

15 November 2016
Lagos, Nigeria

NIGERIAN SLUM / INFORMAL SETTLEMENT FEDERATION

**THE NIGERIAN SLUM/INFORMAL SETTLEMENT FEDERATION
CONDEMNS FORCED EVICTION OF OVER 30,000 FROM OTODO GBAME & THOUSANDS
MORE FROM EBUTE-IKATE, LAGOS ON 9-11 NOVEMBER 2016
CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF RELIEF MATERIALS & EMERGENCY SHELTER;
and
DEMANDS IMMEDIATE MORATORIUM ON DEMOLITIONS IN LAGOS & INVESTIGATION
INTO ROLE OF POLICE & PRIVATE INTERESTS IN FORCED EVICTIONS**

Today, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation stands in solidarity with our members in Otodo Gbame community, an ancestral fishing village located off MTN Project Fame Road in Lekki Phase I, as well as their neighbors in Ebute-Ikate community.

We condemn the forced evictions of over 30,000 hard-working, law-abiding citizens from Otodo Gbame and thousands more from Ebute-Ikate on 9-11 November 2016. We in particular condemn the use of fire, demolition in the middle of the night, and the tragic loss of life of persons who drowned when chased by police into the Lagos Lagoon.

We also condemn the total impunity, noting that the forced eviction of Otodo Gbame was carried out in blatant disregard of a subsisting order of the Lagos State High Court restraining the Police and the Lagos State Government from carrying out any demolition or eviction of Otodo Gbame or other waterfront communities across Lagos State.

The forced eviction of Otodo Gbame community commenced on the morning of 9 November 2016 when police began assisting a group of thugs led by a member of the Elegushi Chieftaincy family to set fire to houses, businesses, and community facilities. When residents tried to quench the fires, the police chased them away with teargas and bullets, forcing residents to rush into the Lagos Lagoon. Several persons drowned.

Just after midnight, in the wee hours of 10 November 2016, the police came back with a bulldozer that began to demolish the remainder of the community in the dead of night, when residents and the newly homeless were sleeping. They again set properties ablaze. Despite calls to higher levels of the police, including the Complaints Response Unit in the Inspector General of Police's office, there was no respite to protect lives and properties.

In a public statement on 9 November 2016, the Lagos State Police Command pointed to the involvement of the Lagos State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development in the eviction. An official of the Lagos Building Control Agency also admitted involvement.



*agbajowo la fin soya
pili pili toloton mi je po godo tolonayo
unity is our strength*



In the morning of 11 November 2016, police and a demolition squad on mufti came suddenly to Ebute Ikate, an informal settlement neighboring Otodo Gbame, and told residents to start packing their loads. The demolition began shortly thereafter with a bulldozer destroying homes and shops and police setting properties on fire. Media were denied access to the community, while thousands were evicted in a matter of hours.

Since 11 November 2016, evictees are facing a grave humanitarian disaster without shelter, access to clean water, food, or other basic needs. Each day, police return to Otodo Gbame to harass evictees with arrest and setting more properties ablaze. On the evening of 13 November, for instance, police came to set fire to the approximately 100 traditional bamboo houses that remained above the Lagoon. One of our members was handcuffed and arrested when he tried to present the police with a copy of the court injunction.

While we, the urban poor, stand up to this grave and inhumane injustice, we are pleased to be joined by so many others in civil society and beyond who have condemned these acts. We note the deafening silence, however, of our elected leaders – the President, the Lagos State Governor, the members of the National Assembly and Lagos State House of Assembly, among others – and other voices that should represent the international community in condemning these atrocities, including UN Habitat, the World Bank, and foreign Embassies.

We firmly believe that Lagos State and Nigeria as a whole should, by the year 2016, have left such atrocities beyond and be moving toward modern, inclusive, participatory and pro-poor urban development. We are deeply saddened to discover, once again, that our government and security forces are still employing the brutal practices of the military era.

We therefore call upon our elected leaders and the international community to demand:

1. Universal condemnation of the forced evictions in Otodo Gbame and Ebute Ikate;
2. Immediate provision of relief materials and emergency shelter for evictees, along with longer-term plans for rebuilding or suitable resettlement of evictees, along with compensation for all losses, and a public apology from all responsible;
3. An immediate moratorium on demolitions in Lagos State and engagement with we, the urban poor, around alternatives to evictions;
4. A public inquiry into the role of police and private interests in Lagos demolitions.

The Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation is a movement of the urban poor for our dignity and development, made up of community savings groups in over 70 slums and informal settlements here in Lagos – and growing also in other Nigerian cities. In addition to community-led economic empowerment through our savings groups, we work with our member communities to undertake citywide slum profiling, mapping, and enumeration. We are supported by Justice & Empowerment Initiatives – Nigeria and affiliated with Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a global network of slum dwellers' federations.

SIGNED: NIGERIAN SLUM/INFORMAL SETTLEMENT FEDERATION, LAGOS CHAPTER

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