

## ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES



### UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN BRANCH

12 July, 2022

#### PRESS RELEASE

### **STOP TOYING WITH THE NATION'S FUTURE: ENOUGH IS NOW ENOUGH MR PRESIDENT**

**Text of a Message from the Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Ibadan Branch**

#### **Introduction**

On Monday, 11 July 2022, a statement by Garba Shehu, President Buhari's spokesperson credited to President Buhari with an expression of worry that the strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) had generational consequences on families, the educational system and future development of the country. According to him "We hope that ASUU will sympathise with the people on the prolonged strike. Truly, enough is enough for keeping students at home. Don't hurt the next generation for goodness sake,"

These words from Garba Shehu do not represent the reality on ground and is another misguided statement exemplifying that our country's President does not have his own voice. Instead of addressing the problem, the presidency is trading blames. This administration has taken Nigerians too much for granted and Nigerians should be the ones to say enough is enough.

#### **Buhari's Administration Remains the Oppressor**

The statement by President Buhari is not only a monumental self-deceit but is an indictment of his administration. This is because if there is anyone or group of people to receive such warning of "enough is enough", ASUU is the least candidate for it. Or rather the warning should go to President Buhari and the Presidency over the way and manner in which they are steering the ship of the nation in general, and their mishandling of the Nigerian education system in particular.

Muhammadu Buhari's campaign in 2015 centred on the eradication of corruption, ending the insecurity in the country, stabilizing the Nigeria's economy and ending strike in the

tertiary education sector through proper funding and sundry supports. However, seven years into his administration as the president of Nigeria, all these campaign promises have not only been far from being accomplished, but the situations have deepened to an unprecedented magnitude much worse than they were in 2015 when he took over power as the president of Nigeria.

In terms of the economy, Buhari inherited the biggest economy in Africa, with the Naira exchanging 200 to 1 dollar. Under Buhari, Nigeria has become poverty capital of the world with almost the weakest currency in the world, exchanging N470 (official) and N600 (parallel market) to \$1. This is one of the reasons for the ongoing strike which Buhari's government has refused to address. To be sure, in the ASUU-FGN agreement of 2009, the consideration was to have an African average in terms of salaries. By then, the exchange rate was N150 to \$1. Salaries of the professorial cadre were pegged at between N450, 000 and N500,000 (which was equal to about \$3000) per month. That was in 2009. The agreement was to be reviewed after every three years, the first of which was supposed to be 2012. This never happened up till date. The current exchange rate is N470 to \$1 (official) and N600 to \$1 (parallel market). What this means is that no professor in any public university in Nigeria currently earns up to \$1000 in a month due to the mishandling of the Nigerian economy by Buhari's administration. In the interview granted on Monday night, 11 July 2022, Garba Shehu argued that the 2009 agreement was with the previous administration and thus is not binding on the present government. What Garba Shehu and the Presidency need to know is that government is a continuum. Again, the Buhari's administration has severally benefitted from the repatriated Abacha loot, without rejecting it as money not looted in the current administration. It is therefore tantamount to double standard to accept money looted from previous administrations, but reject the agreements reached during the previous administrations.

On incessant strike by tertiary education workers, Muhammadu Buhari in 2013 criticized the government of Nigeria under Goodluck Jonathan for allowing ASUU to go on strike. But it is on record that the university workers' strikes under Buhari have been the longest, due to the insensitivity of the current administration and its handlers towards the plight of Nigerians and due to their "I-don't-care" attitude towards education in Nigeria.

### **Enough of Presidential Deceit**

We in ASUU are in shock after listening to President Buhari's statement on the ongoing strike by the Union. The statement has taken the characteristic insensitivity of the president to an arrogant height. It ought to be clear to

Nigerians that the government had no intention to resolve the perennial problems in the University system. Education is an irritant to the President Buhari administration and academics are considered (and are being treated as) disposable entities who the president is barely tolerating. As if to confirm the President's disposition, Garba Shehu, his spokesperson showed what we had warned Nigerians about that the negotiation and discussion held so far with the Unions are ruse staged by the federal government to fool Nigerians.

Is it not a wonder that the President set up a negotiating team and is unaware that negotiations and all forms of discussion had been concluded?

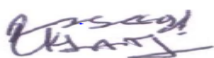
Is it not simply irresponsible that Garba Shehu is unaware of the position of things and the fact we are waiting for Government's approval of the agreement and proposals the Prof. Nimi Briggs committee and the Minister of Education reached with ASUU so that we can sign, begin implementation and move on?

Thus, the onus is not on Buhari to say "enough is enough" to ASUU, because the warning is not only misplaced, but akin to scoring an own goal and a serious indictment on Buhari's administration. Instead, Nigerians in unison should tell Buhari and the presidency;

**enough is enough on corruption,  
enough is enough on insecurity,  
enough is enough on economic hardship,  
enough is enough on destruction of education system, and  
enough is enough on maladministration.**

Nigerians must now show that the nation is not a fiefdom of the president and his clique. Enough is now enough!

Yours in the continuous search for a great Nigeria,



**Ayoola Akinwole**  
**Chairperson**  
12 July, 2022