

HE NAMED HIS MOVEMENT 'REVOLUTION NOW' AND THEY JAILED HIM



Aug. 5, 2019 (GIN) – Omoyele Sowore, activist, founder of the anti-corruption news service “Sahara Reporters” and former presidential candidate, was not surprised when the Nigerian Security Service (DSS) forcibly entered his house early Saturday morning and arrested him. His crime? Organizing a protest against bad governance in Nigeria.

The DSS arrived Aug. 3 with four trucks, seizing his phones and other electronic gadgets. Sowore launched his Revolution Now movement in part, he said, because recent elections which returned President Muhammadu Buhari to power were not credible.

But the calls for revolution were unlawful, according to the security officers.

“He crossed the line, he threatened public safety,” said a government spokesman. “Nothing will happen, there won’t be any revolution. The government, which has been elected

democratically, will be in place.”

The arrest could interrupt plans for nationwide anti-government protests scheduled for this week.

In a recent meeting with supporters, Sowore declared: “This series of marches and rallies will continue until we have the Nigeria of our dreams.” Currently, he said, “there’s no respect for our dignity as a people. For you to get back your dignity, do what they’re doing in Hong Kong, in Algeria, in Tunisia and in Puerto Rico.”

“Shut down this unworkable system... The revolution is now.”

Among Sowore’s many friends is Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka who spoke out against the arrest in a strongly-worded statement.

“Beyond the word ‘revolution’... nothing that Sowore has uttered, written, or advocated suggests that he is embarking on, or urging the public to engage in a forceful overthrow of the government,” the writer said.

“His arrest is a travesty and violation of the fundamental rights of citizens to congregate and make public their concerns.”

Nigeria’s Premium Times newspaper editorialized: “Speaking out is becoming more dangerous in Nigeria as curbs on free speech and repercussions for taking stances opposed to the government of the day are on the rise.

“Without a contest of ideas fueled by dissent, Nigeria will grow more ignorant, timid, and ultimately, impoverished.”

Meanwhile, income inequality is hitting a new record in Nigeria. About 90 million people - roughly half Nigeria's population - live in extreme poverty, according to estimates from the World Data Lab's Poverty Clock while Nigeria's richest man could spend \$1 million a day and not run out of money for 46 years, says the global charity Oxfam.

Sahara Reporters was launched in New York City in a midtown loft. Updates on Sowore's situation can be found on sowore2019.org, and on Twitter at [#FreeSoworeNow](https://twitter.com/FreeSoworeNow)

ILHAN OMAR CHECKS OUT GHANA ON A 'BACK TO AFRICA' TOUR



Aug. 5, 2019 (GIN) – Chants of “Send her back!” seemed to have little impact on the firm-footed Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, one of the four young women of color in the crosshairs of the embattled U.S. president.

It may have been his chant but it was her idea to join the Congressional Black Caucus and visit Ghana on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans in Virginia.

Congresswoman Omar even snapped some photos of herself with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi stepping through the “Door of Return” – a pan-African initiative in support of the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent whose goal was to launch a new era of cooperation between Africa and the Diaspora in the 21st century.

“They said ‘send her back,’ Omar wrote in her Instagram and Twitter posts, “but Speaker [Pelosi] didn’t just make arrangement to send me back, she went back with me!”

The CBC delegation includes the distinguished Majority Whip James Clyburn, Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus Karen Bass, Co-Chair of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee Congresswoman Barbara Lee and icon of the Congress, John Lewis.

Chairwoman Bass said: “400 years ago this year, our ancestors were first brought to this continent in chains. On this delegation, 12 Members of the Congressional Black Caucus will return to the African continent as Members of the United States Congress.

“We have come so far but we still have so far to go. Among the history being made this trip, I am very much also looking forward to witnessing the first woman Speaker of the United States House of Representatives address the Ghanaian parliament. I thank Speaker Pelosi for leading this important trip

and for joining us in sending a signal of mutual respect and partnership to Ghana and the continent of Africa as a whole.”

Speaker Pelosi will also be leading a Congressional delegation to U.S. Army Africa headquarters at a time of concern about the spiraling rise of military operations on the continent. The number of U.S. military personnel on the continent has jumped 170 percent, from 2,600 to 7,000. Military missions – activities, programs and exercises – have risen 1,900, and the number of commandos has grown exponentially, along with the size and scope of AFRICOM’s constellation of bases. *w/Speaker N. Pelosi, Rep. O. Ilhan and Ghana Pres. Nana Akufo-Addo.*

UGANDA JAILS FEMINIST CRITIC FOR ‘CYBERHARASSMENT’ OF PRESIDENT ON FACEBOOK



Aug. 5, 2019 (GIN) – A prominent university lecturer, poet and gender rights activist has been ordered to serve nine more months in prison for the crime of criticizing President Yoweri Museveni on Facebook.

The sentence outraged rights activists. Joan Nyanyuki, director for East Africa at Amnesty International said: “This verdict flies in the face of Uganda’s obligations to uphold the right to freedom of expression. It “demonstrates the depths of the government’s intolerance of criticism.”

Dr. Stella Nyanzi, a former research fellow at Makerere University in Kampala, drew the government’s wrath for posting comments including one that compared President Museveni to “a pair of buttocks.”

When the decision was announced on Thursday, the scholar gave a passionate speech in which she expressed disappointment with that verdict.

“I intended to annoy Yoweri Museveni. We are tired of his 30 year-long dictatorship. Please find me guilty of offensive communication against Yoweri Museveni Kaguta!” After the sentencing, she lifted her blouse and shook her breasts in a cultural expression of disrespect for the viewer. The audience of women cheered loudly.

Dr. Nyanzi, who has been in jail since November, was acquitted on a second charge, of "offensive communication".

“The mere fact that forms of expression are considered insulting to a public figure is not sufficient ground to penalize anyone,” the Amnesty representative underscored. “Public officials, including those exercising the highest political authority, are legitimately subject to criticism and political opposition.”

Kenyan photojournalist Boniface Mwangi, writing on Twitter, weighed in: “The Museveni court has jailed Stella Nyanzi but you cannot jail someone who is already free. Stella Nyanzi is artistically free, intellectually free and she is fighting to liberate Uganda from tyranny. She has used the court as a platform for political education.” Her campaigns on issues such as demanding sanitary pads for schoolgirls and gay rights have made her a divisive figure in a country where homosexual acts are illegal.

The troublesome Facebook posts contain profanity-laced vitriol about the president and his wife in a style known as “Radical Rudeness” and the “Necessity of Political Vulgarly” —a traditional Ugandan strategy for unsettling the powerful through the tactical use of public insult.

“Know our rich history before you think I am the first fighter with words,” Dr. Nyanzi wrote in one post.

“My presence in your Court as a suspect and prisoner highlights multiple facets of dictatorship. I exposed the entrenchment of autocracy. I refuse to be a mere spectator in the struggle to oust the worst dictator.”
w/pix of S. Nyanzi

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