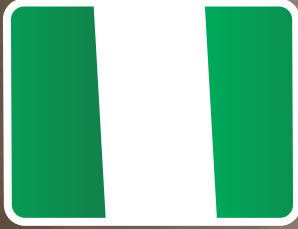


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# BUHARI®

SPECIAL EDITION ON PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

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## CHANGE BEGINS

### WHO IS PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI?

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# INSIDE

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## INAUGURAL SPEECH

Inaugural speech by His Excellency,  
President Muhammadu Buhari



## WHAT DOES BUHARI

Victory mean for africa?



## A NEW NIGERIA IS POSSIBLE

Beginning Today



## ANTICIPATING THE DAWN

of the New Administration

Oluseyi Adebisi

## The Change Game Begins



The change game begins, after a long anticipated wait that lasted 59 days. Since the historic call made by former president Goodluck Jonathan to his successor on the afternoon of March 31 that simmered all post-election hostilities, all eyes had looked forward to May 29, with bated breath.

Buhari, man of character & integrity is not a quitter, one virtue that would readily be required to salvage the country from the precipice of ruin. Defeated in the previous three attempts, he returned from self-imposed political retirement to contest for the highest office again, becoming victorious the fourth time, and bringing home the story of former United States president, Abraham Lincoln, who tasted several defeats at previous elections before getting to the Oval office.

Nigerians are anxious to experience much needed change from today, May 29. And they have confidence that Buhari would deliver. There must be no excuse or reneging!

The promised change has arrived on a fresh clean sheet of unadulterated goodwill.

God Bless Nigeria.

God Bless Muhammadu Buhari, President of The Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Happy Democracy Day.

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Photo Credit: Kelechi Amaobi

## *Acceptance Statement by* **Gen. Muhammadu Buhari,** *President-Elect of Nigeria*

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

I am immensely grateful to God for this day and for this hour. I feel truly honoured and humbled that the Nigerian people have so clearly chosen me to lead them. The official announcement from INEC was the moment the vast majority of Nigerians had hoped and been waiting for. Today, history has been made, and change has finally come. Your votes have changed our national destiny for the good of all Nigerians.

INEC has announced that I, Muhammadu Buhari, shall be your next president. My team and I shall faithfully serve you. There shall no longer be a ruling party again: APC will be your governing party. We shall faithfully serve you. We shall never rule over the people as if they were subservient to government.

Our long night has passed and the daylight of new democratic governance has broken across the land. This therefore is not a victory for one man or even one party. It is a victory for Nigeria and for all Nigerians. Millions of you have worked for this day. So many have risked life and livelihood; and others have died that we may witness this moment.

And it is with a very heavy heart that I report many deaths and injuries amidst the jubilations yesterday. We send our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives; and wish speedy recovery to those who suffered injuries. I appeal to all our supporters to celebrate this victory with prayers and reflection instead of wild jubilation.

May the souls of those who died rest in peace. Let us take a moment of silence to honour all of those whose sacrifices have brought us to this fine and historic hour. As the results of the election have shown, their labor has not been and will never be in vain. Democracy and the rule of law will be re-established in the land.

Let us put the past, especially the recent past, behind us. We must forget our old battles and past grievances—and learn to forge ahead. I assure you that our government is one that will listen to and embrace all.

I pledge myself and our in-coming administration to just and principled governance. There shall be no bias against or favouritism for any Nigerian based on ethnicity, religion, region, gender or social status. I pledge myself and the government to the rule of law, in which none shall be so above the law that they are not subject to its dictates, and none shall be so below it that they are not availed of its protection.

You shall be able to go to bed knowing that you are safe and that your constitutional rights remain in safe hands. You shall be able to voice your opinion without fear of reprisal or victimisation. My love and concern for this nation and what I desire for it extends to all, even to those who do not like us or our politics. You are all my people and I shall treat everyone of you as my own. I shall work for those who voted for me as well as those who voted against me and even for those who did not vote at all. We all live under one name as one nation: we are all Nigerians.

Some unfortunate issues about my eligibility have been raised during the campaign. I wish to state that through devotion to this nation, everything I have learned and done has been to enable me to make the best possible contribution to public life. If I had judged myself incapable of governing I would never have sought to impose myself on it. I have served in various capacities and have always put in my best.

But despite the rancour of the elections, I extend a hand of friendship and conciliation to President Jonathan and his team. I hereby wish to state that I harbour no ill will against anyone.

Let me state clearly that President Jonathan has nothing to fear from me.

Although we may not agree on the methods of governing the nation, he is a great Nigerian and still our president. He deserves our support and permanent respect by virtue of the office he has held. This is how an honourable nation treats its servants and conducts its affairs; and this is how Nigeria should be.

I look forward to meeting with President Jonathan in the days to come to discuss how our teams can make the transition of administrations as efficient as possible.

Here, I want to thank my party for selecting me as its candidate. I thank our party leaders and members for the steadfast contributions they made to bring our dream to fruition. I thank INEC, the police and all other government agencies for performing their tasks in a proper manner and for refusing to be induced to undermine the election and the democratic process.

I also wish to thank religious Leaders, traditional leaders, the media, labor unions, Civil Society organisations, organised private sector, youths and students for their roles in this election.

I give special thanks to President Obama and his timely intervention and support for peaceful and credible elections in Nigeria and for sending Secretary John Kerry and other United States officials. The European Union - especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other nations that were actively involved in ensuring the success of this election are equally appreciated. My sincere thanks to the United Nations Secretary General Mr Ban-Ki Moon. The Commonwealth, China, India and other Asian and Gulf states are also hereby appreciated. Finally our brothers in the African Union and ECOWAS have truly and clearly shown and demonstrate their commitment to our democratisation process. Former Presidents John Kuffour, Amos Sawyer, Bakili Muluzi and his team are well appreciated. I must also add my appreciation for the role played by civil societies, national and International observers, other world leaders in ensuring that Nigeria holds free and fair elections.

I assure all foreign governments that Nigeria will become a more forceful and constructive player in the global fight against terrorism and in other matters of collective concern, such as the fight against drugs, climate change, financial fraud, communicable diseases and other issues requiring global response. I want to assure our fellow African nations that Nigeria will now stand as a more constructive partner in advancing the matters of concern to our continent, particularly with regard to economic development and eradication of poverty.

Former head of state and president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, General Yakubu Gowon, Alh. Shehu Shagari, General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief Ernest Shonekan and General Abdulsalami Abubakar deserve commendations for their statesmanship and words of caution and counsel for peace during the tense moments of this electoral period.

Most of all, I thank the people of Nigeria for reposing their confidence in me at this trying moment. Our nation wrestles many challenges including insecurity, corruption, economic decline. I pledge to give you my best in tackling these problems.

The good people of Nigeria, your obligation does not end with casting your ballot. I seek your voice and input as we tackle these problems. This will not be a government democratic only in form. It will be a government democratic in substance and in how it interacts with its own people.

No doubt, this nation has suffered greatly in the recent past, and its staying power has been tested to its limits by crises, chief among which is insurgency of the Boko Haram. There is no doubt that in tackling the insurgency we have a tough and urgent job to do. But I assure you that Boko Haram will soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid this nation of terror, and bring back peace and normalcy to all the affected areas. We shall spare no effort until we defeat terrorism.

Furthermore, we shall strongly battle another form of evil that is even worse than terrorism—the evil of corruption. Corruption attacks and seeks to destroy our national institutions and character. By misdirecting into selfish hands funds intended for the public purpose, corruption distorts the economy and worsens income inequality. It creates a class of unjustly-enriched people.



Photo Credit: Kelechi Amadi Obi

Such an illegal yet powerful force soon comes to undermine democracy because its conspirators have amassed so much money that they believe they can buy government. We shall end this threat to our economic development and democratic survival. I repeat that corruption will not be tolerated by this administration; and it shall no longer be allowed to stand as if it is a respected monument in this nation.

I ask you to join me in resolving these and the other challenges we face. Along the way, there will be victories but there may also be setbacks. Mistakes will be made. But we shall never take you for granted; so, be rest assured that our errors will be those of compassion and commitment not of wilful neglect and indifference.

We shall correct that which does not work and improve that which does. We shall not stop, stand or idle. We shall, if necessary crawl, walk and run to do the job you have elected us to do.

I realise that the expectation of our people today is as high as their commitment to change has been strong and their belief in us unshaken. While we pledge to begin doing our best without delay, we would like to appeal to them to appreciate the gravity of our situation, so that we become more realistic in our expectations.

We will govern for you and in your interests. Your vote was not wasted. This is not the first time Nigerians have cast their votes for us, and this is not the first time they have been counted; but this is the first time that the votes have been allowed to count. With the help of God, we pledge to do our utmost to bring forth the Nigeria you seek.

Thank you for your patience and attention.

**General Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR**  
President-Elect,  
Federal Republic of Nigeria

# Muhammadu Buhari's Acceptance Speech

*Speech given by President-elect, General Buhari  
after he was declared winner of the 2015 elections*

*Wednesday, April 1, 2015*

**Y**our Excellency, the Vice President elect, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, your Excellency, Chief Rotimi Amaechi, the Director General of APC Presidential Campaign, 2015, your Excellency, the former Governor of Edo State and National Chairman of our great party, your Excellency the Governor Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, your Excellency, the former Governor of Imo State, Dr Ogbonaya Onu, Your Excellency, the former Governor of Ekiti State, Engineer Oni, your Excellency the former Governor of Kwara, Bokola Saraki, your Excellency, the Speaker of the House of Representative, Honourable Aminu Tambuwal, Please, let me stand on existing protocol.

At exactly 5:15 yesterday (Tuesday) evening, President Jonathan called to congratulate me on my victory. For this, I want all Nigerians to join me in congratulating and appreciating Mr President for his statesmanship. President Jonathan was a worthy opponent. I extend my hand of fellowship to him. I look forward to meeting him soon, as we plan the transition from one administration to another. He will receive nothing but cooperation and understanding from me, who led this nation to democracy. You stood in line patiently for hours; in the rain, in the sun and then in the dark to cast your votes. Even when the vote was extended to Sunday in some places, you still performed your civic duties.

You did so peacefully. You voted with your heart. Your vote affirms that you believe Nigeria's future can be better than what it is today. You voted for change and now change has come. INEC has released the official result of the Presidential Election. INEC has declared that I gained the most votes with the required spread and won this election. In a more profound way, it is you, Nigerians that have won. The people have shown their love for our nation and their believe in democracy. The declaration of INEC accurately reflects the will of the people.

While there might have been some logistical obstacles and irregularities associated with the exercise, the result shall stand as what the people want. I thank all Nigerians who have made this day possible, our country has now joined the community of nations that have used the ballot box to physically change an incumbent president in a free and fair election. To me, this is indeed historic. Most people will welcome the result because it is the one they voted for. Others will literarily be disappointed. I ask that we all be circumspect, respectful and peaceful in these times. This was a hard-fought contest. Emotions were high.

We must not allow them to get the better of us. This is not the time for confrontation. This is a moment that we must begin to heal the wounds and work toward a better future. We do this first by extending a hand of friendship and conciliation across the political divide. We hope and pray our friends in other parties reciprocate. I thank all the members of the All Progressives Congress, the APC, for their commitment and their hard work through the formation of the party, the campaigns and the presidential elections. Let me equally express my appreciation to the media, civil society and security agencies for their selfless service.

The international press and our friends abroad deserve a fair commendation for their support throughout the process. We promise a robust and dynamic engagement with your countries in matters of mutual interest. In the interim, I call on all Nigerians to be law abiding and peaceful. The eyes of the world were focused on us to see if we can vote in a peaceful way and carry out elections in an orderly manner. We have proven to the



world that we are a people who have embraced democracy and a people who seek a government by, for and for the people.

We have put one party state behind us. We have voted for a government that will serve and govern, but will never rule over you. CHANGE has come and a new day and a new Nigeria is upon us. The victory is yours and the glory is that of our nation, NIGERIA. I will make a more formal address to the nation, later in the afternoon after I receive the certificate of return from the INEC.

**May God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.**

Nigeria's President Elect  
Muhammadu Buhari





# INAUGURAL SPEECH



*Inaugural speech by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari  
following his swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29th May, 2015*

**I** am immensely grateful to God Who Has preserved us to witness this day and this occasion. Today marks a triumph for Nigeria and an occasion to celebrate her freedom and cherish her democracy. Nigerians have shown their commitment to democracy and are determined to entrench its culture. Our journey has not been easy but thanks to the determination of our people and strong support from friends abroad we have today a truly democratically elected government in place.

I would like to thank President Goodluck Jonathan for his display of statesmanship in setting a precedent for us that has now made our people proud to be Nigerians wherever they are. With the support and cooperation he has given to the transition process, he has made it possible for us to show the world that despite the perceived tension in the land we can be a united people capable of doing what is right for our nation. Together we co-operated to surprise the world that had come to expect only the worst from Nigeria. I hope this act of graciously accepting defeat by the outgoing President will become the standard of political conduct in the country.

I would like to thank the millions of our supporters who believed in us even when the cause seemed hopeless. I salute their resolve in waiting long hours in rain and hot sunshine to register and cast their votes and stay all night if necessary to protect and ensure their votes count and were counted. I thank those who tirelessly carried the campaign on the social media. At the same time, I thank our other countrymen and women who did not vote for us but contributed to make our democratic culture truly competitive, strong and definitive.

I thank all of you.

Having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians.

**I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody.**

A few people have privately voiced fears that on coming back to office I shall go after them. These fears are groundless. There will be no paying off old scores. The past is prologue.

Our neighbours in the Sub-region and our African brethren should rest assured that Nigeria under our administration will be ready to play any leadership role that Africa expects of it. Here I would like to thank the governments and people of Cameroon, Chad and Niger for committing their armed forces to fight Boko Haram in Nigeria.

I also wish to assure the wider international community of our readiness to cooperate and help to combat threats of cross-border terrorism, sea piracy, refugees and boat people, financial crime, cyber crime, climate change, the spread of communicable diseases and other challenges of the 21st century.

At home we face enormous challenges. Insecurity, pervasive corruption, the hitherto unending and seemingly impossible fuel and power shortages are the immediate concerns. We are going to tackle them head on. Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to us. We must not succumb to hopelessness and defeatism. We can fix our problems.

In recent times Nigerian leaders appear to have misread our mission. Our founding fathers, Mr Herbert Macauley, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Malam Aminu Kano, Chief J.S. Tarka, Mr Eyo Ita, Chief Denis Osadeby, Chief Ladoke Akintola and their colleagues worked to establish certain standards of governance. They might have differed in their methods or tactics or details, but they were united in establishing a viable and progressive country. Some of their successors behaved like spoilt children breaking everything and bringing disorder to the house.

Furthermore, we as Nigerians must remind ourselves that we are heirs to great civilizations: Shehu Othman Dan fodio's caliphate, the Kanem Borno Empire, the Oyo Empire, the Benin Empire and King Jaja's formidable

domain. The blood of those great ancestors flow in our veins. What is now required is to build on these legacies, to modernize and uplift Nigeria.

Daunting as the task may be it is by no means insurmountable. There is now a national consensus that our chosen route to national development is democracy. To achieve our objectives we must consciously work the democratic system. The Federal Executive under my watch will not seek to encroach on the duties and functions of the Legislative and Judicial arms of government. The law enforcing authorities will be charged to operate within the Constitution. We shall rebuild and reform the public service to become more effective and more serviceable. We shall charge them to apply themselves with integrity to stabilize the system.

For their part the legislative arm must keep to their brief of making laws, carrying out oversight functions and doing so expeditiously. The judicial system needs reform to cleanse itself from its immediate past. The country now expects the judiciary to act with dispatch on all cases especially on corruption, serious financial crimes or abuse of office. It is only when the three arms act constitutionally that government will be enabled to serve the country optimally and avoid the confusion all too often bedeviling governance today.

Elsewhere relations between Abuja and the States have to be clarified if we are to serve the country better. Constitutionally there are limits to powers of each of the three tiers of government but that should not mean the Federal Government should fold its arms and close its eyes to what is going on in the states and local governments. Not least the operations of the Local Government Joint Account. While the Federal Government can not interfere in the details of its operations it will ensure that the gross corruption at the local level is checked. As far as the constitution allows me I will try to ensure that there is responsible and accountable governance at all levels of government in the country. For I will not have kept my own trust with the Nigerian people if I allow others abuse theirs under my watch.

However, no matter how well organized the governments of the federation are they can not succeed without the support, understanding and cooperation of labour unions, organized private sector, the press and civil society organizations. I appeal to employers and workers alike to unite in raising productivity so that everybody will have the opportunity to share in increased prosperity. The Nigerian press is the most vibrant in Africa. My appeal to the media today – and this includes the social media – is to exercise its considerable powers with responsibility and patriotism.

My appeal for unity is predicated on the seriousness of the legacy we are getting into. With depleted foreign reserves, falling oil prices, leakages and debts the Nigerian economy is in deep trouble and will require careful management to bring it round and to tackle the immediate challenges confronting us, namely; Boko Haram, the Niger Delta situation, the power shortages and unemployment especially among young people. For the longer term we have to improve the standards of our education. We have to look at the whole field of healthcare. We have to upgrade our dilapidated physical infrastructure.

The most immediate is Boko Haram's insurgency. Progress has been made in recent weeks by our security forces but victory can not be achieved by basing the Command and Control Centre in Abuja. The command centre will be relocated to Maiduguri and remain until Boko Haram is completely subdued. But we can not claim to have defeated Boko Haram without rescuing the Chibok girls and all other innocent persons held hostage by insurgents.

This government will do all it can to rescue them alive. Boko Haram is a typical example of small fires causing large fires. An eccentric and unorthodox preacher with a tiny following was given posthumous fame and following by his extra judicial murder at the hands of the police. Since then through official bungling, negligence, complacency or collusion Boko Haram became a terrifying force taking tens of thousands of lives and capturing several towns and villages covering swathes of Nigerian sovereign territory.

Boko Haram is a mindless, godless group who are as far away from Islam as one can think of. At the end of the hostilities when the group is subdued the Government intends to commission a sociological study to determine its

origins, remote and immediate causes of the movement, its sponsors, the international connexions to ensure that measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of this evil. For now the Armed Forces will be fully charged with prosecuting the fight against Boko Haram. We shall overhaul the rules of engagement to avoid human rights violations in operations. We shall improve operational and legal mechanisms so that disciplinary steps are taken against proven human right violations by the Armed Forces.

Boko Haram is not only the security issue bedeviling our country. The spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, herdsmen/farmers clashes, cattle rustlings all help to add to the general air of insecurity in our land. We are going to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined people – friendly and well – compensated security forces within an over – all security architecture.

The amnesty programme in the Niger Delta is due to end in December, but the Government intends to invest heavily in the projects, and programmes currently in place. I call on the leadership and people in these areas to cooperate with the State and Federal Government in the rehabilitation programmes which will be streamlined and made more effective. As ever, I am ready to listen to grievances of my fellow Nigerians. I extend my hand of fellowship to them so that we can bring peace and build prosperity for our people.

No single cause can be identified to explain Nigerian's poor economic performance over the years than the power situation. It is a national shame that an economy of 180 million generates only 4,000MW, and distributes even less. Continuous tinkering with the structures of power supply and distribution and close on \$20b expanded since 1999 have only brought darkness, frustration, misery, and resignation among Nigerians. We will not allow this to go on. Careful studies are under way during this transition to identify the quickest, safest and most cost-effective way to bring light and relief to Nigerians.

Unemployment, notably youth un-employment features strongly in our Party's Manifesto. We intend to attack the problem frontally through revival of agriculture, solid minerals mining as well as credits to small and medium size businesses to kick – start these enterprises. We shall quickly examine the best way to revive major industries and accelerate the revival and development of our railways, roads and general infrastructure.

Your Excellencies, My fellow Nigerians I can not recall when Nigeria enjoyed so much goodwill abroad as now. The messages I received from East and West, from powerful and small countries are indicative of international expectations on us. At home the newly elected government is basking in a reservoir of goodwill and high expectations. Nigeria therefore has a window of opportunity to fulfill our long – standing potential of pulling ourselves together and realizing our mission as a great nation.

Our situation somehow reminds one of a passage in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

There is a tide in the affairs of men which,  
taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,  
Is bound in shallows and miseries.

We have an opportunity. Let us take it.

Thank you

**Muhammadu Buhari**  
**President Federal Republic of NIGERIA**  
**and Commander in-Chief of the Armed forces**



# A New Nigeria is Possible Beginning Today

*Democracy Day Statement by National Leader Bola Tinubu*

Friday, May 29, 2015

**M**ay 29, 2015, shall be recorded in our history as the moment when democracy finally was allowed to participate in Democracy Day. The reason for this is the legion of average Nigerians who voted to make this happen. Should any of you wish to see a true hero of democracy, don't fret. Just look in the nearest mirror.

The celebrations prior to this were false showings; they were the commemoration of wrong.

The path we have taken to come to this august moment has not been one of easy victory or swift progress.

Instead, it has been a path hewed by the triumph of resilience over broken promises and fraudulent avowals of representative governance. Reaching this fine moment has been a story told in the cadence of the victory of common good over arrogant power.

The voice of the solitary poor man, no one hears. But the votes of the poor became a potent army capable of toppling the very citadel of high privilege in order to bring forth national awakening no less historic and important than the very birth of this nation.

On this day, we shall witness the inauguration of Muhammadu Buhari, a great, honorable and dedicated public servant as our president. This is indeed an inspiring moment, a turning point in our national direction, and the reclamation of our best destiny.

We shall celebrate this achievement but not in mindless, care-free fashion. The road ahead is still choked with the debris of problems left too long unattended.

We are well aware of the challenges pitted against our wellbeing. Insecurity, economic decline and corruption, we must fight and fight as if we are going to war not a carnival.

Most of all, we must fight the temptation of hopelessness, the sense that little good will come out of even the greatest efforts.

This is where I want to thank and commend all those who voted in the past election.

It is you who turned this day into the true celebration of true democracy it was intended to be.

With no guarantee save your faith and armed solely with the hope and promise of a better tomorrow through better governance, you fought the mounting tide of power and money. That tide tried to induce you to sell your democratic rights and your chance for a greater future on the cheap.

In the eyes of those who were self-exalted, you had been debased and brought low by visible circumstance of poverty and lack. You seemed to them ripe for purchase. Yet, inside, you retained a greatness of character and a loyalty to the democratic ideal incomprehensible to those who believed that everything can be purchased.

You showed them that your self-definition as human beings and as Nigerians was not for sale or tender. As a result, he who had been given so



much, so easily by so many was humbled. You who have been ridiculed, reduced and written off were lifted up. The will of the people hath reclaimed its sovereignty.

This has been a blossoming of justice and the illumination of the power of human decency. So often, Nigeria has been portrayed negatively before the world. Not this time.

The world is proud of what you have done and how you have advanced the cause of fairness and right.

What you have done has lent solace to those still struggling to establish democracy and responsive governance in their homelands.

They now see Nigeria as an inspiring example. They seek to be like you, to travel the road you just trod.

Today, the old Nigeria is no longer in chains as we move into a new era and take hold of our new selves. From President Buhari to the state governors inaugurated this day, I wish them well and pray they govern in an open, democratic way that assures your optimal wellbeing.

I ask that you, the people, maintain your diligence and help guide those you have just elected.

The issues that confront us are deep and complex. They are not susceptible to facile solution or inattention. Wise and sound policy is within our capacity. But, we must have the will to accomplish it. If both the governed and government work in league, there is nothing our beloved nation cannot overcome.

Let it be said that on this day, the nation consecrate itself to the ideal that governance is the sacred instrument of the people and never again shall it be the exclusive recreation of a select few. No longer shall Democracy day be a shallow ritual. Henceforth, it is a living truth.





# Who is Nigeria's Muhammed Buhari?

By Susannah Cullinane and Stephanie Busari, CNN

Photo Credit: Kélechi Amadi Ohi

**M**uhammadu Buhari has ruled Nigeria before, as one of a line of military strongmen who dominated the country between 1966 and 1999. A military coup brought Buhari to power in late 1983 -- closing a brief period of popular rule by Shehu Shagari -- and another military coup ousted him from power in August 1985.

Buhari's 20-month rule was known for what he described as a "war on indiscipline," a tough regime which some say was marred by human rights abuses.

The 72-year-old retired major general's experience as a military ruler has been viewed as a plus by some and a minus by others in present-day Nigeria, where the government has been locked in a deadly battle with the militant group Boko Haram.

This year alone, the extremists have killed at least 1,000 civilians, Human Rights Watch says. The ongoing violence in the Northeast has put security -- along with corruption and the economy -- at the top of the election agenda.

Prior to this year's polls in March, Ayo Johnson, a documentary filmmaker and analyst on African affairs, told CNN that voters would opt for whoever could make Nigeria feel safe.

"Many Nigerians will not forget (Buhari) was a military leader, during a dictatorship," Johnson said. "Or maybe they will feel that they need a military leader to address fundamental problems such as terrorism."

Buhari has campaigned as a born-again democrat to allay fears about his strict military regime, while stressing that Nigeria's security needs to be the next government's focus.

"It's a question of security. Whether I was a former military officer or a politician through and through, when there is insecurity of this scale in the country, that takes the priority," he said from his campaign plane.

## 'Judged harshly'

In another interview with Amanpour in February, Buhari blamed President Goodluck Jonathan's government for repeated setbacks in the fight against extremists.

"The misappropriation of resources provided by the government for weapons means the Nigerian military is unable to beat Boko Haram," he

said. Asked by Amanpour about abuses allegedly committed during his own previous leadership, Buhari said there was "a degree of accuracy" in the claims.

But he said he had ruled Nigeria as part of a military administration.

"When that military administration came under my leadership, we suspended -- as a military then -- part of that constitution that we felt would be difficult for us to operate and as also a consensus," he said. "I think I'm being judged harshly as an individual that what happened during a military administration can be extended under a multiparty democratic system."

Buhari's campaign was fiercely anti-corruption. He ran under the slogan of "new broom," and his supporters were often pictured holding brooms in the lead-up to the vote.

## Previous Candidacies

The 2015 presidential race was Buhari's fourth attempt at leadership since he was ousted from power in 1985.

In 2003, Buhari -- then with the All Nigeria People's Party -- lost to Olusegun Obasanjo in an election during which EU observers reported widespread irregularities.

He lost again to Umaru Yar'Adua in the 2007 election, which was widely condemned for rampant vote-rigging, violence, theft of ballot boxes and intimidation.

After Yar'Adua's death in 2010, Jonathan rose from vice president to president and Buhari challenged him in the 2011 elections as a candidate from the Congress for Progressive Change.

Buhari had helped found the party a year earlier, saying it was "a solution to the debilitating, ethical and ideological conflicts in my former party, the ANPP."

Buhari is a Muslim from Nigeria's poorer North, while Jonathan hails from a Christian and animist South that is rich with oil.

After Jonathan's victory in 2011, amid accusations of vote-rigging, violent riots broke out in the North.

Armed protesters took to the streets chanting Buhari's name, and more than 800 people were killed in the post-election violence.

Buhari's office issued a statement calling reports of burning of places of worship places a "sad, unfortunate and totally unwarranted development."

"I must say that this is a dastardly act (that) is not initiated by any of our supporters and therefore cannot be supported by our party," said Buhari's spokesman Yinka Odumakin. "I must emphasize that this is purely a political matter, and it should not in any way be turned into an ethnic, religious or regional one."

Ahead of this year's election, Jonathan and Buhari signed a nonviolence pact, the Abuja Accord, in January. On March 26 they renewed their pledge and reiterated their commitment to "free, fair and credible elections."

But violent protests broke out a day before the final results were announced. Protesters fired gunshots and torched a local electoral office in Nigeria's oil-rich Rivers state as they marched to protest the elections, amid claims of vote-rigging and voter intimidation.

Both candidates called for calm, with Buhari, who contested this year's vote as part of the All Progressives Congress, tweeting: "Fellow Nigerians, I urge you to exercise patience and vigilance as we wait for all results to be announced."

After the protests in Rivers, his party demanded the elections there be canceled. But Nigeria's electoral commission decided the results would stand, saying it "did not believe the allegations were substantial enough to require the cancellation/rescheduling" of the Rivers poll.

#### Secondary Education Claims

According to his campaign website, Buhari is from Daura in Nigeria's northern Katsina state and is married with eight children. His military training began in 1963 and included stints in the United Kingdom, India and the United States. Buhari was the first chairman of the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation, the site says.

Elements of Buhari's biography were questioned in the run-up to the March 28 election.

After weeks of speculation and an ongoing legal battle over allegations that Buhari failed to complete his secondary school education, a Nigerian court on March 25 cleared the way for him to run in the presidential race after adjourning the case until April 22.

As a Sunni Muslim from the North, Buhari appears to have moved to address any concerns his appointment could be detrimental to non-Muslim Nigerians -- approximately half the country's population, according to the CIA Factbook.

A blog post on his campaign website headed "Buhari will never Islamise Nigeria" describes a campaign ceremony in January in Imo state.

Imo Gov. Rochas Okorocha, it says, "dismissed suggestions of plans by Muhammadu Buhari to 'Islamize' Nigeria," telling the audience Buhari's long-time cook and driver were Christians and his youngest daughter had



married a Christian.

Buhari has also not been immune to the violence plaguing northern Nigeria. Last year, he was targeted in a suicide bombing that killed at least 15 people in the city of Kaduna. An earlier blast in the city the same day had been aimed at a Muslim cleric.

A day after winning the country's presidency, Buhari told CNN's Christiane Amanpour that fighting corruption and curbing violence were at the top of his agenda.

The economy is another major issue the new leader has to contend with, as the country overtook South Africa last year as the continent's largest economy. But as many as 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, surviving on less than a dollar a day.

Photo Credit: Kelechi Amadi Obi

### MUHAMMADU BUHARI IN FOCUS:

- Age 72
- Disciplinarian - Civil servants late for work had to do frog jumps
- Elected president in 28 March poll
- Muslim from northern Nigeria
- Military ruler of Nigeria from 1984 to 1985
- Survived an apparent Boko Haram assassination attempt
- Deposed in a coup
- Poor human rights record
- Seen as incorruptible







U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry meets with retired Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari,

## 6 Things to Know About Nigeria's Next President Muhammadu Buhari

**M**uhammadu Buhari defeated Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in the most competitive presidential race in the country's history. The historic shift of power marked a turning point for Africa's largest country as Buhari's win was the first time the opposition ousted an incumbent by democratic means, according to the BBC.

Buhari, a 72-year-old retired major general in the Nigerian army, spent much of his campaign promising to weed out government corruption.

He won with 15.4 million votes to Jonathan's 13.3 million, according to official tallies. Jonathan has conceded defeat.

Although many Nigerians see Buhari's military resume as an asset in the effort to defeat Boko Haram, an Islamic fundamentalist group that has been terrorizing northern Nigeria for more than a decade, Buhari has long tried to distance himself from his military past. Here are six things to know about Nigeria's next president.

**1** Buhari became Nigeria's head of state after a military coup in 1983. Buhari helped lead the overthrow of democratically elected President Shehu Shagari, ending a short-lived attempt to democratize. He held power until August 1985, during which time he drastically cut government spending on health, agriculture and education.

**2** He was accused of ruling with a heavy hand. During his time as head of state, human rights groups criticized Buhari for silencing dissent. Many of the former democratic government's ministers and journalists were imprisoned without trial.

**3** He was defeated in the last three elections. After Nigeria became a democracy again in 1999, Buhari made three unsuccessful bids at the presidency.

**4** Buhari, a Muslim, has been accused of having a radical Islamist agenda. Many northern Muslims supported Buhari, while Christians tended to vote for Jonathan. Some have alleged that, if elected, Buhari would impose Islamic law across the country.

**5** Buhari has been known for living modestly. Compared to most other retired military generals or Nigerian politicians, Buhari lives a less opulent lifestyle.

**6** Buhari survived a supposed assassination attempt by Boko Haram. In July, an attack on his convoy was blamed on the terrorist group.

## Pres. Jonathan Officially Hands Over Comprehensive Report of His Administration to Buhari



Photo Credit: Bayo Omoboriowo

President Goodluck Jonathan officially handed over the comprehensive report of his administration to President-elect Muhammadu Buhari at the State House in Abuja, May 28, 2015.



Buhari arriving at the presidential villa





Photo Credit: Kelechi Amadi Obi

## MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT

**M**ajor General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) was born on December 17, 1942, in the town of Daura in the former Katsina province of the then Northern Nigeria. He went to Primary School in Daura and Mai'adua from 1948 – 1952, before proceeding to Katsina middle School in 1953. He attended the Katsina Provincial Secondary School (now Government College Katsina) from 1956 – 1961. Upon graduation from Secondary School in 1961, the young Buhari went to the Nigerian Military Training School, Kaduna in 1963.

In October of the same year, he was sent to the officers' Cadet School in Aldershot in the United Kingdom and was thereafter commissioned Second Lieutenant in 1963 and posted to the 2nd Infantry Battalion, Abeokuta as Platoon Commander in 1963. A contemporary of his in Aldershot said he was like "an only pebble in the beach, a star in his calm and calculating disposition."

It was at the Abeokuta Garrison that the real traits of a great soldier were identified in the young man. From 1963 – 1964 he was sent for further training on the Platoon Commanders' Course at the Nigerian Military College, Kaduna. In 1965, he went for the Mechanical Transport Officers' Course at the Army Mechanical Transport School in Borden, England. He also attended the Defence Services' Staff College, Wellington, India in 1973 and to the United States Army War College from June 1979 to June 1980.

A thorough-bred soldier, General Muhammadu Buhari has held several impressive Command and Staff appointments since 1963, including the following:

- ➔ Platoon Commander, 2nd Infantry Battalion, 1963 – 1964.
- ➔ Mechanical Transport Officer, Lagos Garrison, 1964 – 1965
- ➔ Transport Company Commander, 2nd Infantry Brigade 1965 – 1966;
- ➔ Battalion Adjutant / Commander, 2nd Infantry Brigade 1966 – 1967;
- ➔ Brigade Major, 2nd Sector, 1st Infantry Division, April to July 1967;
- ➔ Brigade Major, 3rd Infantry Brigade, August 1967 – October 1968;
- ➔ Acting Commander, 4th Sector, 1st Division November 1968 – February 1970;
- ➔ Commander, 31st Infantry Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, February 1970 – June 1971;
- ➔ Assistant Adjutant-General, 1st Infantry Division Hqrs., July 1971 – Dec. 1972;
- ➔ Colonel, General Staff, 3rd Infantry Div. Hqrs. Jan. 1974 – Sept. 1974
- ➔ Acting Director, Supply and Transport, Nigeria Army Corps of supply and Transport, September 1974 – July 1975;
- ➔ Military Governor, North Eastern State of Nigeria, August 1975 – March 1976;
- ➔ Federal Commissioner for Petroleum Resources, March 1976 to June 1978;
- ➔ Chairman, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, June 1978 – July 1978;

- ➔ Military Secretary, Army Headquarters July 1978 – June 1979;
- ➔ Member Supreme Military Council, March 1976 – June 1979;
- ➔ General Officer Commanding, 4th Infantry Division, Aug. 1980 – Jan. 1981;
- ➔ General Officer Commanding, 2nd Mechanised Infantry Division, Jan. 1981 – October 1981;
- ➔ General Officer Commanding 3rd Armed Division Nigerian Army, October 1981 – December 1983.
- ➔ Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, December 1983 – August 1985.

Good education, military training, nature, character, experience and proven record are the foundations upon which the exemplary leadership of this remarkable man is built. These are the qualities General Muhammadu Buhari is bringing into the future of Nigeria. In recognition of his numerous and enviable contributions towards the development of this country, General Buhari has been conferred with a number of national awards. He is the recipient of the following:

- ➔ GCFR Grand Commander of the Federal Republic
- ➔ CFR Commander of the Federal Republic
- ➔ DSM Defence Service Medal
- ➔ NSM National Service Medal
- ➔ GSM General Service Medal
- ➔ LSGCM Loyal Service and Good Conduct Medal
- ➔ FSS Force Service Staff
- ➔ CD The Congo Medal

It was during his tenure that the Nigerian National Oil Corporation and the Ministry of Petroleum Resources were reorganised to form the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), and he became its first Chairman, a job he performed without blemish. He masterminded and spearheaded the construction of 20 oil depots throughout the country, a project involving over 3200 kilometres of pipelines. Under his leadership both Warri and Kaduna Refineries were built. He drew up the blueprint for the country's petro-chemical and liquefied natural gas programmes all without even a hint of scandal. Today, Nigerians recall with nostalgia the probity, accountability and honesty and above all thorough and efficient management of public funds demonstrated by the leadership of General Muhammadu Buhari in all public institutions he worked.

Having endeared himself to the masses, General Muhammadu Buhari is first a family man. He is married to Aisha Buhari and they have eight children.



## PROFESSOR YEMI OSINBAJO, VICE-PRESIDENT

**B**orn on March 8th 1957 in Lagos, Professor Oluyemi Oluleke Osinbajo is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and Senior Partner in the Law firm SimmonsCooper Partners. A professor of law, he was the Head of Department of Public Law at the University of Lagos from 1997 to 1999. Regarded as one of the finest advocates in Nigeria, he studied at the University of Lagos, Nigeria (LLB, 1978) and the London School of Economics (LLM, 1980).

With over 31 years of litigation experience, he served as the Special Adviser to the Attorney General of Nigeria (1988-1992), and later became the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice of Lagos State in 1999 reappointed for a second term in 2003. During the period of his public service, he commenced the Lagos State justice reform project. A prominent feature of that project was the establishment of the Directorate for Citizens' Rights (DCR) which provides free legal services and legal representation to indigent citizens of the state. This initiative gave a voice to many who would otherwise not have a way to access their rights.

As Attorney General, Prof. 'Yemi Osinbajo is credited with undertaking far-reaching significant judicial reform in Lagos State, addressing critical areas as judges' recruitment, remuneration, training and discipline. In addition, he addressed access to justice for the poor by establishing appropriate institutions in the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) and the Citizens Mediation Centre (CMC). In honour of his contributions to legal reform and the development of law in Nigeria, a compendium of essays on Nigerian constitutional law was compiled. The authors of these essays were senior lawyers and law professors with a foreword provided by a past chief justice of Nigeria. Prof. 'Yemi Osinbajo is also the Ethics Adviser to the Advisory Board of the African Development Bank and a non-executive Director of Citibank. He has served in various roles within the United Nations, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, United Nations African Institute for Crime Prevention, the International Criminal court for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, the department of Peacekeeping operations and the United Nations Peace Operations in Somalia.

Prof. Osinbajo is Co-founder & Board Member Convention on Business Integrity and the Justice Research Institute Ltd. He has authored, co-authored and edited several books and publications including "The Unification and Reform of the Nigerian Criminal Law and Procedure Codes"; "Law Development and Administration"; "The Annotated Civil Procedure rules of The Superior Courts in Nigeria"; and "Cross Examination: A Trial



Lawyer's Most Potent Weapon". He is a member of the International Bar Association and the British Institute of International and Comparative Law and has served in the Nigerian Body of Benchers and the Council for Legal Education of Nigeria.

Prof. 'Yemi Osinbajo speaks frequently at several commercial litigation events locally and internationally and is actively involved in the pursuit of legal education reform in Nigeria. He believes that Nigeria urgently needs a common sense revolution that's why he is fully committed to the task of rebuilding this nation alongside General Muhammadu Buhari.

Prof. 'Yemi Osinbajo is a spiritual leader who is dedicated to the promotion of ethics and orderliness. He is married to Oludolapo Osinbajo, (grandchild of Obafemi Awolowo) and together they have three children.



HIS EXCELLENCY  
**MUHAMMADU BUHARI** GCFR  
PRESIDENT, COMMANDER - IN - CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA





# WHAT DOES BUHARI VICTORY MEAN FOR AFRICA?

**A**fter the anxiety and drama of the past few days in Nigeria, it is tempting to get carried away by the impact of this ballot - what it represents for both Africa's largest democracy and for those countries on the continent still wrestling with the notion that power can change hands without the world coming to an end. The significance of General Muhammadu Buhari's victory should certainly not be underestimated.

An electorate that has savoured the rich experience of ousting an incumbent by the mere act of voting cannot easily be persuaded to forget it.

And that must surely be a contagious experience on a continent where, it is often said, roughly one in five people are Nigerians.

Besides, this was no "people's revolution" - something that the continent's remaining strongmen could loudly dismiss as a dangerous threat to the natural order of things.

Instead Nigeria's election was something much more prosaic, and more subtle - a challenge to entrenched autocracy.

It was, despite the disruptive efforts of a few, a very ordinary thing: A peaceful, modern, well-monitored, uncontested transfer of power.

Nothing to be feared. A casual precedent that should echo loudly around the region.

"It establishes a link between performance and accountability - knowing that if you don't perform you can be thrown out of power by the electorate, not by the military," Adekeye Adebajo, from the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, told me by phone.

"It's an incredibly powerful incentive for better governance in the future.

"It sends a strong signal to the rest of the continent. There will be autocrats in Khartoum, in the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, who are thinking of staying on in power. They won't welcome this."

## International Clout

The election also gives Nigeria more credibility and clout within the West African grouping of ECOWAS, at the African Union, and internationally, as the continent seeks to shrug off the enduring influence of former colonial powers like France.

Nigeria's leaders can no longer be dismissed as hypocrites when they lecture neighbours like Mali, Niger, Guinea and Guinea Bissau, on the need to keep the military out of politics. That can only be a good thing for African democracy.

On a more nuts and bolts level, these past few days have been a valuable reminder of quite how difficult it is becoming to rig an election.

Social media, fingerprint scanners, and an army of young volunteer observers armed with mobile phones have all played their role - as they have done in other recent African elections - in limiting the possibilities of ballot stuffing and other shenanigans.

That's not to say people didn't try to rig this election - and won't in the future.

But once the data is out there - posted online - it becomes much harder for the backroom cheats to cook the books.

Then there's President Goodluck Jonathan's abrupt decision to accept defeat - a move made, I'm told, without consulting some key officials and against the wishes of many in his party.

It was a bold, selfless move that may well have saved many lives in Nigeria.

It will go down as a new milestone for African democracy, and may help redeem Mr Jonathan's presidency, at least partially, in the eyes of his many critics.

Does that mean Nigerian democracy is safe? Perhaps not.

## Challenges Ahead

A new man may be coming to power.

But Gen Buhari is not young, and he presides over an untested coalition.

He is inheriting an empty treasury - broken by falling oil prices, the cost of supporting the national currency, and now threatened with more looting by sticky-fingered officials heading for the door.

Boko Haram's insurgency in the north-east remains a huge challenge to a corrupt and

Photo Credit: BBC



humiliated army.

Perennial frustrations in the oil-rich south of Nigeria could well begin to boil over. The list goes on.

And now comes a six-week period of administrative limbo - another new experience for Nigeria - as the old regime prepares to empty its desks, and a new team is formed.

Gen Buhari has much to do, and to prove, in a short time.

Who will he choose to run the economy? How can he prevent any last-minute looting? Can he get the army to secure, and build on the territorial gains it has made against Boko Haram in the last few weeks?

And how will he balance the need for a smooth transition against what must surely be his instinct to make an example of those public officials who have been greedily stealing from Nigeria's oil revenues for years?

Nigeria, by all accounts, is not an easy country to run.

After a political earthquake, aftershocks are almost inevitable.

But for now it is the optimists both in Nigeria and around the continent who must, surely, have the upper hand.

The uncontested fact of a democratic transfer of power trumps any legitimate, but unrealised concerns about whether a different president, and a different party, will actually make life better for the people of Africa's most important nation.



HIS EXCELLENCY  
**PROF. YEMI OSINBAJO** SAN  
VICE-PRESIDENT  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA



# Anticipating the Dawn of the New Administration

Oluseyi Adebisi:

Photo Credit: Kelechi Amadi Obi

I do not lay claim to have been around for very long, however I must say that for over twenty years of my existence in this country Nigeria, I have never witnessed a transition period as terrible as this. In the short period of my existence, I have been privileged to witness a number of military take-overs, vis-à-vis democratic transitions. Although those periods were as well characterised by various forms of apprehension and anxiety, none ranks anywhere close to the level of apprehension that currently pervades the polity.

In the course of last week, the Vice-President elect Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (SAN) stated that the economy that was being handed over to the incoming administration was at its worst moment in history. These statements came after a two-day Policy Dialogue on the Agenda for Change organised by the Policy, Research and Strategy Directorate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) Presidential Campaign Council.

According to him, Nigeria's local and foreign debts now stand at \$60 billion. The debt servicing bill for 2015 is N953.6 billion, being 21% of the budget; while on account of severely dwindled resources, over two-thirds of the states in Nigeria owe salaries. In a swift response to this, the co-ordinating Minister of the Economy debunked his claims, stating that the total debt figure was not a true reflection of the debt incurred in the current administration, rather an accumulation of debt from previous administrations in addition to theirs. While this seems to be more self-absolving, the current state of things in the country leaves no one in doubt of the outgoing administration's ineptitude.

To think that a few days to a change of government, many individuals and businesses are not sure if they would have enough fuel to transport themselves, or even power their offices. The nation seems to be grinding to a halt as civil servants continue to pray for a miracle to happen to enable them receive their salaries. Other workers in the private sector are beginning to consider alternative means of transporting themselves to work (trekking inclusive).

On Saturday, a friend of mine had an appointment scheduled in Lagos and had booked an early morning flight from Abuja. He arrived the airport early enough and in high spirits, unaware of the rude shock that lay in wait for him as he was later informed that all flights had been cancelled. This situation was the same across other airports. As though this wasn't enough, some of the network providers have begun sending messages to subscribers, informing them of the possible disruption in services, based on their inability to provide fuel to their numerous base stations. While all this was beginning to settle in, the banks dealt a final blow, also informing customers that they would be closing their branches to customers earlier than normal due to the increasing difficulty of purchasing diesel. The

question then is, where do we really go from here?

The recent news that the purported strike by the oil marketers has been lifted and nationwide movement of oil-laden trucks expected immediately has still not elicited any excitement from the populace. A vast majority of



Nigerians can't just wait for the current administration to move out. Over the weekend social media was abuzz with claims by many Nigerians that if the elections were held again, they would not bat an eyelid in voting for the APC all over again. Although a few people still claim that the scarcity is a sabotage by the APC, this claim perhaps no longer holds water, going by the widespread suffering that currently pervades the nation.

As the days draw into hours and inauguration day comes upon us, one message that we choose to send the outgoing administration is that, regardless of any ploy to further ground the economy to a halt, we can't wait for them to exit. We can't wait to see what it feels like to have a decisive President in power; we can't wait to see corruption being a thing of the past, we can't wait to have a President that is ready to relate on our level, introducing policies that are humane. Well, we sure do not expect miracles from the incoming administration, but we still can't wait to give them a chance. Above all, we can't wait for the return of our dearly beloved country Nigeria to its once glorious past. Nigeria will arise again. Amen.

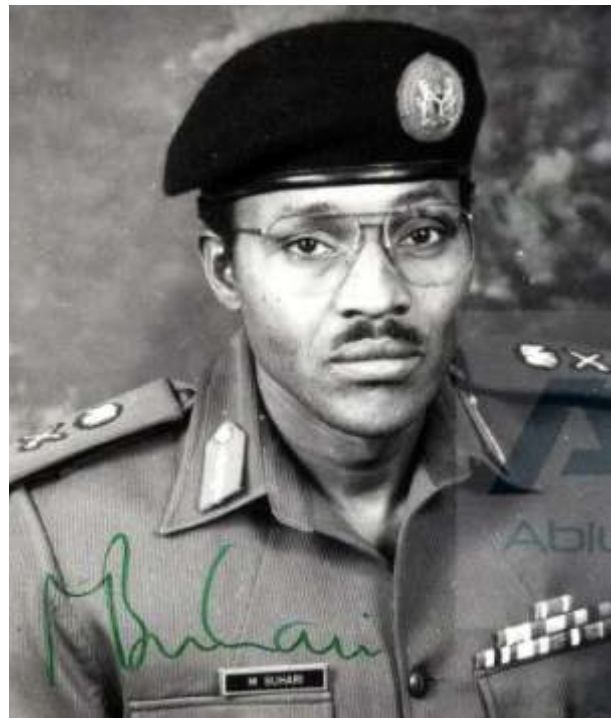
## About Oluseyi Adebisi

Seyiako lives to write and writes to live. He studied Agricultural Economics at Obafemi Awolowo University and currently works with a financial services provider in Abuja. His interests are as diverse as they come. He tweets from @seyiako and blogs periodically at [www.santachronicles.wordpress.com](http://www.santachronicles.wordpress.com)





#ThrowBackPhotos: General Muhammadu Buhari's late wife and former Nigeria First Lady Hajia Safinatu







General Buhari's wife Aisha with her children, Yusuf, Zahra and Halima in an old photo.



Aisha Buhari





## PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S INAUGURATION



**From Left:** Former Vice President Namadi Sambo; Former Head of State, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida; Former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar; Former Head of Interim Government, Chief Ernest Shonekan and Former President Olusegun Obasanjo, During The Inauguration of President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja on Friday, May 29, 2015.

**From Left:** Vice-President Professor Yemi Osinbajo, First Lady Aisha Buhari, President Muhammadu Buhari, & Former President Goodluck Jonathan





**First Portrait of First Lady  
Her Excellency Mrs Aisha Buhari**

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## Chude Jideonwo:

### Why Today - and President Buhari - Made me Cry

*Article written by Media Entrepreneur and Future Awards co-founder, Chude Jideonwo*

*May 29, 2015*

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**T**his morning, my team member, Oluwatobi Soyombo and I sat in the office, and discharged our final responsibility to the Buhari Campaign Organisation – we changed the bio of the Muhammadu Buhari account across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and everywhere else to ‘President of Nigeria’. I asked Tobi for the privilege to do this myself, with my own hands. Then, as he looked at me, shocked, the tears began to follow. After sending out the tweet for the new president of Nigeria (personal tweets from him are signed –MB), I took to my own private account and shared: ‘@MBuhari better not disappoint us. This is too important. This is too important.’

My team and I were offered the job to handle the communication for the Buhari campaign in November 2014. I couldn't believe it. We had never been close to the All Progressives Congress; I had never even met Buhari. Even the ‘closer’ Tinubu, I have not met since that time in 2002 when I served him tea as a production assistant at the Nigerian Television Authority.

I had a few weeks before declined a meet to discuss youth communication for the Goodluck Jonathan campaign because I no longer had any faith in his leadership, but I was almost certain he was going to win anyway.

In May 2014, I had arrived Abuja to speak at a #BringBackOurGirls event. But I had hardly left the airport, when someone high up in the government called me: “If I see you up on that stage with Oby (Ezekwesili), you are finished in this country.”

So, I wondered, was it wise to finally set up enmity with the government for the next four years by working directly for its opposition?

All through the time my co-founder, Adebola Williams worked hard with the team of Uche Nnaji (OUCH) and Kelechi Amadi-Obi to shoot the photographs that redefined Buhari's image, all through the period the team was assembled from Tobi to Alex Yangs to Kathleen Ndongmo, I couldn't move. I was transfixed in fear, in hope that dared not speak. Could Nigerians actually unseat a seating President from the People's Democratic Party?

I wondered if the rage I felt was worth the sacrifice I was about to make – putting my life, my relationships and my business on the line in a country where the biggest advise our richest man has given entrepreneurs is ‘never fight with the government of the day’?



All of that is history now. What looked like a mirage then has become reality. The job became a mission. After four months of the most emotional campaign in my lifetime, sleepless nights at the StateCraft Inc headquarters, from the campaign office in Abuja, supervising the setting up of billboards, fighting TV stations that didn't want to air our ‘Is This Transformation?’ promos, Adebola following the candidate around the country, and rewriting speeches in the dead of the night because the candidate knew exactly what he wanted to say, we are here now. Nigerians have unseated a 16-year monopoly.

So, this morning, I shared a story on my Instagram pagethat I haven't spoken about in public before.

In 2013, six of us friends including Adebola Williams, Yemi Adamolekun, Gbenga Sesan and Kola Oyenehin came together and decided that, beyond mobilising citizens, leading protests and using the media to drive conversation, Nigeria needed our passionate, sustained prayers. A year before, after our active involvement with #OccupyNigeria, and the events



after, we were beyond disillusioned.

And so, every Saturday morning, we went from the houses and offices of one to the other and we would cry, and we would scream, and we would pray for country. Ah, we prayed. Nigeria's future looked so bleak. It looked so dark, didn't see any logical pathway to change. So we went to God with our hearts, we went to him with our disappointment; we went to him with our pain. We asked him, "What should we do? How should we do it?"

One day, as we prayed, in an office on the Lagos Island, I was so overwhelmed with despair I fell down on the floor and began to speak in frenzied tongues, tears streaming from my face, banging furiously on the cabinet in front me. My heart was desperate; just desperate for something to give way.

I didn't know my friend, Kola, had the gift to interpret tongues. But then he began to interpret what I was saying. And it frightened me, because he was absolutely right. He captured the fears in my heart, and the requests I was making. He said, paraphrased, 'God says He will change Nigeria. It looks like it won't happen, but He will do a new thing and it will spring forth. We won't understand how He will do it, but He will.'

Two years later, God has kept his promise.

I do not know what the future holds. I cannot even say with certainty that this new dispensation will fulfil the promises it made to us when it called us on board and to you when it asked you to vote.

But I know one thing: I spent the past four years giving the Jonathan government the benefit of the doubt, willing it to succeed. Yet each time it failed, I was on the street, passionately denouncing it. And when, finally, after the Chibok girls went missing, I lost hope in it, I put everything on the line to join Nigerians in punishing it.

Things have changed.

I have invested faith that Buhari will be different, not just because he is a new president today, but because I have been privileged to sit in the same space with him, I have listened very carefully to his wisdom and his depth. I have counted the cost and I have overwhelmed faith that he is the leader we need.

But we, and he thankfully, know this: he cannot play with our future. He cannot play with the future of our children.

We have cried for this nation, because it has failed us too many times. We have worked our fingers to the bones, and our 'bloods' have boiled because we believe in its potential. Therefore, our tempers will be short, our forgiveness will be costly, our reactions to real and perceived failures will be swift.

Our hearts are broken, our spirits burdened. We desperately need the promised change, and we need it to start immediately.

Nigeria has suffered enough.

*\*Jideonwo is managing partner of Red Media Africa, 'the media group to reach and inspire the largest number of African youth at any time'. One of its companies, StateCraft Inc, was official communication agency to the Buhari Presidential Campaign*





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