

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



RC: 737676

(Mainstreaming Social Justice In Public Life)

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Press Statement

MINISTER OF STATE, PETROLEUM RESOURCES, DR IBE KACHIKWU'S ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NNPC NEEDS TO BE INVESTIGATED

Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) notes with regret the recent allegations by the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu on the way and manner Dr. Maikanti Baru, the Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, has been running the affairs of the Corporation. We recall that officers of the previous federal administration who managed the oil sector are facing investigations and trials for offences related to the stealing of Nigeria's resources.

Key allegations as revealed by Dr. Ibe Kachikwu include the award of \$10billion crude term contracts; \$5billion direct sales direct purchase contracts; \$3billion AKK pipeline contract; financing allocation funding contracts worth \$3billion and NPDC production service contract of \$4billion. In all, these contracts worth \$25billion were awarded in breach of legal and procurement requirements and the NNPC Board was never involved. Again, key management positions were filled without the input of the NNPC Board. If the *"legal and procedural requirement is that all contracts above \$20m would need to be reviewed and approved by the board of NNPC and in over one year of Mr Baru's tenure, no contract has been run through the board,"* then the procedure is fundamentally flawed.

These allegations are weighty and if they are true, constitute serious crimes and acts of economic sabotage against the Nigerian people and the economy. It would not be difficult to establish if NNPC has held board meetings since Dr Maikanti Baru's tenure and if meetings have been so held, the agenda of such meetings. Finding out the person(s) who took decisions on appointments that were contrary to laid down procedures would also not be difficult to establish.

Coming at a time the administration is prosecuting a war against corruption and seeking to enforce due process in the management of national resources, it is imperative that these allegations are thoroughly investigated. If a prima facie case is established, the offender(s) should be prosecuted and the full weight of the law brought to bear on them. Therefore, President Muhammadu Buhari should rise to the occasion, in the national

interest and ensure that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission moves expeditiously to investigate these weighty allegations; consider suspending the alleged official(s) from office to avoid tampering with evidence and sabotaging investigations.

In the past, many Nigerians have alleged that the federal administration remains silent when serious allegations are made against its key officials. CSJ recalls the grass cutting scandal involving the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation and the benumbing silence following the submission of the report of the Committee headed by the Vice President to President Muhammadu Buhari. It is imperative that the extant allegation is not swept under the carpet. Otherwise, the morality of continued prosecution of persons accused of lesser economic and financial crimes will become a subject for serious questioning. Nigeria has only one set of laws and it should apply across board in accordance with the tenets of justice which demands equality before the law, equal protection of the law and treating like cases alike.

We hope that law enforcement and investigation agencies would live up to the demands of their statutory and constitutional mandates.



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