

Clerics' Involvement in Nigerian Politics: A Case Study of the Obidient Movement

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Abstract

The 2023 election straddles some particularities in relation to previous elections in Nigeria, including Youth Involvement, Active Clerical Participation and most spectacularly the new Electoral Act. This study investigates and problematizes the involvement of clerics (especially of the Roman Catholic denomination) during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. It pays closer attention to the dynamics of the OBIdient Movement as a new political force in Nigeria by investigating the role, modalities, cause and effects of clerics' participation in Nigerian politics. As a result of this new development and following an observational, survey and analytical approach, we lay claim to a number of paradigm shifts in Nigerian politics and have provided inside information on the intricate dynamics of what transpired during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Keywords: Clerics' Involvement, OBIdient Movement, Candidate Endorsement, Good Governance, Nigerian politics.

Introduction

The early hours of 2022 in Nigeria brought on a colossal breakdown in security: Nigerian roads and bushes were becoming beehives of kidnapping activities. Many Churches were experiencing terrible spates of attacks from terrorists. Catholic Priests were increasingly becoming soft targets on the roads, especially in the South East. But the case of the gruesome murder and burning alive of Reverend Fr Isaac Achi of the Diocese of Minna made so much headlines and left deep emotional impacts on the psyche of many Catholic priests in Nigeria (Vanguard Editorial, 2023).

On the political pedestal, the eight years inglorious rule of General Mohammadu Buhari was winding down while campaigns for the 2023 elections were gradually gathering momentum. Something was going to be spectacular about this year's election: The Nigerian Youths were getting interested. The data of Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) registration which was published by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) already showed a staggering statistic of 37,060,399 youths which represented 39.65% of the voting population. The New Electoral Act had clement promises of electoral transparency while the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) gave a new technological impetus to the 2023 Election that was novel.

Then came the emergence of the candidature of His Excellency, the former governor of Anambra State, Mr. Peter Obi. Obi's candidature came like a long-awaited Messiah and his dramatic migration to the Labour Party few days to the presidential primaries of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) increased the growth of the party like a tsunami. The situation was further escalated by the opting of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) for a Muslim-Muslim Presidential ticket. According to Odii (2023), "The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and prominent Church leaders in Nigeria rose against the Muslim - Muslim ticket, describing it as a ploy to Islamize Nigeria. However, Muslim groups in Nigeria threw their full weight behind the Muslim - Muslim ticket" (p. 808). This goes to affirm Afolabi's claim that religion has taken "a position of importance in Nigerian Politics" (Afolabi, 2015: 808). Against this development, clerics in Nigeria (especially of the Roman Catholic denomination) saw it not just as a national challenge but an ecclesiastical exigency to help mobilize support for Peter Obi's presidency.

Interestingly, this development occasioned a new theological debate on the nature, modalities and limitations of priests' involvement in politics. The codes of Canon Law such as Canons 385 (which prohibited priests' active involvement in Politics) and Canons 387 (regulating Priests' support of Political parties) were problematized shortly before and during the Conference of the Nigerian Bishops held at Orlu in Imo State, Nigeria (Beal and Others, 2003). After that Conference, the learned bishops submitted in a communique dated 8th to 16th September 2022, a robust position stating that the Church was neither going to be neutral on political matters nor partisan (Communique of Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, 2022). To this end, the challenge became: How? To what extent would Catholic priests involve themselves in the 2023 election without tainting the Church's image and contravening the age-long Canons? This study therefore investigates and problematizes the involvement of clerics in the 2023 election with a special focus on what some regard as their exigent support for the OBI-dient Movement while also considering the dangers posed by the threat of insecurity to the common good of the Church.

Methodology

Our approach is largely qualitative and adopts the following processes: of observation (whereby the researchers, being also deeply involved in the OBI-dient Movement, can be seen as participant observers); a descriptive study (where the researchers take an in-depth analysis of the intricacies of clerical participation in the 2023 election; and a case study (where the research zooms in on the OBI-dient Movement as a focus group - a new development in the Nigerian political matrix). We also relied on in-person interviews with some resource persons such as religious leaders whose opinions are considered vital to the facts and discourse of this research. As participant observers in the OBI-dient Movement, we played active roles in the mobilization of fellow priests for the following:

1. Sensitization of the people for PVC (voter's card) registration.
2. Helping to build Federal and State Structures for the Labour Party since the nation has no provision for independent candidature in its Constitution.
3. Grassroot mobilization of support for Peter Obi through fliers, handbills and vocal solicitations.
4. Organization of Town Hall Meetings by the Political Enlightenment arm of the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC).
5. Campaign against vote buying and selling.
6. Election monitoring/observation.
7. Ensuring the uploading of results of our various Polling Units to the IRev portal.

These roles were not without such major challenges as opposition from the ruling party, lobbying and all forms of unethical pressures that could impinge on our priestly integrity and even threat of life. In addition, we sourced data from available research papers, social and print media, opinion of clerical and political stakeholders and other relevant documents.

Theoretical Framework

We have anchored our work on theories like the Democratic Participation Media theory, which was proposed in recognition of new media developments and increasing criticism of the dominance /monopoly of the mainstream media houses. This theory argues for the essence of active involvement of every other aspect of the media. It is known as the reaction theory, according to Folarin (1998) which insists that the existing bureaucracy, as well as commercialization and hegemony in the media system, has been broken down so as to guarantee media access for all potential users and consumers. Through this, the citizens can now express their right to self-determination.

Another theory adopted in this research is the Agenda Setting theory propounded by Walter Lippman, Bernard Cohen and others. It states that institutions (like the Church) shape Political debates and outcomes by determining what issues are most important and featuring them in news broadcasts, homilies or town hall

meetings. The processes leading to the formation of agenda setting theory, even though not begun by Bernard Cohen, was made popular by him as he articulated earlier views into a more astute line of thought that is today known as agenda setting theory (Nwogu, 2008). Cohen, (1963, p.13), succinctly puts it that, "The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers, listeners and viewers (Sic) what to think about".

Media, no doubt, influences the choices of people and their life styles. Media messages and contents have in no small measure driven the activities of people in the society. Media, most times, drive the socio-economic and political life of the people. People can arguably be said to be influenced by what they read, watch and listen to. It is believed that people consider as important those things reported in the media and that major issues discussed in the society are introduced by the media (Nwogu, 2008). The formation of 'Obidient' movement for and during the 2023 elections was driven essentially by social media. Mainstream media, which previously privileged a political class by monopolizing and dictating narratives at will, were shortchanged as Peter Obi bypassed them and instead, made effective use of social media platforms to engage the youths. The use of platforms like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and the likes, to share contents focusing on issues important to the youths, actually set the agenda for youths' participation and influence in the 2023 elections in Nigeria.

It is interesting to note here that most of the activities planned and executed by the OBIdient Movement of priests were done via social media platforms. Groups such as "Priests for Good Governance" were created and housed over three platforms of more than 500 priests each with a Think Tank group to propel the activities of all Catholic Priests in Nigeria. This effort remains a sample for the most successful deployment of social media and agenda setting in democratic Nigeria to date.

The OBIdient Movement: Role of the Catholic Clergy

The emergence of Peter Gregory Obi as the presidential candidate of the Labour Party in mid-2022 signaled the end to an old era and the beginning of a new one in Nigeria's national politics. According to Okonkwo (2023), the Nigerian youths, after a careful scrutiny of all the Presidential aspirants, warned all the political parties not to field any of the corrupt politicians of the old order who had contributed in ruining Nigeria. Nigerian Youths believed he was the best candidate and expressed their wishes at the Abuja Party Secretariat headquarters of the People's Democratic Party (popularly known as the 'Wadata Plaza'). But this expression of interest was ignored by the delegates who went on with their 'monetization jamboree' and ended up surrendering the party Presidential ticket to the highest bidder. Shortly before this ugly development, Peter Obi's migration to the Labour Party gave new impetus to the group that became the "OBIdient Movement".

The OBIdient Movement saw in Peter Obi a symbol of the struggle for good governance in Nigeria. As Okonkwo (2023) succinctly puts it:

They reached this decision based on Peter Obi's track record of ability and performance in Anambra State, from being the worst governed state to the best governed state after just 8 years in office... He was the 1st in poverty alleviation, in fulfilment of the millennium development goals in education, building best network of roads, paying up Anambra State debts and leaving a whopping savings of 75 billion naira and 150 million dollars in savings...They also saw in Peter Obi, a jinx breaker: He was the 1st Governor to regain his mandate through court in Nigeria; 1st person to introduce staggered election in our electoral system in 2007; 1st governor to win without structure in 2003 with All Progressive Ground Alliance (APGA) in Anambra State. Their mind was made up and Obi is the answer to the call for a new Nigeria.

The OBIdient Movement became a new identifiable force with ideological slogans such as "We no de give shi - shi", "Go and verify", "Take back your Country from these old Politicians". These slogans were gleaned from the country-wide campaign speeches of Peter Obi himself. All hopes were rife to translate their support for

Peter Obi into decisive votes and show those determined to destroy Nigeria that democracy is not plutocracy (Agbo, 2022a). The battle line was drawn between the new and old orders who continued to taunt the OBI-dient Movement as a mere gathering of "four people tweeting together in a room." As the million-man matches of Nigerian youths in support of Peter Obi continued to gather momentum in the mega cities, the older politicians continued to ridicule the Labour Party as a "structureless party". Yet, Peter Obi insisted that "The hundred million Nigerians that live in poverty and the thirty-five million Nigerians who didn't know where their next meal will come from will be his (party) structure". Hassan submits that "With his promises of frugality and accountability, he has attracted the support of a youthful OBI-dient movement tired of the profligate elite" (Hassan, in *Businessday* Editorial, 2022).

Interestingly and unsurprisingly, Peter Obi, as Hassan opined, "was not just a candidate of the young people, he could eventually be a candidate of the Church". Many clerics of both Catholic and non-Catholic denominations were investing huge support for his candidacy. While some did so because they were convinced that he was the best candidate, others acted in protest to a Muslim - Muslim configuration or a Fulani versus Fulani succession. Furthermore, Peter Obi's choice of Senator Datti Ahmed as his running mate was seen as an amazing and complimentary combination. The Northern elders' forum threw their weight in support of their candidacy and a good number of the Northern Muslim elites saw in the duo a better future for Nigeria.

To be clear, the Catholic Clergy played very significant roles in the growth of the OBI-dient Movement. At a time when the Labour Party had little or no structures all over the country, with no single office holder anywhere, not even a Councilor, Catholic Priests organized themselves in the 58 dioceses all over the federation and more than 5000 parishes across the Country to preach the 'good news of a Peter Obi's Presidency'. This, in no little way, gave stronger grassroot momentum to the social media prominence that Peter Obi was already enjoying, especially among the Nigerian Youths. All the Churches (Catholic and non-Catholic) were reverberating with his praises while many mosques were applauding his jingles, his Christian background notwithstanding. A combination of these shots from different cylinders must have led to the impressive outing of the Labour Party in the just concluded 2023 elections.

Challenges, Criticisms and Outcomes

The OBI-dient movement among Catholic Priests did not grow without criticisms both from within and without the Church. The very first critical appraisal of this movement in the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka was made by Rev Fr Dr Innocent Enwe¹ who first questioned the ontological status of this movement by asking whether it would not end up as a mere expression of a political "revolt" rather than a "revolution". Six months after this question was raised, what looked like a revolt had clearly metamorphosed into a movement but not without its challenges. In a sense, the Obidient movement, despite its massive popular appeal, could be said to lack ecclesiastical footing. To be clear, this is because it lacks full theological backing. In articulating the mind of the Church Fathers of the 2nd Vatican Council, Flannery (1988) said: "The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified in any way with the political Community nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendental character of the human person" (G.S, 76). As an outcome, the movement can never claim to have officially received the backing of any Nigerian bishop. So many theologians registered their dissenting voices of caution as the movement developed. Rev Prof Stan Chu Ilo² wrote a number of articles arguing strongly against Candidate endorsement as follows:

This is to avoid scandal or ambiguity in proclaiming the gospel, and in creating needless divisions among the faithful. While many may believe that our Catholic faith impels us to vote for a particular candidate, it is a rare occasion that a political candidate stands for everything that the Church teaches both in positions and track record. By not endorsing candidates which to greater or lesser degree may be at variance with Church teaching, the Church avoids projecting confusion about Catholic truths.

Again, the Church avoids the possibility of future scandal by not endorsing candidates who may, after being elected, change their positions or fail to fulfill their promises.

But does the Church offer any guidance in terms of voter education? Yes. Political enlightenment through formation of the free consciences of her faithful is allowed (G.S. 76). Thus, the US Bishops teach that "a Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and others (USCCB, Par. 34). Other Catholic Priests like Fr Chinenye Oluoma,³ staying in Urban areas like Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory), shared his own peculiar experiences as different from those in rural areas who minister to unenlightened Parishioners. He is of the opinion that the nature of the Congregation determines the modality of voter education.

Bishop Godfrey Onah⁴ did not mince words in condemning Priests' involvement in partisan politics as follows: The forthcoming elections present a golden opportunity for Nigerians to do the right thing by choosing the right crop of political leaders at all levels, irrespective of political and other divisive considerations. This is not the time for party loyalty or "delivering your ward" to the wrong person. Let us strive to "deliver" our respective wards to good governance, integrity and concern for the common good. All Church personnel, organs and institutions in the Diocese must not be seen to be partisan in a multi - party political system like ours. Do not be deceived by the rhetoric and empty promises of the politicians.

Fr Matthew Ezea⁵ reechoed this view of the Catholic bishop of Nsukka in all the Town Hall Meetings organized by the Justice, Development and Peace Commission of the Diocese. In a complicated development, however, some parties (specifically the ruling party) in Enugu State fell into disaffection with the Commission and did not trust completely her nonpartisan disposition. This led to their boycott of the remaining Town Hall Meetings organized by the Commission. As the Town Hall Meetings progressed, the Church struggled to maintain a level playing ground and kept exercising her teaching and prophetic roles to the final detriment of the aggrieved party. Agbo (2022a) took a radical and politically incisive position thus: "Many Nigerians are ready to drink poison simply because it is served in one's party tea cup. There is the need to fight against bad governance in Nigeria and revolt against such ideologies like "ashuaazumama" - a consumerist settlement/lobbying mentality that commodifies the dignity of the human person." This negative ideology was trending more especially in Enugu and several other states in Nigeria. Agbo (2022a) continues to say more emphatically that:

We need a new generation of 'avantgarde' politicians who will unite with people like Peter Obi to say We No De Give Shishi, We No De Take Shishi; People who will, after administering public office, tell you to Go And Verify all that they have done; People who will reduce the cost of consumption drastically in Leadership and increase production. It is no longer expedient for the Nigerian Church to remain apathetic or even neutral in politics. It is no longer wise for priests and pastors to fold their hands in prayer and allow the corrupt Politicians to continue to deceive and mislead our people. Political enlightenment is needed. A complete reorientation of our value system is needed politically, socially and religiously.

The challenge for clerics became: To what extent can one enlighten the people in the present dispensation of Nigeria, without being partisan? To what extent can the clerics exercise their prophetic ministry as priests from the pulpit, as well as on social and in print media without appearing partisan? To what extent can the priests specifically point their people to some of the wrongs already witnessed in the mega parties (APC and PDP), including godfatherism, consumerism, bribery and corruption, vote buying and selling, constitutional incongruence, and other anomalies without sounding partisan? He vociferously contends that we have seen the emergence of a Third force alignment that is, on the one hand, made up of embittered people who feel that the two mega parties (i.e., APC and PDP) in the Country have failed Nigerians, especially those who have a burning passion to help to fix this nation for better (Agbo, 2022b).

On a negative development, the social media was awash with numerous criticisms of Priests' active involvement in Politics in some states across the Federation such as Lagos, Enugu, and Anambra. Oyeleke (2023), expressing Pastor BribenaEfy'e's opinion, sees Pastor Osibanjo's nomination as a strategic attempt to launder the reputation of Muhammadu Buhari and make his candidature more palatable to the Church, since he was a pastor of one of the biggest Churches in Nigeria - The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). He argues that "there is no magical trait of skill and capacity bestowed as a result of religious conviction". Ekwunife (2023) reports the terrible insult meted on Peter Mba, the Gubernatorial Candidate of People's Democratic Party (PDP) by the OBIdient Movement fanatics when he went for campaign at Ugwuadinso in Enugu State. A plethora of social media articles flooded the air on both divides of the political battle. Ugwuoke Michael Onyemaechi⁶ and many others wrote an article where he accused a Priest of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka of destroying and destabilizing one of the Parishes in the diocese by using the sanctuary as an avenue for political misinformation. Ogbonna Asadu, Eze Nwamadi and Ezema Igwenu⁷ also wrote an article that went viral on the internet where they criticized some Catholic Priests over some purported bias against the PDP. Some other writers openly supported the Labour Party and accused some priests of collecting money to work for PDP in Enugu State. Wrong or correct as these accusations may be, they are all negative fallouts from the active involvement of the Clergy in the 2023 elections. Worthy of mention are the controversial homilies of Fr Ejike Mbaka whose "political prophesies" have remained distasteful to some clergy and lay people alike. In a recent publication, Fr Mbaka purportedly warned the incumbent Governor of Enugu State, Dr Peter Mba to resign now or be disgraced out of office (Onwuka, 2023). Fr. Mbaka also lamented in a recent homily that the Clerics have offended God during this past 2023 elections (Agbo, 2023). In all, the OBIdients believe that their Presidential election victory was stolen and have vowed to recover it (Okonkwo, 2023). However, the older order believes that the OBIdients are only day - dreaming and will soon lose steam. Akinlotan (2023) speaks about Wole Soyinka's criticism of the OBIdient Movement as a threat to the judiciary thus: He (Soyinka) warned the Presidential Candidate of the Labour Party before the Presidential election that if he lost the election, it would be his followers who lost for him. In their response, the OBIdients disparaged the Nobel Prize Winner both on social media and some mainstream media outfits. And responding to the disparaging remarks, Soyinka through a statement titled, 'Fascism on Course' retorted by saying that the "seeds of incipient fascism in the political arena have evidently matured". Several people including the young literary giant, Chimamanda Adichie, reacted to this accusation from Soyinka as "a cry taken too far." How can the OBIdient Movement be justifiably likened to fascism? The movement remains a concerted effort of young Nigerian youths to rally solidly behind a role model - a leading figure they found in His Excellency, Mr Peter Obi.

The result of the 2023 elections as officially announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), controversial as it has remained, still shows the impact of the OBIdient Movement in altering the political dynamics of Nigeria. It was a result that denied over ten state governors a place as senators in the current parliament and, instead, paved the way for new federal legislators. The role of Priests (Catholic and Non-Catholic) cannot be underestimated, especially in states like Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, Lagos, Nassarawa, Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory) and other areas where they made salient impact. It can be arguably observed, that in States like Enugu, during the Gubernatorial elections, when the narrative changed in many Churches, the outcome was significantly felt.

For better or worse, clerics' involvement in the 2023 election has been assessed by some as a child of necessity, and by some others, as a 'bull in a China shop'. Priests cannot ignore their prophetic roles, especially in speaking truth to power and partaking in different forms of political enlightenment, yet should never be clearly seen as being partisan.

Way Forward

Democracy has come to stay in Nigeria and the Church (especially the Roman Catholic Church) cooperates with all apparatchiks of government to make this dream a reality. Much as the Roman Catholic Church may not in itself be said to be essentially democratic, she accepts democracy as a preferred way of conducting political life. The synodal process, for example, is no longer exclusively an assembly of bishops but a journey of all the faithful, in which every local Church has an integral part to play (Oraegbunam, 2023). The Church through her Clerics, therefore, contributes to the growth of the democratic process by allowing her priests to exercise their leadership role especially in the area of voter education or political enlightenment but should not (as in the case of Fr Hyacinth Alia of Benue State), contest for a leadership position. The Church stops at the level of political conscientization. Mustapha (2023) calls it "the need for Political enculturation". For him, "informed citizenry has been described as the fulcrum of democracy". Consequently, when the majority is unenlightened, democracy becomes a tragedy since the majority will succeed in making the worst choice. Priests must therefore, never abdicate their bounden duty of political enlightenment no matter whose ox is gored. They should do so provided that they too are sufficiently knowledgeable about the true political scenario of the time, especially regarding the real character and personality profile of the contestants. This must however be done without unnecessary religious or denominational bias. Candidates should be assessed on the basis of what they can offer to the people and not on the basis of their Church denomination. Nnadi (2022) argues that the Church, like every pressure group, has every right to be involved in politics but this should be done with prudence. She laments such cases like in Anambra State "where being an Anglican or Catholic will to a great extent determine how far you might go politically". Clerics must work hard to teach their congregation how to engage in politics without bitterness. According to Bako & Others (2023), factors that mitigated the success of the 2023 General elections among others are hate speech, unfulfilled promises of the electoral umpire INEC, violence and intimidations of voters and party's prohibitive nomination fees that prevented common citizens from vying for different political positions. Clerics can help a lot in preaching against these vices before, during and long after the elections.

Moreover, we must note that the information people get even from the social media are sometimes distorted and subjective. Mustapha and others (2023) therefore contend that the information sourced from social media should be balanced when relayed from the pulpits. It is, thus, the job of priests and learned clerics to distill such information and be able to tell their Congregation what is true and what is fake news. The empowerment theory as posited by Zimmerman (2000) argues that when individuals are provided with opportunities to be active members of the society, they can be influential in the process of development. This empowerment is needed more for the Nigerian Youths. Ushie (2022) suggests that the Youths need to be empowered to be positively influential to the process of development unlike in many areas in southeastern Nigeria where many youths are playing ignominious roles such as the clandestine enforcement of illegal sit-at-home orders due to frustration.

On a positive note, Ushie (2022) noted a gradual shift towards an ideology-based politics in Nigeria. The OBIdient Movement has brought this paradigm shift in Nigerian politics where, for the first time, a big number of Nigerian Youths have jettisoned their tribal, religious and party interests to queue behind the man Peter Obi just because of his political ideologies which they are convinced would restore the equilibrium of leadership in Nigeria. Religion should not be allowed to destroy Nigeria. The Muslim - Muslim ticket of the ruling party, All Progressive Congress (APC) has attempted to do just this and needs to be firmly resisted. Odii (2023) following the recent events in Nigerian Politics, has criticized Nigeria's claim of secularism as a "deliberate hypocrisy" when the likes of Nasir El Rufai have both publicly and scandalously communicated religion as a most dangerous political weapon used in this 2023 election. The combined candidature of Peter Obi and Datti Ahmed became a perfect match to correct this narrative by drawing their strong support base across all the major religious and tribal divides within the country in order to pull the national political psyche beyond religious and tribal sentiments. It is left for Nigerians and posterity to decide the way forward.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the origin of and *raison d'être* for the OBI-dient Movement with specific emphasis on the role of Catholic priests in extensively galvanizing this movement. It has problematized clerics' own involvement in politics both from canonical and existential perspectives by outlining the gains and losses incurred in this process and, thus, provided inside information on the intricate dynamics of what transpired during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Accordingly, we have suggested ways by which Priestly involvement in politics will help in political enlightenment and the (re-)balancing of the negative impacts of social media in the disinformation age. By contrast, we have also highlighted the inherent danger of partisanship - undermining the pastoral integrity, unity and peace of a Parish/ Diocese if and when care is not taken. Going forward, one should tread with caution in relation to the new paradigm shift in Nigerian Politics. An ideology - based politics is gradually being birthed in Nigeria and clerical participation has come to stay. The terms and references of this renaissance can only be improved over time.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest by the authors.

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² Stan Chu Ilo, Unpublished Article, 17 March, 2023.

³ Chinenye Oluoma, Interview with authors, 23 April, 2022.

⁴ Bishop Godfrey Igwebuike Onah, Address presented to the Nsukka Diocesan pastoral Council, 17 September 2022.

⁵ Matthew Ezea, Address presented in a Town Hall Meeting of the Nsukka Diocesan Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), 19 January, 2022.

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⁷ Ogbonna Asadu, Eze Nwamadi and Ezema Igwenunu, Telephone Conversation: How Priest Represents Facts to Malign Ifeanyi Ossai and the PDP, Unpublished Socia Media article.