

General Sanni Abacha's Inaugural Speech

Fellow Nigerians,

sequel to the resignation of the former Head of the Interim National Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Chief Ernest Shonekan and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, I have had extensive consultations within the armed forces hierarchy and other well meaning Nigerians in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems which have engulfed our beloved country, and which have made life most difficult to the ordinary citizen of this nation.

Chief Ernest Shonekan took over as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at a most trying time in the history of the country. Politically, economically, and socially, there were lots of uncertainties. Things appeared bleak and the atmosphere was heavy with uncertainties. However, driven by a belief in himself, his countrymen, and love for his country, he accepted to face the challenges of our time.

I will, therefore, like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his selfless service to the nation. He showed great courage at taking on the daunting task of heading the Interim National Government and even greater courage to know when to leave.

Many have expressed fears about the apparent return of the military. Many have talked about the concern of the international community. However, under the present circumstances the survival of our beloved country is far above any other consideration. Nigeria is the only country we have.

We must, therefore, solve our problems ourselves. We must lay a very

solid foundation for the growth of democracy. We should avoid any ad hoc or temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose. Consequently, the following decisions come into immediate effect:

The Interim National Government is hereby dissolved.

The National and State Assemblies are also dissolved.

The State Executive Councils are dissolved. The Brigade Commanders are to take over from the Governors in their States until Administrators are appointed. Where there are no Brigade Commanders, the Commissioners of Police in the State are to take over.

All Local Governments stand dissolved. The Directors of Personnel are to take over the administration of the Local Governments until Administrators are appointed.

All former Secretaries to Federal Ministries are to hand over to their Directors-General until Ministers are appointed.

The two political parties are hereby dissolved.

All processions, political meetings and associations of any type in any part of the country are hereby banned.

Any consultative committee by whatever name called is hereby proscribed.

Decree 61 of 1993 is hereby abrogated.

A Provisional Ruling Council (PRC), is hereby established. It will comprise:

The Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the federal Republic of Nigeria as Chairman.

The Chief of General Staff as Vice-Chairman
The Honourable Minister of Defence
The Chief of Defence Staff
The Service Chiefs
The Inspector General of Police
The Attorney General and Minister of Justice
The Internal Affairs Minister
The Foreign Affairs Minister
Also, a Federal Executive Council will be put in place.

Our security system will be enhanced to ensure that lives of citizens, property of individuals are protected and preserved. Drug trafficking and other economic crimes such as 419 must be tackled and eliminated. On the current strike throughout the nation following the increase in the price of fuel, I appeal to all the trade unions to return to work immediately. We cannot afford further dislocation and destruction of our economy. On the closed media houses, government is hereby lifting the order of proscription with immediate effect.

We, however, appeal to the media houses that in this spirit of national reconciliation, we should show more restraint and build a united and peaceful Nigeria.

Fellow Nigerians, the events of the past months, starting from the annulment of the June 12 presidential election, culminating in the appointment of the former Head of State, Chief Ernest Shonekan, who unfortunately resigned yesterday, are well known to you. The economic downturn has undoubtedly been aggravated by the ongoing political crisis.

We require well thought-out and permanent solutions to these problems if we are to emerge stronger for them. Consequently, a constitutional conference with full constituent powers will be established soon to determine the future constitutional structure of

Nigeria. The constitutional conference will also recommend the method of forming parties, which will lead to the ultimate recognition of political parties formed by the people. While the conference is on, the reorganisation and reform of the following major institutions will be carried out:

The Military

The Police

The Customs

The Judiciary

NITEL

NNPC

NEPA

The Banking Industry

Higher Educational Institutions

This regime will be firm, humane, and decisive. We will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will be decisively dealt with. For the International Community, we ask that you suspend judgment while we grapple with the onerous task of nation building, reconciliation and repairs. This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination to restore peace and stability to our country and on these foundations, enthrone a lasting and true democracy. Give us the chance to solve our problems in our own ways.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.