



NCMG PEACE AWARD





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African Solutions to African Challenges

*The NCMG Peace Award recognize and honour
individuals and organizations that exhibit
exemplary leadership, as well as make outstanding
contribution to the pursuit of peace,
justice building, which strongly enhance
the capacity of people to live in
peace and harmony*





Heroes Of Peace Celebrated



Former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon presenting the NCMG Special Recognition Award to the family of late Justice Kayode Eso, founding Chairman, NCMG International

The activities of Boko Haram brought the northern part of Nigeria to its knees and caused humanitarian disasters. During the devastating periods, there were men and women who expended time and resources to arrest the situation as well as manage the humanitarian challenges that ravaged innocent citizens. On November 1 2017, a ballroom in Lagos, Nigeria was filled to capacity as hundreds gathered to celebrate and honor personalities whose contributions, sacrifice and selfless commitment to peace and justice are hardly recognised. The ceremony was the debut of the NCMG Peace Award in celebration of the 21st Anniversary of the non-profit organisation; NCMG International.

In her welcome address, Prof. Isabella Okagbue, NCMG Peace Award Committee Chair emphasized the essence of NCMG Peace Award as:

"A strong commitment towards building a just and sustainable Nigeria and by extension, Africa. In fulfillment of this commitment, the NCMG Peace Award shall honour individuals and organizations that continually make exemplary commitment and demonstrated outstanding contribution to the pursuit of peace especially in crisis and conflict zones".

The core message of peace was further amplified by Bishop Matthew Kukah, Chairman, NCMG Peace Award, Panel of Judges ;

"Nigeria's severe fractures have shown no sign of healing despite great efforts at medication. We are unsure whether the problem is the poor diagnosis or the quality of the caregivers. Either way, like the great fall of humpty dumpty, fixing our dreams back is proving an insurmountable challenge... This is where the NCMG Peace Award comes in. Although we often say that peacekeeping forces have really no peace to keep in Africa, there are pieces of peace scattered around the landscape. It is a matter of looking in the right place. For, amidst all the chaos, there are many gallant men, women, young people who are doing great things and need to be recognized."



The first award, a posthumous "NCMG Special Recognition Award" was given to the family of the organization's founding Chairman, Justice Kayode Eso. In introducing the award, Kehinde Aina, Founder, NCMG International described the late jurist as a man of outstanding intellect whose exemplary life was dedicated to the service of law and order and the dispensation of true justice, equity and fairness to all. The Award was presented to the family by the former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, GCFR, who described him as a devout Christian, whose friendship he greatly appreciated especially during their prayer fellowship for many years.

The winner of the "NCMG Peace Builder" award category was Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State for his outstanding contributions in dealing with devastating consequences brought to Borno State as a result of the mayhem caused by the dreaded Boko Haram. One of the major highlights of the evening was the announcement of Mrs. Yana Galang as the winner of the "NCMG Outstanding Woman in Peacebuilding" category. As a co-founder of the "Parents of the Abducted Chibok Girls Association", whose young daughter is yet to be found, Yana Galang continues to creatively and courageously pursue peace as an end to the insurgency raging their town. Standing strong in the face of great loss and devastation, standing in the gap and weaving threads of God's mercy into the fabric of everyday life of the other parents of the missing girls, her award received a standing ovation. In what would appear to be recognition of change makers in the north-east part of Nigeria, the #BRINGBACKOURGIRLS Campaign won the "NCMG Institutional Peace-builder" category. The #BRINGBACKOURGIRLS Initiative is a diverse group of citizens that began the crusade and continues advocating for the speedy and effective search of the abducted Chibok girls by Boko Haram and for a rapid containment and quelling of insurgency in Nigeria. Rather surprisingly, when the time came to announce the winner of the "NCMG Justice Builder" category, Prof. Isabella Okagbue indicated that the Panel of Judges were unable to choose an outright winner from the five nominees. According to her, "NCMG International believes in due process, the decision of the Panel of Judges must be respected".

The twenty-first Anniversary of NCMG International which heralds the NCMG Peace Award is indeed a new flagship in the string of "firsts" by the organisation which has become recognised as the leading voice of mediation and arbitration practice in Africa. As indicated by Justice Ayotunde Phillips, Regional Chair, NCMG International, West Africa, "NCMG International is desirous of seeing a society that is devoid of devastating conflicts and this desire underlines its reverence for peacemakers who have expended so much towards creating lasting peace, either through post conflict humanitarian actions or even activities geared towards preventing the society from degenerating into conflicts."



NCMG PEACE AWARD: GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

The NCMG Peace Award constitute an exciting next step in NCMG International's belief and commitment to a just and sustainable Africa where the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is acknowledged, human rights are respected, social justice is maintained, and where all persons are free to develop themselves, lead meaningful lives and actively contribute to their own well-being as well as their communities. The guiding principles for selection for the NCMG Peace Award are:

Peace Building

We believe that power grows not by force but from participation, dialogue and cooperation. The culture of peace rejects violence in all of its forms, including war and the culture of war. In place of domination and exploitation by the strong over the weak, the culture of peace respects the rights of everyone, economic as well as political. It represents a caring society which protects the rights of those who are weak, such as children, the handicapped, the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

Access to Justice

It is our avowed commitment to promote Access to Justice where every person has a right to a dignified life, irrespective of religion, belief, political opinion, race, gender, sexual orientation or marital status. We seek a just and sustainable world where people are protected by universal human rights, while the fairer distribution of wealth and equality of opportunity is ensured. Equal justice under the law is not merely a caption on the front of a court building, it is

perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists. It is fundamental that Access to Justice is at the heart of rule of Law. It is the ability of a disputant to avail himself of the justice system to vindicate his interest. Our legal system provides us with the opportunity to seek and obtain justice when our rights have been violated and a forum for redress when we have been wronged.

Good Governance

It is our hope that by rewarding good governance culture and highlighting the growing phenomenon of corruption, leaders would become more accountable and decision making more transparent.

Corruption crushes the potential benefits of free market forces and this affects economic progress and in turn social development. In order for Africa to succeed and compete with the developed world, we have to rid the continent of corruption and foster a culture of good governance. This criterion is designed to meet this need.



Former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon exchanges pleasantries with Elder Nathaniel Okoro as Pastor Shyngle Wigwe watches



Lady Maiden Ifeoluwa in a warm embrace with Yana Galang, winner of the Outstanding Woman in Peacebuilding



Gen. Yakubu Gowon, Chief Emeka Anyaoku and Amb. Kunle Adeyemi



General Yakubu Gowon, Amb. Audrey Ajose and Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Former Commonwealth Secretary General



Chief Obafemi Olapade, Senator Daisy Danjuma, Gen. T. Y. Danjuma, Mr. & Mrs. Ladipo and Dr. Mohammed Bulama



Amb. Ajose, Hon. Justice Babatunde Adejumo and Hon. Justice A.O. Obaseki-Adejumo



Kehinde Aina, Prof. Isabella Okagwue and Justice Ipaye



Guests during the opening session of the program



Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Justice Hakeem Oshodi and Justice Bankole-Oki

"LORD, MAKE US INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE"



For most people including some in the audience, the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi is already well known. The prayer is titled, Lord, Make us Instruments of Peace. It is not enough to love the song. It is important to understand the context of the song and the best way is to catch a little glimpse of the life of the man who finally became known as St. Francis of Assisi.

At birth, his mother named him, Giovanni, that is, John. But his father, like all men, thought it was necessary to provide context for the name of his young son. After all, women conceive, nurture a baby in the womb, with hardly any external help. After birth, her job done, it falls on the man to step up and decide what name he wants his son to bear. So, in this case, Giovanni became Francis for simple reason that at his birth, his very wealthy merchant father had been on a business trip to France!

Being from such a wealthy family, it was naturally expected that Francis would take over his father's business as he already worked there. However, he joined the army of Assisi in their war against Perugia, a war they lost and Francis was taken prisoner. His story

is long and I will not bore you with it as I know very little of it myself. However, two astonishing things happened: Francis would later abandon his father's business, give up the great future of wealth and power, turn to Christ and finally, reverse the tide of history by elevating poverty to wealth and turning wealth into poverty. Secondly, he would actualize these contradictions by going on the start a movement that would later change the face of Catholic Christianity.

What is most important for the purpose of this very short keynote address is the lesson that the world, but most especially we in Nigeria must learn in responding to the call of God as agents of peace. Secondly, is the need to highlight a sense of service as the golden rule of our lives and as one way of responding to the opportunities that God has given to us.

It is very difficult to hide the sense of shame and the choking humiliation that arises from the helplessness that one feels. It is shocking to see how the culture of an innocent cultural social norm, the owambe, has turned into one of the highest expressions of our moral bankruptcy. This culture, fed and nurtured by musicians who turned outright begging and praise singing into an art form has now turned into an embarrassing theatrical expression of the summary of decadent and corrupt society looks like.

As the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Charles Soludo embarked on a high profile campaign against what he called; the abuse of the naira, his effort was met with stiff opposition. His target was not so much the criminals whose round tripping culture had ruined the value of our currency and economy, but the entire Nigerian society which had turned the naira into a toilet tissue whose mutilation has become part of the rhythmic revelry that had come to characterise the social landscape of Nigerian celebrations. He lost the war even before it started.

Today, we see the wives, children; friends of the rich and mighty do the same now with the dollars and other currencies in the big cities of the world such as New York, London or Paris. We have seen pictures of the children of the rich lying on beds of dollars and naira, we have seen huge sums of money splashed at

birthday, wedding or graduation parties of the children of the rich and mighty who constitute part of the army of robbers who have overtaken the landscape.

We do not need to look far to know how and why the country remains in a state of volatility, why we have never stood still for us to contemplate creating a society is stable. Violence is the most common currency in our national life. Domestic violence, armed robbery, cult and gang wars, sorcery, ritual murders and so on have become part and parcel of our national life.

Today, the lack of peace is another way of speaking to the yawning and gapping inequalities that have grown over time in our society, a situation in which, before our very eyes, criminals have not only invaded the public space, but seek nobility by recycling their criminality into the political space. Today, across the political spectrum, from top to bottom, the society is filled up with men and women of questionable character, men and women who ought to be nowhere near public institutions are now in government.

Today what we call corruption is only an external metaphor for understanding the terrible mess that has permeated and become part of our society's DNA. Who would have imagined that we would be where we are today with our so-called war against corruption? It beggars belief that those who thought corruption was merely a case of people stealing money forgot that nepotism, favouritism, and turning a blind eye to the sins of our relatives and friends is a far worse form of corruption than merely stealing money. Before our very eyes, the moral fiber of our society is coming unstuck. There is very little moral character left to drive the nation.

The decision by the NCMG to chart a new course in the area of tonight's awards speaks to the larger issue of the need for us to look closely at the state of our nation, to look out to see voices of inspiration, men and women of courage whose actions point to the possibility of a new society. NCMG makes the case very clearly that: The Awards honour individuals and organizations that continually make exemplary commitment and outstanding contribution to the pursuit of peace, justice building, corporate citizenship, and youth innovation while championing the capacity of humanity to live in harmonious adjustment with one other.

We commend this organization for exploring a new path that we hope will continue to call attention to the efforts of men and women whose contributions are

changing the face of our society. We congratulate the awardees and commend the nominees. It is a victory of another kind that your work has been identified. This exercise is not a contest and I think in the end, we are all winners in our different ways.

We cannot resolve the problems of our society today by the force of arms. We may be right to celebrate the fact that we have curtailed the excesses of Boko Haram, or that we have tamed the Shi'ites or IPOB. We do not know where El Zaczacky is nor do we know where Kanu is. This is not the way to run a democracy. The protection of civil liberties is at the heart of our democratic quest and the guarantee of a peaceful society. Our loud silence could sooner than later become a stanza in the hymn of complicity.

This country must quickly return to the path of sanity and due process. Indeed, winning a war of guns is the easy part. The war for ideas and values is a more difficult one to win. By whatever name we call it, we have to turn a different direction very quickly. Restructuring may already be causing ripples in the fact that it has become a battle cry for some and a song of victory for others. Either way, as the saying goes, a rose is still a rose, no matter what name it is called. Whether we use deodorant or insecticide, the important thing is that the room requires some fumigation.

We started with St. Francis of Assisi and I want to end with him. As I said, he it was who turned poverty into wealth and wealth into poverty. We are told, one day, disposed of all his money and decided to embrace a life of absolute poverty. Today, the world knows better. He remains our apostle of peace and I want to end with a verse from his famous song, Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace. When we look at the amount of hatred, violence, greed, prejudice and all the ingredients of war in our society, we cannot but fall back on this prayer both for ourselves and for the larger society.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

Let us all go out and become in our own ways, instruments of peace, in our homes, our communities and our society. God bless you all.

Bishop Matthew Kukah



NCMG INTERNATIONAL – WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1996, NCMG International is an independent, non-profit and non-governmental membership-based organization committed to access to justice and peace building in Africa

As a vibrant and active member of the global community, we are headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. In recognition of our unwavering and passionate commitment to Africa, we have administrative and operational offices in Ghana, Kenya, Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria.

Our primary focus is to make a significant and positive impact on access to justice and peace building through the reengineering and advancement of Nigeria's justice system. The fundamental principles guiding our work are universally recognised human rights and basic principles like human dignity, solidarity and social justice.

NCMG International's approach to access to justice and peace building is to link our knowledge and expertise with those of our partners to support and participate in the development of local

and international strategies for change. We leverage our competence with the collective intelligence of our partners to develop bespoke solutions to entrenched challenges in the Nigerian judicial system, within the government, MDAs and corporations among others. Through the establishment of multi-door courthouses, corporate focused programs and collegial partnerships, we have acquired leadership status in the planning, design and implementation of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) projects in Africa.

The NCMG International Governing Board is composed of distinguished personalities and international citizens. The Global Board is chaired by a former Chief Justice of Nigeria; Justice Mohammadu L. Uwais, GCON; while Justice Ayotunde Phillips is the Regional Chair, West Africa and Justice James Ogoola is the Regional Chair of the East African Region. The organisation was founded by Kehinde Aina, a partner with the law firm of Aina Blankson.

OUR VISION

“ To be the leading Institution for Access to Justice & Peace Building in Africa ”

NOTABLE QUOTES

"We are all too aware that peace is more than just the absence of war. The dark clouds still hovering above our landscape...are matters of serious concern. Thus we seek to examine how we can further co-ordinate our efforts to bring about lasting peace. We should not, for a moment, forget the mothers and fathers, the children and grandchildren who yearn for our urgent intervention to bring them more than just a respite from war. They deserve lasting peace and security. Only in this way shall we deserve the accolades often heaped on us as leaders.

Weaving all the ideals of peaceful resolution of conflict, human right and good governance together is the vexing issue of security. For it is not merely good logic but the reality of life, that, in the end society's freedom from hunger, ignorance and disease is, more often than not, the dividing line between war and peace. The pursuit of the collective well-being of humanity to ensure that all persons live life to the full, is an ideal whose time has come".

Nelson Mandela
acceptance speech at the 1995 Africa Peace Award.

"If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective."

Martin Luther King Jr.

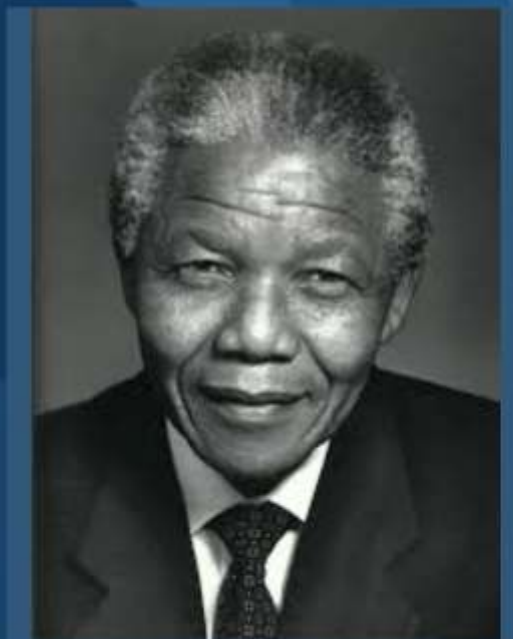
"Peace does not rest in the charters and covenants alone. It lies in the hearts and minds of all people. So let us not rest all our hopes on parchment and on paper, let us strive to build peace, a desire for peace, a willingness to work for peace in the hearts and minds of all of our people. I believe that we can. I believe the problems of human destiny are not beyond the reach of human beings."

John F. Kennedy

"There is a higher court than courts of justice, and that is the court of conscience. It supersedes all other courts."

Mahatma Gandhi





“For me, this occasion is laden with emotion. Certainly when an award is granted, it does evoke strong feeling. But that feeling is multiplied many-fold when the award is indigenous and carries the mantle of Mother Africa”.

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