebanese arrested by the security agencies for arms smuggling and the discovery of large arms cache in their Kano state residence was shocking but yet the court set them free and they return to doing their business of selling super market in Abuja. Impunity and corruption must be stamped out by all means from the body politics of Nigeria if we must bring back and/or rather take back our country. The Nigerian Borders must be secured so as to Bring Back Our Country and save Nigerians from infiltrators who are bombing Nigeria from all fronts with sophisticated weapons and firearms.

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