

## **An Open Letter to Graça Machel**

**Dear Mama Graça,**

**Re: Your Solidarity Message to Sanusi Lamido Sanusi**

It is with due respect that I decided to write to you today. We met at a number of fora over time but none as close as in April 1995 when I visited South Africa with the plan to meet with Madiba and Archbishop Desmond Tutu seeking their respective voices over the incarceration of General Olusegun Obasanjo by General Sani Abacha on that trumped up coup. I did not succeed in meeting Madiba. Archbishop Tutu told me over the phone that he was going to meet Abacha in Nigeria only on MKO Abiola and would not add Obasanjo. With the assistance of General Bantu Holomisa, you agreed to meet me at the airport before your check-in to Mozambique. I remember your being very concerned on my brief and your promise to push Madiba and South Africans not to let go on Olusegun Obasanjo as soon as you return to South Africa. I remain grateful to you for that audience.

I hope you do not object to my calling you Mama. Your two former husbands continue to be revered. Baba Madiba was exactly same age group with my late father. In Ijebu age grade system they are both Egbẹ Obalola. As a Yoruba, the respect for anyone that could be my father automatically transfers to his wife irrespective of her age. And in this instance, you are achieving much yourself for Africa, meaning you have earned respect in your own right.

I read your emotion laden letter to deposed Emir Sanusi within 24 hours of his dethronement. His removal from office, you portrayed as resulting from his "courageous efforts to speak truth to power" etc. This sort of statement got me thinking that your Assistants are doing you disservice by not doing detailed research on Nigeria's Constitution and the person of the deposed Emir. I was wondering also if the deposed Emir had hoodwinked you at the UN Secretary-General's body of Members of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates. Or whether you just felt you must stand by an Advisor to the International Board of Advisors of The Graça Machel Trust irrespective of where that person stands on Omoluabi values.

Since colonial times, traditional authorities knew/know that they are to wear their regalia, enjoy the pomp and pageantry as they deceive their poor people by pretending to be in charge of affairs. I come from royalty in my little village of Òdoşenlú but knew that I must not enter the fray to be an Ọba as some people encouraged when there was a vacancy. I knew very well that I would lose my freedom of speech and must take permission to travel and was not ready to do so. Gladly another Prince got the unanimous nodding of my community and became the Ọba and we will all stand by him. Deposed Emir Sanusi knew very well what he was getting into but needed to use the throne to escape from one of his flippant oratory against Goodluck Jonathan that earned him suspension as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. He did not get his facts right and started adjusting figures.

I can never hold brief for Governor Ganduje, not with his video that went viral. I read the detailed attempt of General Abdulsalami Abubakar's Committee that tried to reconcile the Governor who saw Emir Sanusi II as being involved in partisan politics in Kano. The deposed Emir was advised to operate within the norms of tradition on political affairs and the Governor to take another look at some of the complaints of deposed Emir Sanusi that included the status of the new Emirates that Kano was broken into and the Governor to desist from trying to remove him from office. They both agreed. But the deposed Emir went to Kano and made the salutary speech that I would endorse any day even if he has done very little himself to address poverty in Kano. The speech was very political as it was to praise Gov Nassir El-Rufai who a number of

kingmakers are suggesting is a Presidential material. Maybe you now understand why El-Rufai is dishing out posts to the deposed Emir. So much political chicanery and shenanigans. By the way, do you know that a small minority have dominated a larger majority in that part of Nigeria for centuries. Please ask your Assistants to read the Abdulsalami Abubakar's Committee report as passing reference was made to this dimension of the problem. The report was leaked into the internet.

Mama Graça, politics is a major part of the problem and not some truth being told power. Courage is a small part of the bigger picture.

Yourself, like Antonio Guterres, only know about people who shout loudest. You never pay attention to their lives to see if they practice what they preach. If you asked questions on the lip service that the deposed Emir Sanusi Lamido Sanusi pays to SDGs as opposed to actions, you would not be writing about his "being a bold inspiration for leaders to hold themselves to account". Has he been holding himself to account?

The deposed Emir while he was the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, had embarked on an apparent effort, as he claimed, to pursue all bad debtors. He started and got Banks to publish some names. How do I know if what was published were all there was as bad debts? I cannot tell. How do I know what happened to a trickle of the debts that were repaid? The system was opaque to the un-initiated like myself. He was reported to have played a major role in the setting up of AMCON that reportedly acquire toxic debts. The jury is out on this institution that has allowed official brigandage to continue in the banking system as people steal depositor's money through lending with and without collateral and favored people (especially part of the Kings College mafia) and powerful ethnicities escape untouched or are normally left with so much after corrupt sharing. And the inequalities and inequities in Nigeria are heightened contrary to the expectations of the SDGs.

Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, wielding the powers of the Governor of the CBN, went on to take over a few banks deemed or declared insolvent (whether they were or not) and sold them to new buyers under new names. Intercontinental Bank Plc fell within this period. The processes of transfer of the Intercontinental Bank remain shrouded in secrecy. What about the ownership of the succeeding institutions and debts write-offs that accompanied these moves that impoverished the country and the people? Has the deposed Emir rendered account? In some countries, he would be brought into the public arena to render accounts as you would certainly expect.

Mama Graça, what can I tell you about Governor of CBN Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's profligacy in doling out Nigeria's patrimony as it pleased him? He called it corporate social responsibility but late Pius Adesanmi called it Corporate Social Irresponsibility. Why do we have a budget, if the head of our national bank can act outside that framework and dole money out by fiat but claiming he had a board and the President did not object? More so, when a calculus of the distribution did not measure to the so-called Federal Character enshrined in our Constitution. Your Assistants can give you a summary from so many write-ups of Pius Adesanmi in 2014.

These efforts were well before the to-be-Royal Majesty became a Whistleblower on the shenanigans he claimed to be seeing at the NNPC. He was confusing over how much money was being stolen. And this is a part I want to call your attention to: get your assistants to cross-check on "alternative facts" being spewed to impress people like yourself who have very little time for details. For instance, is it true that poverty has a religious character in Nigeria? There are more Muslims in the Southwest of Nigeria than Christians. Maybe we ought to dig deeper on his data and stop lapping them up like lazy dogs.

However, there was agreement that billions, in US dollars, were missing. The PDP government in power, at that time, rather than pay the CBN top man the returns for being a Whistleblower, made sure Sanusi

Lamido Sanusi was suspended from office and so, the enfant terrible, eventually lost the CBN treasure trove to Emezie but inherited the huge savings late Emir Ado Bayero had put aside for the rainy day at the Kano Emirate Council. Please ask your Assistants to give you a summary of point by point account of Jaafar Jaafar on how that money was spent. The deposed Emir would not disclose what he inherited from his predecessor and how he has spent it more so when he claims it was his own personal money he used in refurbishing the palace. He claimed his named friend asked what to do for him. He chose Rolls Royce that Jaafar Jaafar supplied details on purchases about as well as airfare of retinue to show grandeur around the world. I witnessed one of these myself in Khartoum. He relegated the then President of Sudan to a small VIP as he occupied the space as Lagbaja incarnate. I was surprised when he removed part of the regalia and ate like every other human being inside a confined space that I was lucky to have a seat at - thanks to the UN.

Mama Graça even if the fleet of Rolls Royces were from friends, I am sure you must be wondering why he did not ask those friends to endow institutions to get Almajiris off the streets of Kano. After all, the dethroned Emir appeared to claim he was interested in education for the poor through repeated advocacy. Or better still, you would remember the child he claimed died in the palace as the mother was waiting in line to receive less than \$5 from him the potentate to buy medicines. Would it not have been progressive if whatever late Emir Ado Bayero left was used for supplementary medical institutions in the name of the emirate? Why should a woman have to wait in line to receive less than \$5 from the Emir himself? Well, as we say colloquially: What's my problem as a Yorùbá man, as to the management of the Kano Emirate Council's savings? After all, as my people say, Gàmbarí pa Fulani, kò lẹ́jọ́.

His private marital affairs should be of interest to a champion of education for the girl child. To start with, as he pontificates about the ills of polygamy, Mama Graça, have you bothered to ask him how many wives he has? And along that line, how many children in a situation in which yourselves are expressing concern over the population of Africa in 2030/2050? Is he a great role model as you seem to be implying in your letter?

More importantly, for somebody you seem proud of as speaking truth to power, have you asked for details about Sa'adatu Barkindo-Musdafa, daughter of the Lamido of Adamawa, Muhammadu Barkindo-Musdafa, with who he started a relationship that resulted in marriage on the basis of what they call child-bribe? Exchange of Princes on the lives of young impressionable young women. Or did you lap up the claim that he would not have carnal knowledge of her till she can take it (after studying Computer Science) in the eyes of the Westerners that he constantly courts? Maybe he won't. But why do it at all? Because he can afford it? Or because he is a 'big man' in Nigeria? The little that's expected of you and senior brother Antonio Guterres is to ask questions about the example this gives on girl child that you both are laudably speaking up about. Yes, she was 18 and he 54 but was this princely transaction in the interest of that teenager? Could she have said no? Please don't expect Amina to tell it as it is to both yourself and Antonio. She knows that she has to return to Nigeria and will not bite any finger that fed her.

You and I are agreed he should not have been dethroned without due process. More importantly, he should not have been held in the so-called banishment, which is anachronistic. But are you not wondering as I am, as to why he is not ready to fight to be reinstated? Could it be because, the people of Kano have seen through him as they readily welcomed his successor? Or is it because he now wants to be President of Nigeria as some are saying in spite of his saying politics is not for him? I know deceit is part of the game in politics. You keep what you are after close to your chest until there is the opportunity to strike when your adversaries least expect. I really don't know what he is up to and wish you could help us by reaching his inner thoughts when next you meet.

As a Nigerian, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi is free to run for office. I know not to believe what he says only but focus on what he does. I am of course worried about Nigeria in his hands given how he managed the CBN and Kano Emirate Council. The latter got broken up under him as he followed the footsteps of his grandfather into deposition. We cannot afford to have Nigeria handled the same way Kano traditional affairs were handled.

Mama Graça, do you know that some Nigerians are calling for his head over a claim I am yet to research into in detail? If he continues to be flippant in his do as I say but not as I do, I will not be surprised if he is dragged formally before the courts. You would have thought that a courageous individual as you described him would not use the courts to stop investigations. In fact, you should encourage him to open up and prove to the world that he has nothing to hide. He says he did not inherit the kind of money being stated. Fine, records are available at Banks to transparently answer that. A hero as you are portraying him should boldly step forward to clear his name. People like yourself can offer to observe to ensure that he is well treated under acceptable precepts of the rule of law.

My letter, in response to yours is much longer. I apologize. I hope you will spend some time to read me and ponder whether you still want to be remembered for having written: "Your convictions are powerful ones that ring loudly in the hearts and minds of all those who value human dignity and equality and the causes you are fighting so steadfastly for cannot be silenced". Mama Graça please take the pains to know more about issues you want to dabble into before entering into the fray.

Sincerely Yours,

**Babafemi A. Badejo, Ph.D**