



Oct 1967 Asaba Massacres

Annual Memorial Anniversary

9th October 2021



At the Palace of His Royal Majesty,
ASAGBA (PROF) CHIKE EDOZIEN, CFR, JP
The Asagba of Asaba
Ezenei Quarters Asaba, Delta State



His Excellency

MUHAMMADU BUHARI, GCFR

**President, Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces
Federal Republic of Nigeria**



His Excellency
SENATOR DR. IFEANYI OKOWA
Governor, Delta State



His Royal Majesty
ASAGBA (PROF) CHIKE EDOZIEN, CFR, JP
The Asagba of Asaba



Her Royal Majesty Agunwanyị
MODUPE CLARA EDOZIEN
The Wife of Asagba of Asaba

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Annual Memorial Anniversary of the October 1967 Asaba Massacre

*This year's events are dedicated in Honour of
Esteemed Asaba women,
for their suffering, sacrifice and unique exertions
during the tragic episode and its aftermath; A
nd the Symbolic Commissioning of the
Memorial Monument Project*

*Mothers of the Day
HRM Agunwanyi Modupe Edozien
Chief Mrs. Theresa Odogwu
Chief Mrs. Jumoke Asiodu
Chief Theodora Giwa-Amu
Enyi Darling Monu-Olarenwaju*

*Date:
9th October, 2021 Time: 11.00am*

*Venue:
Asagba's Palace, Oshimili South LGA, Delta State.*

RSVP

*Chief Chuck Nduka-Eze
Isama Ajie of Asaba
Chairman Asaba Memorial Committee
08033043000*

*Chief Pat. N. C. Ndili
Ihonor of Asaba
Palace Secretary
08063654668*

Annual Memorial Anniversary of the October 1967 Asaba Massacre Venue: Asagba's Palace, Oshimilli South LGA, Delta State.

DATE: 9TH OCTOBER, 2021 TIME: 11:00AM

- 11:00 – .am Arrival of the Asagba*
- 11:00 – 11:15am Arrival of the Agu Nwanyi accompanied the Mothers of the Day.*
- 11:15 – 11:20am National Anthem by Mr. Nwamu (Synergy Choir)*
- 11:20 – 11:30am Breaking of Kolanut*
- 11.30 – 11.45am Greeting of Asagba*
- 11:45 – 11:55am Prayers by Rev. Fr Leonard Biachi and Pastor Ituah Ighodalo*
- 11.55 – 12:05pm Welcome Address and Introduction of the Monument Project*
- 12.05 – 12:25pm Address by Omu of Asaba and Mothers of the Day*
- 12:25 – 12:45pm Royal Dance*
- 12.45 – 1.35pm Keynote Address by Ambassador Joy Ogwu*
- Entertainment and Refreshments*
- 1.35 – 1.45pm Interlude – Mr. Nwamu (Synergy Choir)*
- 1.45 – 2.00pm Address by Major General Ahmed Ibrahim Taiwo*
- 2.00 – 3.00pm Reading the Names Victims of Asaba Massacre*
- 3.00 – 3.05pm One minute Silence for the Victims of Asaba Massacre*
- 3.05 – 3.45pm Awards*
- 3.45 - 4.55pm Cultural Dances and Refreshments*
- 4.55 – 5.05 pm Comedienne*
- 5.05 – 5.15pm Closing remarks & Vote of Thanks*

*Annual Memorial Anniversary of the October 1967 Asaba Massacre
Venue: Asagba's Palace, Oshimilli South LGA, Delta State.*

Sunday October 10TH 2021 Time: 10.00am to 2.00pm

Truth Telling, Healing and National Reconciliation

Strategic Conversations on The Asaba Massacre

A Symposium

AIM: – This event is aimed at fostering and sustaining a conversation of truth telling towards reconciliation, healing and nation building.

OBJECTIVES: – The event will be split into four parts as follows:

Historical Record Keeping, 10.00am – 11.00am

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Physical, Virtual or Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker One: Liz Bird</i>	<i>Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker Two: John Silverman</i>	<i>Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder One: Fraser Otanelli</i>	<i>Recording (Virtual?)</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder Two: Ed Keazor</i>	<i>Physical</i>
20 Minutes	<i>Questions and general discussions:</i>	<i>Physical and Virtual</i>

Transitional Justice, 11.00am – 12 Noon

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Physical, Virtual or Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker One: Ibrahim Gambo Pam</i>	<i>Virtual</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker Two: Ituah Ighodalo</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder One:</i>	
10 minutes	<i>Responder Two:</i>	
20 Minutes	<i>Questions and general discussions:</i>	<i>Physical and Virtual</i>

Truth Telling

Personal Stories 12 Noon – 1.00pm

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Physical, Virtual or Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker One: Nwanne</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker Two: Getty Ogunkeye</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder One: Ngozi Edozien</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder Two: General Taiwo</i>	<i>Physical</i>
20 Minutes	<i>Questions and general discussions:</i>	<i>Physical and Virtual</i>

Collective Conscience and Nation Building 1.00pm – 2.00pm

<i>Time</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Physical, Virtual or Recording</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker One: Chuck Nduka Eze</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Speaker Two: Ken Odogwu</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder One: Ndidi Nwaneri</i>	<i>Physical</i>
10 minutes	<i>Responder Two:</i>	
20 Minutes	<i>Questions and general discussions:</i>	<i>Physical and Virtual</i>

Committee Members :

Chief Chuck Nduka-Eze, Isama Ajie of Asaba, Chairman;

Chief (Dr) Ben Okonta, The Ojiba of Asaba;

Prof (Dr) Victor Izegbu;

Ogbueshi Chike Ogeah;

Ogbueshi Ken Odogwu;

Ms Ngozi Edozien

Ogbueshi Uche Nwanze , The Onoi of Asaba.

Members of the Colloquium Resource Group

Chief Chuck Nduka-Eze;

Ibrahim James Pam;

Ed Keazor;

Ndidi Nwaneri;

Ogbueshi Chike Ogeah

Ogbueshi Ken Odogwu

Remarks at the Annual Memorial Anniversary of the October 1967 Asaba Massacre.

REMEMBERING THE HEROES AND MATYRS OF THE ASABA MASSACRE: RESHAPING THE FUTURE:

It is indeed my profound honor to respond to the call to this forum from the Palace of the Asagba of Asaba. My first words must be to thank both Chief Chuck Nduka Eze, the Isama Ajie of Asaba and Chief Pat Ndili, the Ihonor of Asaba for inviting me to deliver a brief message. As a Daughter of this land, I want to state that I consider it a high duty and solemn responsibility.

On the concept of "message" I would like to share the reflection of Archbishop Fulton Sheen. He said, "Three elements conspire in the making of a message; namely, the Pulpit, the Audience and the Truth. " I believe that all three elements are present here today. The Asagba's Palace constitutes not only the pulpit but also the fulcrum of the value we hold and cherish in Asaba tradition and culture. The audience is not only the citizens of Asaba but also all people of virtuous conscience who understand the searing pain of rejection and the frightening experience of annihilation. Regarding the Truth, one can safely assert that in human conflicts, the first casualty is truth. We gather today to affirm the truth. Almost fifty four years have passed since that defining event in Asaba history, a day of infamy. When over a thousand innocent, defenseless civilians, men and boys were exterminated in a hail of bullets, under the ruse of a welcome reception. In it's aftermath, it left echoing pain, visible scares and indeed some open veins. The significance of today's event represents more than just a commemoration. It is a powerful testament of the accommodating spirit and resilience of Asaba people. I dare say that it is Providential that we have in our times, our Royal Father, the Asagba, who himself is a living history, and a living legend of the Ahaba experience through the difficult times. Agu Nwanyi his Consort, an indomitable spirit, offered unalloyed support from the homefront.

As a point of departure, I want to place this Remembrance event in a wider context – history, geopolitics and perhaps culture, because I do not believe the massacre can be viewed in isolation. It is often said that history is never an alien to crises. Yes, indeed history is essential to understanding the world around us. In human history, even before sovereign territorial boundaries were delineated with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, communities engaged in the most ferocious tragic conflicts ever recorded. World history is riddled with massacres. In our times, the nature of conflicts has shifted from interstate to intrastate without clear rules of engagement. Under these conditions, massacres and indescribable atrocities take place in theaters of conflict. Often times, the root causes are never addressed, instead they remain hidden sources of future conflicts. Whatever the strategic considerations for that operation, the Asaba massacre must not constitute for us a relic of history. It must become living history shaped by the people of Asaba and those who share their values of humanity, civility and responsibility.

And so, we must avoid the temptation to fall into despair, studiously awaiting a humanistic admission of guilt. Even in our private lives, apologies do not necessarily happen because we expect them. You cannot elicit an apology, there must be a clear perception of the problem and more significantly a contrite heart. As survivors, with a shared responsibility to immortalize our dead, it is time to be strategic not emotional. The strength of the human spirit is enormous and we must learn to put our virtues and values into practice. It is our responsibility for us the living to commit and rededicate our lives to the finest values, ideals, and the principles that our fathers and mothers represented. We must reinforce our virtue driven society with new thinking. Asaba must not shirk from its responsibility as

"Keynote Address by: Ambassador (Prof.) Joy Ogwu OFR (cont.)"

'builder'. We have made remarkable contributions before Nigeria became a sovereign state. We have made outstanding contributions since independence, we are still giving all our best in the service of country and humanity.

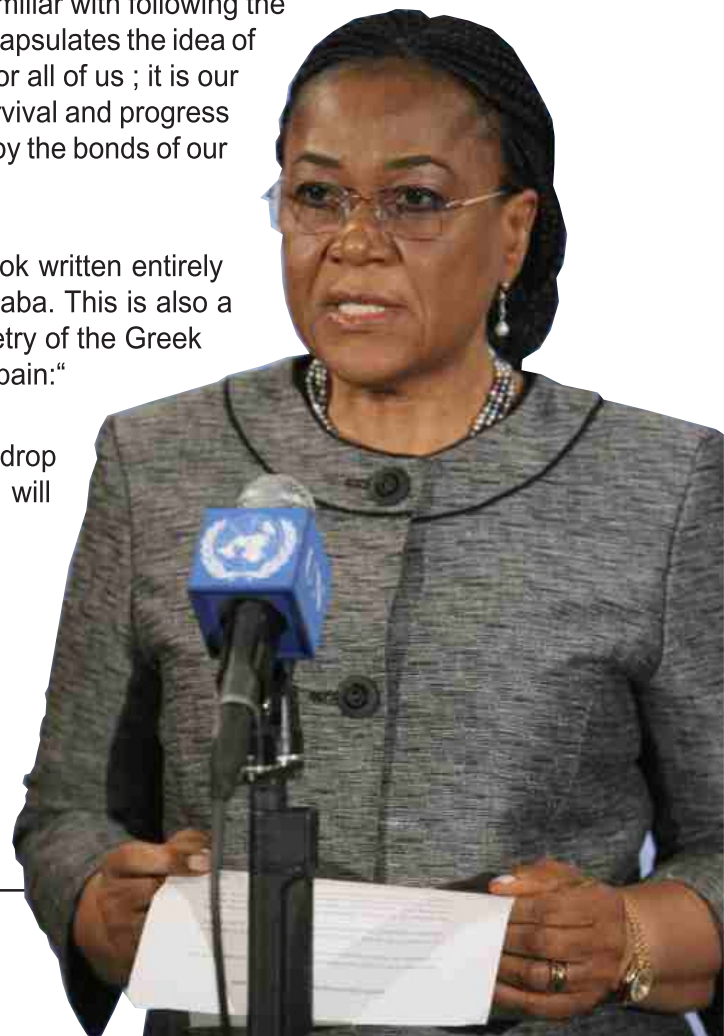
If I may pose a critical question, is there a lesson or lessons from the historical experience of the Asaba massacre that we must be desperate to learn now ? I would say unequivocally, Yes. The lesson is 'A study in Remembrance, a study in Memorialization'. I believe that Memory is the Mother of all wisdom. It holds the key to how we shape the future, not through revisionist perspectives, but through a genuine understanding of the *raison d'etre* of the object and reason for Remembrance. Asaba needs a unified resolute stance determined to bring good out of disaster. Asaba requires a new climate where the citizen essentially becomes an instrument of Remembrance. A new consciousness, a new awakening that recognizes that Remembrance must be linked to positive action, or it loses its essence. Positive action must also be all encompassing. Special attention must be given to the role of women. Imagine what it was like for women following the massacre. We must remember their indomitable spirit, their resilience, enormous sacrifices that they made, and their courage and strength. Like Winston Churchill, they "offered their blood, toil, tears and sweat" in the service of their community. I want to state unequivocally that "Ndidi" (Patience) is perhaps, the best way to encapsulate the intervening Fifty Four years since the massacre. We must now move beyond that to inspire a new generation, inspire new thinking on how to harness our strengths, our energies and skills to help build the "Good Society". I expect the symposium that follows on the heels of this event will address as appropriate the critical importance of Oral Documentation and Oral History, and indeed research in critical areas of study relevant to the advancement of the community. I must emphasize that Memorialization reminds us that those who forget history will invariably repeat it. The concept of "Never again" is a phrase that we are all familiar with following the Holocaust. In Asaba dialect the word "Ozoemezina" encapsulates the idea of remembrance. The duty to remember is an obligation for all of us; it is our shared responsibility, it is our collective interest- the survival and progress of our people. The friends and citizens of Asaba united by the bonds of our stated goals can really serve us as a light on the hill.

These remarks may be regarded as a preface to a book written entirely from the perspectives and experience of citizens of Asaba. This is also a collective task worth pursuing. Let me end with the poetry of the Greek poet Aeschylus on the wisdom that inevitably flows from pain:"

even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget
Falls drop by drop upon the heart until in our own despair,
against our will; comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

May God sustain us.

H.E. Prof Joy Ogwu
October 7th, 2021



Her Excellency, Prof U. Joy Ogwu.

Profile:

Prof. U. Joy Ogwu has spent a greater part of her life in a disarming, quiet, unobtrusive service to her country, teaching, mentoring young scholars, raising young leaders, conducting research in International Relations and representing Nigeria at the highest levels.

Ambassador Uche Joy Ogwu is an exceptional scholar, author, administrator and diplomat who left an indelible mark on the institutions and processes of global security, conflict resolution and peace making.

A distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations, she served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria (2006 - 2007), first female Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations (UN) (2008 – 2016), Director-General, Nigeria's Foreign Policy Think-Tank – Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (2001-2006)

At the UN, she served as Member UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (2002), First African Chair of the Board from 2006 – 2007, First President of the First Executive Board of UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, as well as Four-time President UN Security Council.

In recognition of her meritorious services to the nation and humanity, Prof. Ogwu has won several national and international honours, including award of Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) in 2004. She serves on the Governing Board of Nigerian Prize for Leadership (NPL), Chairing the NPL Committee on Strategy and Foreign Relations, as well as the Boards of Baze University Abuja, the Pan African Institute for Global Affairs and Strategy (PAIGAS), Abuja.



In Memory of the Asaba Massacre

by Chuck Nduka-Eze,



The Asaba Massacre occurred in early October 1967 during the Biafran war fought over the secession of Biafra. Biafra identified as the predominantly Igbo, former Eastern Region of Nigeria. Asaba (Igbo: Ahaba) has an interesting ancestral lineage with its origin linked to Ugboma, Ezeanyanwu, Nnebisi, and also Igala in Kogi State. Though linguistically and ethnically Ibo, Asaba was never part of biafran territory.

On the 4/5th Oct 1967, the Federal Troops of the second division of the Nigerian Army entered Asaba en route to Biafra. In the next days that followed, a massacre of the male population occurred at Ogbeosowa Square in Asaba. The Asaba people, wishing to show allegiance to the Federal Troops, had come out to welcome them with the hope of assisting a reduction of tension in the town. The Federal Troops separated the women from the men and coldly assassinated the men and buried them in shallow mass graves around Ogbeosowa village. In the ensuing days, various killings were orchestrated in various areas in the town. It is estimated that over 1000 men were killed. The killings had every aspect of a premeditated attempt at the extermination of the male population.

The father of Mariam Babangida, a younger brother of Chief Philip Asiodu who was an Olympic athlete at the time and various prominent citizens of Asaba were also amongst those killed.

Till today no proper explanation of this event has been provided by the Federal Government neither has any official apology been offered for this humanitarian crime.

It remains the only massacre in the world of this magnitude to be treated with silence and impunity. Asaba people have continued to cry out for an explanation for what happened to their people and continue fittingly to remember them and to remind the country about the value of upholding the principle that all (Nigerian) lives matter.

And so we do this to preserve their voices, the voices of the many sentenced to their untimely death and forgotten by our indifference and silence. This new cenotaph is a belated attempt to salvage meaning out of a meaningless tragedy. We must teach our country that there may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest. Freedom, liberty, and justice is not an instantaneous holiday. It is a road. A long road. We know this now. In this unspeakable tragedy, we learned painfully how quickly man sheds culture and a monster emerges. The beast is revealed. But despite this, Asaba community has decided to stand firmly on love, as hate is too heavy a burden to bear. Whoever was responsible and for whatever reason, these were innocent victims who are worthy of our recollection, at least for one single day each year. This monument is therefore dedicated in honour and remembrance of a loss so grave and sad that time cannot diminish. Please contemplate their passing in respectful silence”.

As the Asagba of Asaba stated at the occasion of the presentation of this new cenotaph, “the social and economic consequences from this loss suffered by Asaba community and indeed Nigeria from the deaths of the cream of Asaba society on Oct 1967 is yet to be fully assessed or determined”.

Asaba people will continue to hope till hope creates from its own wreck, the thing it contemplates.

Chuck Nduka-Eze,
The Isama Ajie of Asaba,
Chairman Asaba Massacre Memorial
Anniversary Committee 2020.



Asaba Massacre (October 1967)

The Asaba Massacre occurred in early October 1967, during the Biafran War, fought over the secession of Biafra (the predominantly-Igbo, former Eastern Region of Nigeria). Asaba (Igbo: Àhàbà) has an interesting ancestral lineage (its origin is linked to Ugboma, Ezeanyanwu, and Nnebisi) though linguistically Igbo, it was never part of Biafra. The people of Asaba typically identify as Anioma.

In August 1967, three months into the Biafran War, Biafran troops invaded the Midwest Region, to the west of the River Niger. They spread west, taking Benin City and reaching as far as Ore, where they were pushed back by the Nigerian Second Division, under the command of Col. Murtala Muhammed.

The Asaba Massacre: A Living Trauma

The Federal troops gained the upper hand and forced the Biafrans back to the Niger, where they crossed the bridge back into the Biafran city of Onitsha, which lies directly across from Asaba. The Biafrans blew up the eastern spans of the bridge so that the Federal troops were unable to pursue them.

Massacre

The Federal troops entered Asaba around 5 October and began ransacking houses and killing civilians, claiming they were Biafran sympathizers. Reports suggest that several hundred may have been killed individually and in groups at various locations in the town.

Leaders summoned the townspeople to assemble on the morning of 7 October, hoping to end the violence through a show of support for "One Nigeria." Hundreds of men, women, and children, many wearing the ceremonial akwa ocha (white) attire paraded along the main street, singing, dancing, and chanting "One Nigeria." At a junction, men and teenage boys were separated from women and young children and gathered in an open square at Ogbesowa village. Federal troops revealed machine guns, and orders were given, reportedly by Second-in-Command, Maj. Ibrahim Taiwo, to open fire. It is estimated that more than 700 men and boys were killed, some as young as 12 years old, in addition to many more killed in the preceding days.

The bodies of some victims were retrieved by family members and buried at home. But most were buried in mass graves, without appropriate ceremony. Many extended families lost dozens of men and boys. Federal troops occupied Asaba for many months, during which time most of the town was destroyed, many women and girls were raped or forcibly “married,” and large numbers of citizens fled, often not returning until the war ended in 1970. The total death toll during early October was in excess of 1,000, although the exact numbers will likely never be known.

Suspect

I.B.M. Haruna has sometimes been named as the officer who ordered the massacre, following a report of his testimony to the Nigerian Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission, known as the Oputa Panel.[1] This article quoted him as claiming responsibility (as the commanding officer) and having no apology for the atrocity. However, Haruna was not present in Asaba in 1967. He replaced Murtala Muhammed as C.O. of the Second Division in spring 1968.

In October 2017, the Asaba community marked the 50th anniversary of the massacres with a two-day commemoration, during which the new, comprehensive book on the massacre, its causes, consequences, and legacy, was launched: “The Asaba Massacre: Trauma, Memory, and the Nigerian Civil War,” by S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser Ottanelli (Cambridge University Press). This book, which draws on interviews with survivors and military and government figures, as well as archival sources, discusses how and why the massacres happened, and the impact of this community trauma, decades after the event.



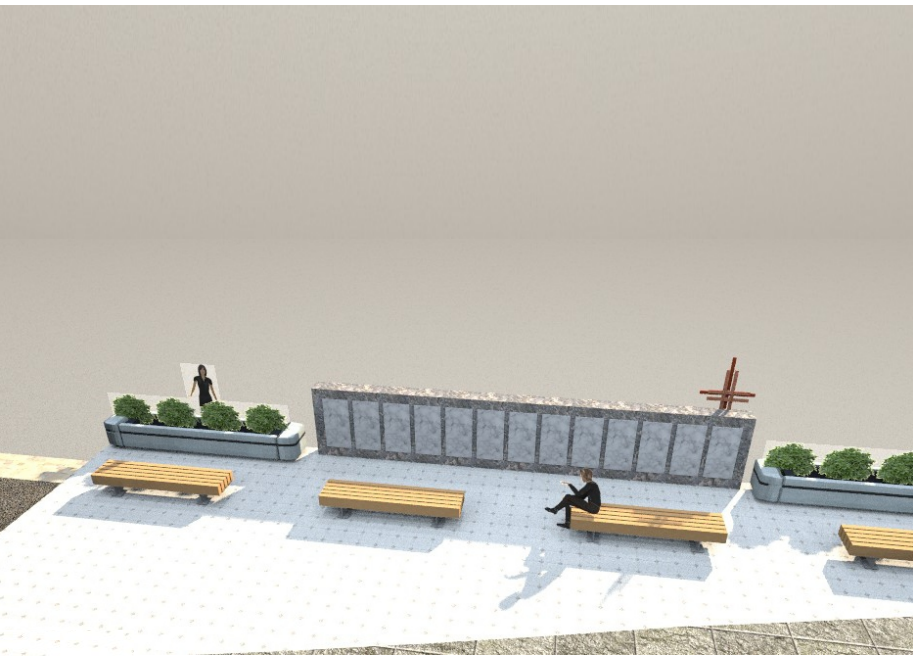


The Cross

In Memory of the
Asaba Massacre
Oct. 1967

**THE NEW CENOTAPH
AND MEMORIAL
MONUMENT**

THE ASABA MASSACRE MEMORIAL MONUMENT



**The Asaba Woman - One of her Roles
during the Asaba Massacre.**

Asaba women played diverse and amazing roles during the horrific and unwarranted massacre of mostly youth and adult men that happened in Asaba during the Nigerian Civil War. True, there was a Civil War going on but the war zone was in the then Eastern part of Nigeria. There was no anticipation of trouble of such immense proportions getting to Asaba so no one was prepared for it, least of all the women. Had anyone had an inkling of what was to befall the town, our men would have run away instead of sitting down, defenseless, for trigger happy soldiers to mow them down.

Nobody wanted any trouble in Asaba during the war. Nobody expected any trouble either. So no one was prepared for it. When the Nigerian troops entered Asaba, and the massacre began, our women found themselves thrust with the onerous responsibility of burying the dead, a role they had never had need to perform in the past as that was the duty of the young men in the villages, most of whom had now been killed! They were SO MANY KILLED!!! And they all had to be buried! Women who were lucky had their fathers, husbands, sons, brothers and other male relatives killed close to home so taking them to where they would be buried was not too difficult. Most other women however would be told by people where the soldiers had killed their loved ones and they would then have to go there with wheel barrows, wailing and weeping, to carry their dead who may already be decomposing and bring them home for burial. Then they would have to dig a grave, (which was usually shallow - women didn't know how to use a shovel, most used hoes!), with the help of women around and bury their dead. There were no men to help as those who were lucky to escape the massacre had run into the bushes. One of my uncles', a prominent man, who was shot close to his house, had his grave dug by his young daughters. They dragged/ carried his body to his compound. The grave they dug was so

shallow, parts of his body was still exposed after it was covered!! He was properly buried later when hostilities in Asaba had eased and men started returning to the town. Another uncle of mine, who was in secondary school, was made to dig his grave and he was shot into it. A young female cousin who was with him when he was killed, thankfully covered his grave amidst tears.

Asaba women are truly incredible! One shudders to imagine what Asaba would have been like if these burials had not taken place! Disease ridden!!! As genteel, beautiful, well read, proud but not arrogant women, no one would have thought they had what it took to bury the dead by themselves! But they did!! They rose up to the task to do what had to be done when the need arose and as a result, most of the dead were laid to rest in dignity! Thank God for our women!

The untimely death of their spouses left the Asaba woman in the sad role of single breadwinners of their families. Most of these women were in their twenties and thirties at the time their husbands were killed and had young children. They braced up to the challenge and by dint of hard work and sacrifice, many have raised children who are successful in all areas of their lives!

May God continue to bless and empower ALL Asaba women, of whom I AM VERY PROUDLY ONE!!!! Amen.

I pray this doesn't happen again. So much was lost, nothing, absolutely nothing was gained!!!

OZO EMEZIE!!!! AMEN.ASABA GA NA GA NIHU NIKECHUKWU!!!! AMEN

ASABA GA NA GA NIHU NIKECHUKWU!!!! AMEN

Dr. Getty Ogunkeye nee Okogwu

Ogbueshi Kenneth Odogwu

Of the few events that are recorded in the sands of time, none as painful as the massacre that happened in Asaba in 1967 is as gripping to the citizens of this erstwhile sleepy happy town (now a capital).

It is difficult for the present generation to imagine that such an event occurred barely a generation ago, and sad that not enough is known about it or lessons acquired as a consequence. Asaba people today find the urgent need to recoil such incident because we believe that we are the custodians of an event which tells a universal message about war and its proclivity to exposing mans darkest side.

The Asaba massacre happened in a time of war, unlike the other massacres happening today elsewhere in Nigeria In a time of supposed peace. History teaches us many lessons but the Asaba massacre is one lesson that ought to have been learned instead of being ignored in our classrooms all over the country. It is the very first of such tragic incidents. As custodians we find it necessary to remember this dark event, not to open wounds or cast aspersions on the perpetrators, but to remember those brave helpless souls who suffered as a consequence of what they did not do. I believe that there could be a correlation between the massacres happening all over the country today and the Asaba massacre - such events just cannot happen and be treated with indifference. Something must be done for the benefit of future generations to catalogue and bring to conclusion this sad chapter.

The answer lies in many spheres - amongst the most important being to recognise and empower women who are essentially the backbone of our societies. Reshaping and strengthening our values through women will also reshape the way we, especially the

next generation will see education, impact on policies and interpret our laws for the benefit of humanity. But it must start with apologising to the communities that have suffered. Beginning in Asaba.

To do the needful will act as a cathartic effect on the nation. Until then the chapter remains open which started with the Asaba massacre and with ongoing massacres occurring all over the country across tribal and religious lines - and it's all down to the indifference of our people and leadership. Hence the need to be responsible and build our arc de triumph as a mark of respect to the fallen heroes and an important symbol of nation building

- Ogbueshi Kenneth Odogwu
2021

The Asaba Massacre Memorial: Remembrance, Redress, and Reconciliation

by S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser Ottanelli | May 25, 2021

For almost a decade, we researched what happened in Asaba in 1967, examining documents and interviewing survivors and witnesses to those terrible events. We presented this research in a book, *The Asaba Massacre: Trauma, Memory and the Nigerian Civil War*, launched in Asaba in 2017, the 50th anniversary. Excerpts from these harrowing interviews are here on this website.

We will probably never know exactly how many people died; we learned new names as the interviews progressed, and we are sure that many others lie unknown. Hundreds of Asaba civilians died in the days leading up to Oct. 7, and many more died in the "Second Operation" in 1968. The Asaba massacres were not the only killings of civilians during that terrible war. Civilians were slaughtered at nearby Isheagu, and at marketplaces and hospitals in Biafra itself. But Asaba was the largest single massacre, and the most deliberate and systematic. These civilians were not unfortunate collateral damage of a war; they were murdered in an undeniable war crime. This monument will be a tribute to all.

The Nigerian government has yet to recognize the suffering of Asaba, consistently taking the position that the war is best forgotten, while refusing to understand that it was truly a national tragedy. Unlike many other countries transitioning from conflicts, Nigeria has failed to come to grips with the violations of the past, and one consequence is a nation struggling with constant violence. Remembering the past is not incitement, and it is not unpatriotic; healing and

reconciliation are a crucial part of nation building.

For decades the people of Asaba were forced to honor their dead in private, while their ongoing suffering was unacknowledged and denied. Our work, building on that of Emma Okocha, lifted that silence and took the atrocities to an international audience. Meanwhile, leaders in Asaba, at considerable time and effort, built a monument to the dead at Ogbe-Osawa, the site of the Oct. 7 killing field. Today, this new initiative will take the memorial process to a new level, bringing visibility throughout the nation and the continent. This new visibility gives hope that Asaba will finally see an official acknowledgement of responsibility for its suffering. But above it, this spectacular memorial will honour those who died, ensuring they will not be forgotten, and leading the way to a better future. The people of Asaba deserve to be remembered; this will be a fitting memorial space where education and peace-building initiatives could serve as a model for the entire nation.

Fraser Ottanelli



S. Elizabeth Bird

The Need For A Memorial Centre

by Jon Silverman | May 25, 2021

'Creating sites of memory assumes – indeed requires – the pre-existence of a will to remember' (Dr Andy Pearce writing about Holocaust memorialization in the UK). But memory of conflict is invariably contested, with one side erecting monuments to its victories, the other seeking to find a suitable way to represent its losses. In 2020, both in the UK and US, historic statues were the focus of contemporary political rancour. The heroes of the US confederacy, symbols of white supremacy to many, became a visible affront in a pluralistic, multi-cultural society. While in the UK, the 'Black Lives Matter' movement found it intolerable that those who had profited from slavery and the spoils of empire continued to be honoured in many city centres.

But there is much more to memorialization than whether a statue remains on its plinth or is pulled down and hurled into a river. The way the past is represented changes with the times. In the Soviet Union, monuments to the victims of the 'Great Patriotic War' did not specify their ethnic or religious origin. That they were all described as victims of fascism served a political purpose: to prove that Communism represented the triumph of good over evil. Now that there is a specificity to the inscriptions on monuments in Eastern Europe, a different kind of historical remembrance is served, in many cases, rehabilitating parties and individuals of the far right who fought against Communism.

Where is the truth in all this? Unfortunately, at the mercy of those leaders currently in power. But one should never lose sight of the fact there ARE truths which cannot be

camouflaged or airbrushed by cynical politicians. Just as it is true that the worst massacre on European soil since the Second World War took place at Srebrenica in Bosnia in 1995 – despite the efforts of Serb politicians to deny the genocide – so there was undoubtedly an atrocity committed by Federal troops at Asaba during the Biafran war of secession. It is right that it should be commemorated and the victims honoured, not to fan the flames of ethnic tension but as a simple necessity: to leave a permanent physical record of inhumanity for this and future generations to reflect on and ensure that it is never repeated.



Jon Silverman

The Triumph of Justice

by Ibrahim Pam | May 25, 2021

One of the most profound moments of the public hearings of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (also known as the "Oputa Panel") in Enugu in April 2001 was the testimony of Dr. Uriah, a medical practitioner and a native of Asaba. He had been called to testify in a petition on the Asaba Massacre, brought before the Commission by Chuck Nduka-Eze, an accomplished lawyer also of Asaba lineage. This petition was subsumed under the petition of human rights abuses brought by the Ohaneze Ndigbo, broadly covering atrocities committed during the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970.

There was pin drop silence as the doctor described in chilling detail how an unsuspecting group of male residents of Asaba, who had assembled to welcome the Federal troops to the town sometime in early October 1967, were herded together to the town square by Federal troops and then mowed down by machine gun fire. According to reports, nearly one thousand defenceless men were thus killed in cold blood.

Although several years before I had read an excellent account by Emma Okocha of this horrific incident in his seminal work on the subject published in 1994 and titled "Blood on the Niger", not even that prepared me for the particularly chilling detail that was recounted by this gentleman, who was not only a firsthand witness but was also a victim, and perhaps one of the only survivors of that massacre. In those few minutes of testimony, Dr. Uriah brought into the conference chambers the true horrors of what was the worst atrocity in Africa's bloodiest conflict.

It seemed almost as though until that moment at the public hearings that massacre that had occurred in Ogbesowe Square, Asaba in 1967 had been locked away in the closet of history and erased from national memory. What Emma Okocha had brought to national attention in his book was now starkly revealed by a man who had borne the scars on his seven-year-old body, and had locked up the memories in his tormented mind for thirty-four years.

In the years since the Oputa Panel, and in the course of my work at both the International Criminal Court and the United Nations in a number of conflict situations in Africa, I have researched several mass atrocities in different countries around the world. I can say authoritatively that this massacre in Asaba is one of the most egregious, if not in scale then certainly in cold deliberateness and brutality, in a long list of infamy; but also in the near complete collective amnesia that has followed in the half-century since.

In this context, the Asaba Massacre Memorial Monument is an important accountability project that would bring to the public consciousness a truthful recollection of this tragedy. It would honour the memory of the dead, safeguard their solemn remembrance, and assuage collective trauma and grievance. As a national memorial, it would be a place of homage and of remembrance, of preservation and of instruction. Perhaps most importantly, the Memorial would promote national catharsis and reconciliation.

Why is this important? It is important as a means of employing a transitional justice approach to assist society as a whole to recover from the trauma of mass violence and mass crimes.

There is no question that a profound occurrence such as the Asaba massacre does violence to the psyche of not only the immediate community, but also to the psyche of the nation as a whole. It shatters the foundations of a just society and overthrows ideas of rule of law and due process. Restoring the moral imperative and making society whole again requires the establishment of accountability mechanisms that promote both truth and reconciliation.

With all its failings (and ultimately, with the inability of government to implement its recommendations), the Oputa Panel was an important step in this direction. Indeed, it was the late Honourable Justice Chukwudifu Oputa (retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, and Chairman of the Human Rights Violations Investigation

Commission, after whom the moniker "Oputa Panel" came about) who, after a considered examination of the complex issue of how to confront and resolve historical occurrences of mass crimes and human rights abuses, and at the same time overcome the apparent, inherent contradictions of a transitional justice approach, concluded as follows in these brief words:

"Reconciliation is not the anti-thesis, but the triumph of justice."

Those words could not be truer than at this particular moment in our national history. Since the terrible events in Asaba in October 1967, and the ensuing deaths of nearly three million mostly civilian non-combatants in the course of that war, Nigeria has experienced numerous other mass crimes and killings in different parts of the country.

The culture of impunity and lack of accountability built on the amnesia of the Asaba Massacre and other such mass crimes has spawned a terrible legacy of tragic events. Indeed, today the continued corporate existence of our country is threatened by violent agitations and armed conflicts triggered to some extent by unresolved historical abuses and the absence of effective justice mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable and to deliver justice to victims.

Whereas retributive justice seeks individual criminal accountability, transitional justice through the twin tools of memorialization and reconciliation builds on the ethos of community catharsis that is unique to African systems of transitional justice. This ensures a more durable and surer foundation on which to build national cohesion. Evocatively, this is the route chosen by the people of Asaba, and powerfully expressed in this inspired project.

The Asaba Massacre Memorial Monument Project as a memorialization initiative could then become that essential catalyst for the promotion of national reconciliation that is anchored on an honest discussion of historical grievance, that leads to acknowledgment and recompense, and promotes genuine appeasement and national unity. Therein lies the eternal value of this project.

Nevertheless, even if these higher goals are not met, and even if all that the project does is to bring dignity to the dead and closure to the survivors and victims, it would have been well-worth the effort. The least that those who were so tragically killed in Ogbesowe Square so many years ago deserve is a dignified place of rest.

My hope is that the Nigerian state and its people would take the cue, and leverage on this initiative to construct an authentic national legacy to peace, justice and reconciliation. On my part I pay tribute to the memory of the dead, and honour the noble aspirations of the founders of the Memorial.



Ibrahim Pam

The Asaba Massacre

by Professor Victor Izegbu | May 24, 2021

My earliest memory of the civil war started with the Biafran invasion of the Mid West Region. I was still at boarding school at Government College Ughelli. I remember the Biafran soldiers walking around the main administrative building of the school. We were eventually made to understand that the troops had taken over the whole of the Midwest region. The schools were then told a few days later that the region was now under the control of Biafra. Not too long after that the school closed rather earlier than planned. My family lived in Benin then. We all then went home on holidays. A few weeks later the Nigerian troops started fighting the Biafran soldiers in Ore Ondo state. The Biafran Army was eventually driven back to the outskirts of Benin. It was when the soldiers neared the Benin we began noticing the hostility of the locals to Igbo speaking people.

Igbo people in Benin were advised to leave Benin and go to their various home towns. The advancement to Benin by the Nigerian army happened very quickly. So much so that we did not have enough time to take our belongings. We then escaped to Asaba. This was towards the middle of September 1967. My mother was pregnant with the youngest in my family. In fact she was near term. She did not have the benefit of seeing any obstetrician in the last weeks of her pregnancy. We learnt that many Igbo people who did not leave Benin on time were murdered by the locals and Nigerian soldier. Our properties were looted in Benin. The Nigerian army after capturing Benin City started advancing towards Asaba. This was around early October. Prior to that my mother went into labour and went to a hospital under siege and delivered my youngest brother on September 25th 1967.

By the end of of September we could hear distant shellings around Asaba. From then to around the first few days of October there were rumours that it was not safe to remain in Asaba and that people should escape to the east of the river Niger. My parents thought hard about it and decided to stay behind in Asaba. We started hearing rumours of atrocities being committed by Nigerian soldiers in Agbor and other parts of Anioma. We moved to my father's property deep in Ogbeogo. By early October Nigerian soldiers had entered Asaba. We started hearing about the atrocities committed by the soldiers in different parts of Asaba. It was extremely frightening. There was no power supply the markets were not open and we could not go anywhere. Lots of shellings around the town.

On one faithful day a couple of Nigerian soldiers started going from door to door in the village searching the houses apparently for Biafran soldiers. A pair of them one afternoon started banging on our front door. It was extremely frightening. My mother opened the door and my father soon followed. We were all singing One Nigeria!. Suddenly one of the soldiers pointed to my dad and said he was a Biafran officer and he would kill my dad. That was the beginning of a 2-hr frenzy of shouting, crying and begging saying he was not a soldier and that he was a civil servant. After a prolonged period he then said what was my father's name and we told him. He said he had a list of civil servants from Benin. He brought out this crumpled torn out page of an exercise book that was partly wet. As he scrolled through the list we saw my father's name. We were so excited to see his name as it confirmed he was a civil servant and not a Biafran soldier. That feeling of relief only lasted a few seconds as the soldier gleefully confirmed the list of names are civil servants to be killed when they got to Asaba. They had been given the list in Benin. Then started another round of shouting, crying and begging that they should not kill my father.

Then from no were came the cries of my 7-day old baby brother who was hidden under the bed in the room next door to protect him from the shell fragments falling through the roof. Suddenly one of the soldiers stopped and asked what was that crying sound. We confirmed it was a baby under the bed. He asked what was the baby's name and we said he had not been named which was true. He then said to my mum bring the baby out and let's do a naming ceremony. He proceeded to a strange naming ceremony. Suddenly his mood and countenance changed. He stopped planning to kill my father. They both 2hrs after the ordeal started decided they will not kill my father. To prove the bullet was meant for him they would discharge the bullet through the roof of the building which they did and eventually left the house. It was a most harrowing moment of my life.

After that incidence we knew it was definitely time to leave town. The next day before we could leave town another group of soldiers went round the village and took all the villagers to Mr Uriah's home and we met others from nearby villages. There were rumours they would massacre all the adult males there. It appears there was a lot of discussion going on between the officers. I remember that very vividly and it was scary. Not too long after we gathered there I saw them bring a farmer who looked to be in his 40s. I saw the soldiers arguing with him. I think they were accusing him of being a Biafran soldier. Before we could say Jack they shot him thrice right in front of us and he collapsed and died. That remains the only time in my life I had seen someone shot and killed. Eventually after so many hours outside in the rain in the dark hours of the day around 9pm we were released. We returned home to Ogbeogo.

The next day we decided to leave Asaba and run into the bush. My dad left with other men ahead of us towards Ibusa via Achalla. We decided to stop on our way at my grand father's Chief Francis Isichei. On our way we walked past so many dead bodies including in his compound and one of them was my mother's youngest brother Mr Osi Isichei All the windows of his property were wide open and the house was completely empty. They had apparently been taken to Ogbeosowe where around a 1000 Asaba men were massacred. My mum's brother Mr Emmanuel Isichei was one of them. My grandfather luckily survived but was wounded. We left Umuaji and escaped to Achalla where we eventually reunited with my father. We stayed in Achalla in one room all 11 of us. We were lucky to be alive. We where in Achalla for around 3 months before we returned to Asaba.



Professor Victor Izegbu

Asaba Massacre Memorial Project

by Tani A. Molajo, SAN | May 22, 2021

“They shall not grow old, as we that are left
grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years
condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the
Morning.

We will remember them”

For the following brief commentary, I have not chosen a title. I am content to write under the rubric of the above-quoted 4th stanza of the poem, For the Fallen, penned by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), published in The Times newspaper on 21 September 1914 in tribute to Britain’s war-dead just over two months into the First World War. Even those early days of the war delivered profound shock to the collective system of the public due to the huge number of casualties on all sides caused by the modern weapons of the day notably, machine guns, flamethrowers, poison-gas, to mention a horribly lethal three. Then followed the prolonged horrors of the trenches in which men sought protection in the squelching mud. To forget such suffering, such sacrifice would have been a grotesque unkindness and ingratitude.

Commenting on the Nigerian Civil War (6 July 1967-15 January 1970), renowned author, Chinua Achebe remarked that the war-

“...was a cataclysmic experience that changed the history of Nigeria, and yet why has the war not been discussed or taught to the young, over 40 years after it’s end?”

Of course we must confront our history. Facts are stubborn things. They will not be wished away. It is an axiom that those who choose not to

remember the past are doomed to repeat it’s mistakes.

The result of selective amnesia? Unredressed acts of injustice and unfairness, like ragged fingernails continue to catch at the fabric of our peace. Old unhealed wounds covered only by scabs of untruths have now broken down into violent, often ethnicity based, confrontations all over the country. How many of us care to remember Abacha’s brutal suppression of MOSOP - Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People - which struggled against environmental degradation by multinational oil companies culminating in the hanging of Saro Wiwa and his compatriots in 1995? How many choose to remember the Asaba massacre of 1967 and other horrific atrocities of our 30 - month civil war? Why are there now so very many ethnic militia? Because we have done our best not to remember our national past whenever it is uncomfortable to do so.

In remembering and memorializing, we redress hurts and offences; we salve and eventually heal wounds by acknowledging the sacrifice of those who gave their lives. We dedicate ourselves to (in those memorable words of Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address) “that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain....”



Tani A. Molajo, SAN

The Mind of a Nation – The Asaba ‘Silence’ is over

by Supo Shasore SAN | May 22, 2021

The mind of a nation is its history, history is the mind of a nation. Like individuals a sound mind is important for well being, mental health matters to humans why not to nations. To be bereft of your mind is a tragedy that no one wishes or could possibly inflict on himself.

It therefore defies understanding when nations or sections of people choose to attempt to deny or omit history.

Where it confounds the most is when human tragedies, unjustifiable loss of otherwise innocent lives – that makes the story of Asaba in ‘October of 1967’ and its absence from the nations mind all the more tragic.

Described in many terms as a pogrom or a massacre, the death of so many at the hands of ‘brothers’ was one of the lowest points in the period of an uncivil war that itself was a low point in the history of Nigeria.

Respect and trepidation of history is good advice because – contrary to the popular thinking – History always repeats itself, we must choose to learn from it and therefore avoid the pretexts that lead up to tragedy.

I first learnt of ‘October 1967’ from my principal in law chambers as a young very ‘green’ lawyer, that I was in the famous city of Ibadan in Nigeria. ‘Chief’ had lost all his bothers and his father in what he described as a pogrom. So I was getting first hand information. I was shocked. Gradually I searched hard and kept looking without finding official history of ‘October 1967’. For this reason when the work titled – ‘The Asaba Massacre’ written by Professors Elizabeth Bird and Fraser M. Ottanelli came for formal introduction I rushed along with some other enthusiasts to the evening book reading event in a quiet corner of Lagos. The authenticity, the balance and painstaking research of the book is unassailable – a delight for any historian.

In the book the 1966 coup & counter coup d’ tat are placed in the context as both trigger and pretext leading the exhibition of inhumanity exhibited leading up to October of 1967 and beyond by both sides.

The ‘coincidental’ historical timelines – First the deliberate British economic interest carried over from the colonial extraction policy now in its crude oil stage represented by the BP concessions in Eastern Nigeria and secondly the Middle East crisis presented a more captivating empathy of invasion and nations at war distinct from the Nigeria story of internal insurgency not common or topical in 1967. Therefore Nigeria was obnoxiously and conveniently not ‘news worthy’.

But that Asaba witnessed ‘silence’ is amplified by the authors’ discovery of the ominous and blatant absence of a ‘sitrep’ report from the field in the archives for the 7th & 8th of October 1967, in which the report of events of the 7th might have been recorded.

Silence that eventually led the former Head of State, to state publicly that he did not know of the deaths till 1990 as it was something he would never have approved.

Silence from the British government and the press in Nigeria and Britain. Astonishingly authors, Bird & Ottanelli cite John De St Jorre’s tongue in cheek reference to the derisory public opinion of deaths of black people by the press at the time ‘...by and large the old rule of thumb for African reporting – one dead white equals a hundred dead blacks...’

Memorializing as the book ‘The Asaba Massacre’ does as well as the Asaba memorial Monument website dedicated to the memory of ‘October 1967’; these efforts and others to come will restore our ‘national mind’ and break this silence.

Silence is the route to forgetting. We should not forget our nation’s history, on the contrary, just one lesson from past human behavior is essential to maintain peaceful co-existence and the progressive development of a nation.

No nation should seek to escape from its past- its a question of responsibility.

For Asaba – the silence is over.

Olasupo Shasore
Lawyer & Historian
2021



Supo Shasore SAN

The Asaba Massacre

by Chike C. Ogeah Esq.

The Asaba Massacre is a sore spot in the minds of Ndi Ahaba, we have endured for 54 years this gruesome massacre of our Men & Boys, the future generation of Asaba was greatly truncated by this wicked act yet we trudge on to a glorious future, one that is devoid of bitterness (even to our traducers)....

We intend to reestablish a new dawn of dignity, honesty, discipline & integrity which have always been the hallmarks of Ndi Ahaba....

I would want to congratulate the Asagba of Asaba, The Asagba in council & all sons & daughters of Asaba for seeing a day like today where we have all finally resolved that although we will forgive this heinous & dastardly act not because there has been a formal apology from the Nigerian state but because it is the right thing to do as "unforgiveness is a burden too heavy bear & actually debars progress"

However we must state it clearly & categorically that as we forgive, we shall NEVER FORGET....Ozoemena!

CHIKE C OGEAH Esq.

The Asaba Massacre

by Mr Ademola Akinrele SAN

Fundamentally, a memorial is built to reflect on the past, address in good faith the grievances occasioned, ameliorate the trauma, and bring dignity and closure to survivors and victims, thus promoting equity, tranquility, and harmony.

The Nigerian Civil War was Africa's bloodiest conflict; erupting seven years after independence at a time the hope and expectations of a society united in a shared belief of a profitable future for all, was cruelly dashed. It pitted brothers against each other and resulted in the death of nearly three million non-combatants.

The atrocity committed in Asaba by Federal troops during the Biafran War gained notoriety as a symbol of horror. One thousand unsuspecting defenseless young men were herded into the town square and brutally mowed down. This gesture of evil was only surpassed by the national amnesia that attended it for half of a century.

Herein lies the paramountcy of the Asaba Massacre Memorial Monument, trumpeted by an accomplished lawyer of ancient lineage and traditional Chiefdom of Asaba – Chuck Nduka Eze, motivated by his deep passion for justice and abiding love for the disadvantaged; a trait he inherited from his illustrious father renowned in the field of human liberty and the dignity of labour, and actuated by his profoundly poignant experience of witnessing his mother who was a victim of the atrocity.

The endeavour of the Asaba Memorial Project is testimony to the words of the Israeli Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer-

“Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.”

The notorious tragedies of history – the Holocaust, the American Civil War, the Rwandan Civil War, and the Killing Fields of Bosnia and their like, festered in

consequence of the indifference of society. The ultimate value of a memorial is to attest to the courage of those who refuse to be silent and who uphold the values of freedom, accountability, and rule of law. By erecting a memorial to the Asaba victims, we not only honour survivors and those who have perished, we cast a stone foundation to an enduring edifice that symbolises Peace and Justice.

Today, Nigeria is riven by incessant violent conflicts and agitations that are a consequence of unresolved historical atrocities and inequities. The antidote is to address the issues with unrelenting candour. The Asaba memorial project is such an inoculation, and it could not have been administered at a more opportune time.



Mr Ademola Akinrele SAN

THE ASABA MASSACRE MEMORIAL MONUMENT

by Stephen Kola-Balogun

The Asaba massacre was a watershed moment in the Nigerian Civil War and in the history of modern day Nigeria. On 5th of October 1967, Federal troops entered Asaba and began ransacking houses and killing civilians. Over a period of 3 days more than a thousand people lost their lives. Asaba was left in ruins and the survivors traumatised. Many women were raped and others killed. The anguish and trauma felt by those families who endured this most egregious of crimes was passed down to successive generations. Many Asaba indigenes have spent a life time trying to seek justice for the victims of that massacre especially since the facts and truth of what happened was largely suppressed. It is fair to say that the Asaba massacre was the single worst atrocity of the civil war. Eventually, a Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission –popularly known as the Oputa Panel was set up in 1999 to look into several human rights abuses including the Asaba massacre, Chuck Nduka-Eze a Barrister of distinction took up the gauntlet and presented the case of the victims of the Asaba massacre before the panel showing that even in death the spirit of his revered father Nduka Eze the inspirational father of leftist nationalism remained alive in him.

Chuck Nduka-Eze who is now the Isama of Asaba has been unrelenting in his quest to obtain justice for the victims of this gruesome crime of the Nigerian Civil War and to his everlasting credit has set up the Asaba Massacre Memorial Monument. This memorial project marks a significant new chapter for the families and victims of the Asaba Massacre in that the survivors and victims' will forever be remembered and honoured in very much the same way as the Jews who were the victims of the 2nd World War Holocaust. In many respects, it is always a matter of social justice to remember the dead in the context of this sort of massacre and further honour their memory. It is indeed a worthwhile project and a step in the right

direction for the survivors and families of the victims. Whatever the next few years may hold, (and I have no doubt that there is more to come) make no mistake that this is just the beginning and this generation unlike the last seem far more prepared for whatever challenges they may face.

To the indigenes of Asaba I simply say keep the faith and “May the force be with you”.



Stephen Kola-Balogun
Legal Practitioner,
Lagos.

Names of Victims of October 1967 Asaba Massacre

AJAJI (UMUAJI)

ABUDEI GODWIN
 AJUFOR OBI
 AKWULE CYRIL
 AKWULE EUGENE (DR.) (SMO)
 AKWULE TITUS
 ARINZE NDUDI
 ATTOH FRANCIS
 BIACHI PAUL OKEKE
 BIACHI UKPOLO
 CHIME VINCENT IKE
 CHUKWUMA ADIGWE
 CHUKWUMA HENRY
 EZEFODU J. E.
 GWAM GIBSON TOY
 GWAM G. W.
 GWAM LAWRENCE A.
 GWUYENGA APELE OKOLIE
 HALIM JOSEPH
 HALIM NWACHUKWU
 IDIGBE ALEX A. (MBE)
 IDIGBE OKOLIE
 IJEH OSELOKA
 ISICHEI EMMANUEL
 ISICHEI LEO S.
 ISICHEI NWOSU
 ISICHEI OKULO OJEI
 ISICHEI OSELOKA
 ISICHEI RUFUS N.
 IWEBI SUNDAY IGNATUS
 IWENOFU RICHARD
 JUWAH GEORGE
 JUWAH DADA
 JUWAH EDWARD
 JUWAH ONUORAH GILBERT
 MONU ALBERT UZOKA
 MONU CYRIL JOHN
 MONU DANIEL
 MORDI D. N.
 MORDI G. N.
 MORDI GEORGE
 NDUKA EZE ROSE EZIUNO
 NJOTEA PETER
 NWAFAOR OKWUESHIKA
 NWAJEI OKAFOR
 NWALUPUE EMMANUEL OKPUNO
 NWALUPUE GABRIEL
 NWANUKWU WALTER
 NWANUKWU LEONARD
 NWANZE PAUL
 NWANZE UFOMI
 NWOJI JOSEPH
 NWOKO YOUNG
 NWOKOLO AKAJU MORDI
 NWOKOLO DAVID
 NWOKOKOLO JOSEPH MORDI
 NWOKOKOLO THOS C.
 NWOSA CHIKE
 NWOSA JAMES
 NWOSA JOSEPH
 NWOSA NWOKOCHA
 OBIMGBA MICHAEL BOY
 OBIMGBA GODWIN
 ODIWE OMOBI
 ODIWE SUNDAY
 ODIWE SILSON O.
 OGOSI KANEBI (BOB. CHIEKE)
 OJOGWU CHUKWUJI
 OJOGWU E. O.
 OJOGWU MOSES
 OJOGWU NNAJI
 OJOGWU OLIVER
 OJOGWU OMOHAN MIKE
 OJOGWU SAMUEL
 OJOGWU SIMON F. A.
 OKAFOR MMA
 OKAFOR SUNDAY
 OKOLIE ALBERT N.
 OKOLIE AZUKA
 OKOLIE OKOTUBO
 OKOLO JOSEPH
 OKONJI SUNDAY OKONGWONU
 OKONKWO GOULD
 OMOKO CHAS IBE

OMOKO RICHARD C. (BL)
 ONYEABO VICTOR
 ONYEMENAM AZUBIKE
 ONYEMENAM CHIWETA KAFONDI
 ONYEMENAM NYEMIKI
 ONYEMENAM UMECHUKWU OKAFOR
 ONYEMENAM UZOR
 TOLEFE GAB. OKONKWO
 WEMEAMBU ANAMLIA
 WEMEAMBU AWUDU
 WEMEAMBU OBI OKOCHA
 WEMEAMBU PATRICK

UGBOMANTA

ANIGBOGU NWABUOKU
 ANIGBOGU NNANDO
 ASHIOFU EMEKA
 ASHIOFU MIKE O.
 AFUMADE JOHN
 ASIEKWU SAMUEL
 ASIEKWU AGOLUM
 CHIDI FRANCIS NWEKE
 CHIJINDU CHUKWUKA (ALH.)
 CHIJINDU EBORA
 CHIOGO OJINJI
 CHUKWUMA ROBERT
 EFEDUA ASIKODI
 EZEADIEFE PATRICK
 EZEADIEFE JOSEPH CHIWETA
 EZEADIEFE CHUKWUMA
 GWAMNIRU ONOCHIE
 IGWENMA NWOKPO
 IJEH EJIMA
 IJE AMECHI
 IKEDIASHI MICHAEL
 IKEDIASHI WILSON
 IWEOBI
 MADUJEMEZIA N. OKAFOR
 MALECHI OKWUOYO
 MGBEZE ROBERT
 MOWETA OKOLIE
 NDOZI
 NDUKA OBIOZOR S.
 NWAJEI PIUS G.
 NWAJEI FELIX
 NWANNA THOMAS
 OBIAGU SUNDAY O.
 OBIAZOR OLISAJINDU
 OBIMGBA SYLVESTER O.
 OBODOECHINA DUSTAN
 ODIACHI EDWIN (CAPT)
 ODIACHI OSELOKA
 ODIACHI NNABUEZE
 ODU NWOSU
 OKOLIE YOUNG
 OKOLOTU OGBUENYI
 OKOLUTU PAUL IDOKO
 OKOLO ALPHONSU C. (ASP)
 OKOLO OJEI
 OKOZALA
 OKWUEGBUNA NWANZE
 OKWUEGBUNA EZE
 OKWUDI GABRIEL
 OKWUDI OGWUDILE
 ONIANWA SIMON UDEMBA
 ONIANWA NKADI
 ONIANWA MONUNWOKWU
 ONUKWU ANTHONY N.
 ONWUEGBUZIA NDUKA O.
 UGO CHUKWUDEBE M.
 UGO OKOLUBO
 UKANWA MATHIAS
 URIAH ROBERT C.
 URIAH CHIKE P.
 URIAH EMMANUEL A.
 UWEJE GABRIEL
 UZO MIKE C.
 UZOR ADOLPHUS A.

AGU (UMUAGU)

ANYANWU GEORGE A.
 ANYAKWO WILSON
 AWOLOR HENRY NWABI
 AWOLOR OKOKO NWABI
 BIOSAH EMINIAN
 CHICHI DANIEL
 CHICHI JKEMBA
 DOZIE EDWIN
 EDOZIE IFECHUKWUKWU
 EGBUFUA CHIKE
 ESHIANYA NWOGBANJI
 IGBEKA MARTINS
 ISICHEI PETER
 KONWEA OKOJI
 MOKOLO JOSEPH
 NJOTEAH CHIEF EZENBA
 NWAFAOR DAVID
 OBIESSIE NWADIE
 ODIAKA VINCENT C.
 OGEDAZI YOUNG
 OJEAH ODINMA
 OKAFOR AUGUSTINE
 OKOBI JOSEPH
 OKWUOSE DANIEL
 OLIKO AMBROSE O.
 OLIKO NWAOKOLO
 ONIANWA CHIEF UTOMI
 ONOCHIE EMMANUEL
 ONYEANWULI BERNARD
 OYANA AKAZUE
 OYANA UWAGBUNAM
 OYANA NNABUEZE
 SIDI KLYCINTH O.
 UJENNA OKONJI M.
 ODIATU OGE

EZENEI (UMUEZEI)

ABUDEI EMMANUEL
 ADIGWU JOHN
 ADIGWU IBE
 CHAKO EKENEMECHUKWU
 CHUKWUMA MAMA ANDREW
 CHUKWUMA MICHAEL
 CHUKWURA AJOKWU
 EBENUWA OBI
 EBENUWA F. ELOKA
 EGBUNIWE GEORGE
 ELIKWU MGBAZE
 ELUAKA KANAYO
 ELUAKA OSELOKA
 IDIGBE MICHAEL
 IKEMEFUNA ADAIKWUSI
 IWEZE OJINJI V.
 IWEZE ODIAKA
 JIDEAKA DANSON O.
 KEBODI CLEM
 KODJO BERNARD
 MABIKIJUWAH HENRY I.
 MOMAH CHUKS
 MORDI MIKE C.
 NNABUZOR NDUKA
 NNABUZOR JOHN
 NWANZE NDUKA
 NWOGALANYA NKADI
 OBIAPANI FRANCIS
 ODIAKA THOS. O.
 OGBOGU SAM I.
 OJUGBANA ONWEAZU
 OKEDIACHI ADIGWE
 OKEDIACHI ANNA
 OKEDIACHI SUNDAY
 OKOCHA BEN. I.
 OKOGBA FELIX
 OKOLIE AZUKA
 OKONJI GEORGE
 OKONKWO CYRIL I.
 OKONKWO JOSEPH C.

OKONNE EKENEMCHUKWU
 OKPUNO YOUNG
 ONWUKA CHUKWUDI
 ONWUSANYA OKOLIE
 ONYEBOBI NDUKA
 ONYIA NDUKA
 OSAJI NNABUEZE
 RAPU SELINA
 RAPU ANIEROBI
 UZOECHIA

ONAJE (UMUONAJE)

ALUMONA OJUME
 ANUKWU G. N.
 ANUKWU OKAFOR
 APITI SAMUEL
 ASHIOGWU FIDELIS
 ASHIOGWU HENRY C. O.
 AZIKIWE OKELEKE O.
 CHACHA ANDREW C.
 CHACHA EJIMA
 CHACHA NNOKAFOR
 CHACHA SAMUEL
 ECHENUA CHAS N.
 CHIADIKABIA MIKE A.
 CHIDI ANTHONY
 CHIDI NDUKA
 CHIDI THOMAS
 CHUKWURA CHRISTIAN
 CHUKWURA DAVID E.
 CHUKWURA EDWIN
 CHUKWURA MGBEKE O.
 DIABUA ONWUKA
 EGEGBUA ROBERT N.
 EBOKA AUGUSTINE
 EGBUNIWE A. M.
 ENEMMUO OKONJI
 ETIAKA SAMUEL ELOKA
 HARRY JOHN
 IGBODO OKOH
 IGODO OKOLI
 IGWEMUNA PHILIP
 IJEH EMMANUEL T.
 IJEH SUNDAY T.
 ILCILIAGWU MOMO
 ILOJE EBOLIA
 ILOJE ONOCHIE
 KECHI OKOJI
 MGBEJE OGBOGU
 MONYEI JOSEPH K.
 MONYEI GODWIN O.
 MOLOKWU SUNDAY
 MORDI CHUKWUEMEKA
 MORDI CHRISTOPHER G.
 MORDI T. GLORY
 MOWA OBI OKONKWO
 MOWAH BENJI
 NDAH OGOM
 NJOKAMMA
 NKADI ONOCHIE
 NKEONYESHITA S. N.
 NOBEA HENRY N.
 NSUGBE EDDIE T. C.
 NNABUONWU NWEKE
 NNWOSA ADIMONVE
 NNWOSA ONWUKA
 NNWABUNWANNE OGUGUA
 NNWANDU GAB
 NNWANTIKWIT JAMES
 NNWATAMELINKEA
 NNWOKOLO NNABUEZE
 NNWOSISI ROBERT
 OBIANABA NWANI
 OBIAJULU OBIAGO
 OBIOJI IWENGO
 OBIUGBOR WILLIAMS
 ODIKA MIKE C.

ICONIC AWARDS



Prof. Elizabeth Bird



Mrs. Rose Eziunor Nduka Eze



**Dr (Mrs) Getty Chinwe
Ogunkeye nee Okogwu**



**Obi (Chief) Mgbushe Okolie
Omu Ahaba (Late)**

Citation for Omu Ngbuse

Omu Mgbuse Okolie - She was the only Daughter of Obi Maime of Umu Inalu in Umuaji Quarters Asaba. Married to the Okolie family in Umuezeafadia Quarters. Blessed with 8 children and her courage as evidenced in the manner of her death was legendary. She became the Omu of Asaba in 1962 and was blessed the same year with the grand daughter who today receives this award in her honour. She was a grand beautiful lady with a reputation for bravery and her courage evidenced in the manner of her death was legendary.

Her home was open to all and we learned that during the crisis she repeatedly called on people in their homes making sure they were well. She was diligent in her duties and over saw the smooth running of the Asaba market and the welfare of Asaba women which was her role as the Omu of Asaba.

She was killed by a Nigerian soldier for refusing to obey orders incompatible with her role as the mother of all in Asaba.

For this she walks in the rank of honour with fellow upholders and defenders of human freedom.

We call on Evelyn Chineze Adigwu to receive this award on her behalf.



Citation for Professor Elizabeth Bird



Elizabeth Bird is Professor Emerita of Anthropology at the University of South Florida. Author of seven books and over 100 articles, she led the research that helped bring the Asaba Massacre to international attention.

With colleague Fraser Ottanelli, she carried out archival research and interviewed dozens of survivors, witnesses, and military figures, resulting in the book, *The Asaba Massacre: Trauma, Memory, and the Nigerian Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

It was honored with the Oral History Association's Outstanding Book Award in 2018. She created and maintains the project website: www.asabamemorial.org.

Citation for Mrs. Rose Eziunor Nduka Eze



Mrs Rose Eziunor Nduka Eze was born on Jan 20 1939 to the family of Obi Okechukwu Mordi in Umuonaje Quarters of Asaba, making her just 27 years at the year of her death. She trained in Nigeria and the uk as a staff nurse and married the famous nationalist politician Nduka Eze in her early 20s. They both proceeded to the Uk where she deepened her nursing career and bore 2 Children - Anthony Ngozi and Chukwuemeka Chuck - the

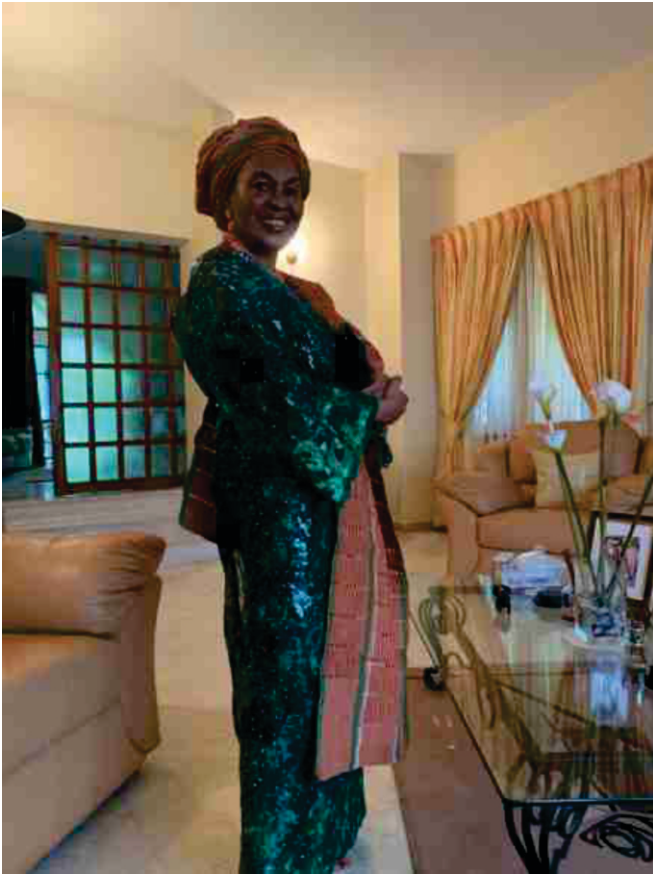
present Isama Ajie of Asaba. She was very generous and philanthropic which made her very popular particularly in a large home where she was the eldest.

Being married to a man whose life stood for fighting injustice against the then colonial masters she was not free of the romantic idealism prevailing as a family tradition. She could not bear to see soldiers humiliating and brutalising her people and felt obliged to remonstrate with them. She was shot making her the only woman killed in the actual massacre. The soldiers buried her opposite the holy trinity church in ogbesowe in a shalow grave.

Her protest places her in the heroics path of the Joans of Arch of France and the Rosa Parks of the US in the long march of our search for human dignity, decency and equality.

Her Award will be received by her Daughter in Law - Mrs Fatima Nduka-Eze

Citation for Dr (Mrs) Gertrude Chinwe Ogunkeye nee Okogwu



Dr (Mrs) Gertrude Chinwe Ogunkeye nee Okogwu is the first child of Late Ogbueshi Gabriel Chike Okogwu OFR and Late Mrs Victoria Nkeonyeasua Okogwu nee Obiakpani.

She is from Ogbeogo village in Umuonaje quarters, Asaba. Dr Ogunkeye is a Medical Doctor, a Paediatrician based in Lagos, Nigeria.

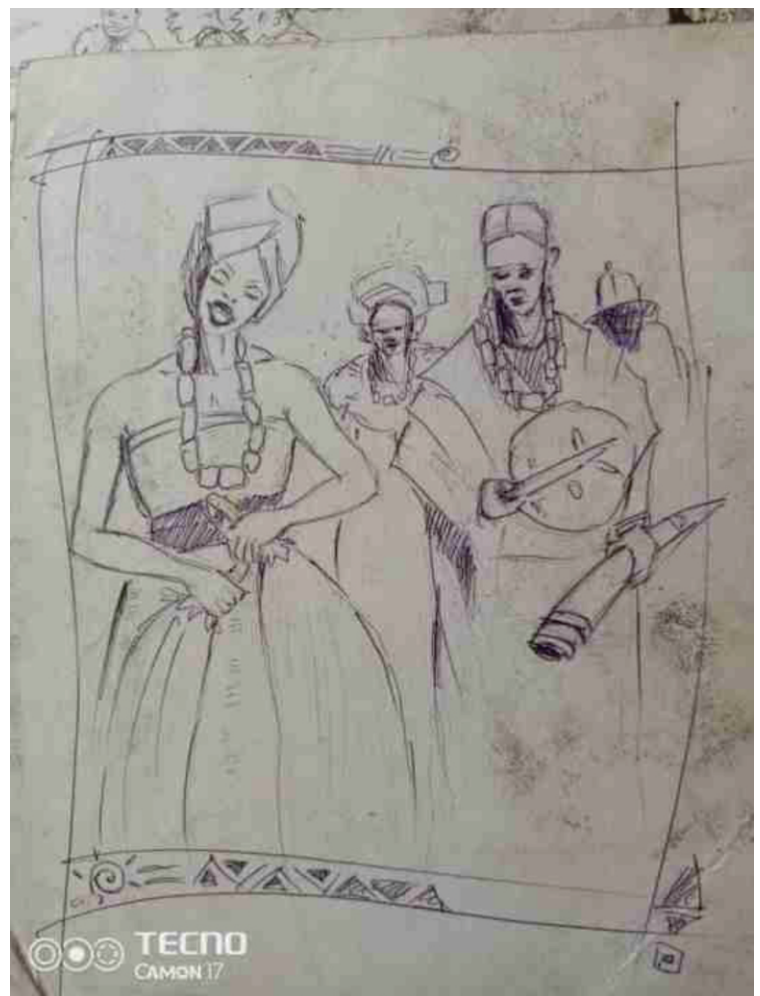
She is passionate about her profession, about the rights of women and children and about her hometown Asaba.

She is a devout Catholic and is happily married with children.

Artworks commissioned for the Asaba Massacre Memorial Centre



Artworks commissioned for the Asaba Massacre



Artworks commissioned for the Asaba Massacre



Appreciation.

As you can see this years ceremony is very special and unique for its dedication and concentration on the exertions and sufferings of Asaba women during the crisis. We can not thank them enough for keeping us going and keeping our spirits up - and more importantly for sustaining us. We acknowledge our huge debt to Nna Agu for making this possible as he has always done and for the immense encouragement he has given all of us who stuck our necks out to give life and meaning to this initiative - essentially this is being done for the larger interest of our country.

Could i acknowledge the tremendous support this years anniversary have derived from the Committee constituted to drive it - this Committee is a Standing Committee and will be in place till the Monument Project is completed and an appropriate foundation established to keep this issue at the very centre of national remembrance, reflection and consciousness.

I thank in particular the Ojiba Ahaba - Chief Dr Ben Okonta who joined this effort since we lost Emma Okocha - and has given me much needed support culminating in this ceremony we are having today. We have been fortunate in our choice of Prof Victor Izegebu (Ogbueshi Nabo Designate) as a member of this Committee for the experience and depth he brings to our deliberations and also the financial support he gave for this event.

Similarly and in the same spirit of consistent support i acknowledge the role of my Cousin and fellow traveller Ogbueshi Ken Odogwu - no matter how tough it was for both of us he found a way. We were also blessed with the long standing friendship and close companionship of Ogbueshi Chike Ogeah who turned his mind to how we can galvanise the entire country in this awareness building whose result can be seen in the type of ceremony we are hosting today.

No less effective is a daughter of this House Ngozi Edozien who brought her acknowledged exposure and skills of high consultancy to bear in our deliberations. Last but not least is our own indomitable Onoi Ahaba who clears the path to assure a smooth passage for all that brings that required pride and efficiency to our proceedings. Many thanks to all these wonderful sons and daughters of Ahaba Ibokwe.

Please also thank our Emeka Odogwu, Chike Asiodu, Mr Louis Edozien, Patrick Ashiofu, our Chief Ashiofu - Okwuloha Ahaba, Ekenem and Innocent Isichei for all the support they have given us. Mr Dan Ngerem for being there right from the early 90s with Emma Okocha and latterly with me proving that true passion is not restricted to a host community in this sort of tragedy. He was there hand in hand before a lot of our people woke up to their responsibility for this effort

Tomorrow we will be hosting a colloquium that teases out the essence of what we are doing today and uses same to ask compelling questions about where we are going as a people and as a country. Driving that are Ed Keazor a man of many parts, a historian and veteran in this social justice space. Mr Gambo Pam an acknowledged panjandrum in international law in the UN - i had the distinct pleasure of meeting

Gambo when we presented the Oputa Panel Petition in 1999. His interest in this matter and other injustices in our space has been consistent and passionate. We have in our midst a lady that binds all these efforts and sweats it out to produce the required effect. We are all indebted to Dr Ndidi Nwaneri for this colloquium and for giving us this much needed clear direction.

Will like to acknowledge the immense support we have receive from great Nigerians and others all over the world who have been deeply touched by this tragedy and reached out in several helpful ways.

We thank and appreciate Mr. Ademola Akinrele SAN, Mr. Tani Molajo SAN, Mr. Uche Nwokedi SAN, Mr. Supo Shasore SAN, Mr. Chijioke Okoli SAN, Mr. Stephen Kola Balogun, Mr. Tola Akinkugbe, Mr. Philip Ikeazor, Mr. Chris Ubosi, Mr. Ike Osakwe, Mr. Ladi Ani - Mumuney, Mr. Tayo Ayeni and others too numerous to mention. A journey of this kind often involves very many fellow travellers such as we have happily encountered here.

Asaba will always remember those who stood by her as she posed the very difficult national question of what we are and could be as Nigerians.

Asaba people can not thank enough our adopted brethren Prof. Elizabeth Bird and Professor Fraser Ottannelli for their brilliant research and publication of the book on the massacre. The book won many awards and has been very well received. In this connection, we also thank Jon Silverman, former Home Affairs Correspondence of the BBC for his belief in the Asaba Massacre Cause.

Dalu Nu and am afraid to say that the works begins

ASABA MASSACRE MEMORIAL MONUMENT

The Asaba Massacre Oct 1967

Earth Conceal Not the Blood Shed On Thee

