

# **THE JUNE 12 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS NEITHER FREE NOR FAIR**

By  
**Abubakar Siddique Mohammed,**  
**Director,**  
**Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training,**  
**P.M.B 1077, Hanwa, Zaria,**  
**Nigeria.**

Was the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993 presidential election free and fair? Was it the “freest and fairest election” in Nigerian history? If it was free and fair and it was actually won by Chief M.K.O Abiola, the candidate of the Social Democratic Party, what electoral mandate did it give him? Did it give him the mandate to become the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Commander - in - Chief of its Armed Forces, for a period of four years, from 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1993, to 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1997, under the relevant provisions of the Nigerian Constitution of 1989? Or, did that election and its results, give him a special mandate, higher than the mandate given by any previous or, subsequent, Nigerian election, to become the President of Nigeria for four years, from any day he is installed, during his life time? That is, did Chief Abiola, on June 12<sup>th</sup> 1993, obtain a mandate from the electorate of Nigeria, which is not defined, or limited, by any time framework, any constitution, any laws, and even the existence of the other essential political institutions of civilian democratic government in a federal Nigeria, like the federal legislatures and the state executives and legislatures?

These are some of many questions millions of Nigerians are asking as their response to the deafening media campaign, since the death of General Sani Abacha, to have Chief M. K. O Abiola installed by the present military regime as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Commander - in - Chief of its Armed Forces, heading a "Government of National Unity", outside the provision of any constitution, for the next four years. These questions are, not only not receiving any answers, but are even being shut out of the media coverage of the current political debate about what to do with the current transition programme to return Nigeria to civilian democracy on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1998, with the swearing - in of a democratically elected President on that day.

These questions cannot be avoided, because they address some very important political issues, which go far beyond the fate of Chief M. K. O. Abiola and what is called "his mandate". These issues are central to the building of democratic civilian rule in Nigeria on solid foundations. Nigeria cannot start rebuilding democracy without a clear public understanding of, what actually is a free and fair election and the meaning and the basis of the electoral mandate derived from such an election.

The campaign for what is called “the actualisation of June 12<sup>th</sup>” is promoting the false impression that the freedom and fairness of an election is determined solely by what happens on the day of the election; and has nothing to do with the whole political process of party formation, party control, the nomination of candidates, the election campaign and the extent of the democratic space within which these are conducted.

There are six aspects of an election which determine whether, or not, it is democratic, free and fair. The first aspect has to do with the composition of the electorate. The second aspect has to do with the formation and control of the political parties putting up candidates for the election. The third aspect has to do with the nomination of the candidates. The fourth aspect has to do with the election campaign. The fifth aspect has to do with the polling, the counting and recording of votes and the announcement of results. The sixth aspect has to do with the operations of the judicial system in its handling of the election petitions.

### **The Parties and the Electorate**

The extent to which an election is free and fair, is determined by the freedom with which the adult citizens of a country can participate in it as voters. In an electoral system in which primaries are conducted by political parties for members of each party to elect their candidates, this freedom of participation has to include the freedom to form political parties which can contest elections and to vote for, or against, candidates in the party primaries. This freedom was denied to the citizens of Nigeria in the presidential election primaries of 1993 which produced Chief M. K. O Abiola as one of the two presidential candidates. The convention of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) which was held in Jos on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1993, in which 5,215 delegates voted and Chief Abiola won with a majority of 272 votes, cannot by any democratic standards be regarded as free and fair. This is because the S.D.P itself was decreed into existence in 1989 by the Armed Forces Ruling Council. In fact, the formation of the SDP and the National Republican Convention (NRC), violated all universally acceptable democratic principles of party formation.

Before the SDP and the NRC were imposed on the people of Nigeria, by the then ruling military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, 38 political parties and associations had been freely formed to contest for the elections which were to return the country to civilian rule. These parties and associations were, for the avoidance of doubt:

1. **People’s Liberation Party (PLP)**
2. **People’s Front of Nigeria (PFN)**
3. **Nigerian Peoples Welfare Party (NPWP)**
4. **Nigerian National Congress (NNC)**
5. **Peoples Solidarity Party (PSP)**
6. **Nigerian Labour Party (NLP)**
7. **The Republican Party of Nigeria (RPN)**
8. **National Union Party (NUP)**
9. **Liberal Convention (LC)**

10. Patriotic Nigerian Party (PNP)
11. Ideals Peoples Party (IPP)
12. All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)
13. Peoples Patriotic Party (PPP)
14. United Nigerian Democratic Party(UNDP)
15. Democratic People's Congress (DPC)
16. People's Party of Nigeria (PPN)
17. Black But Beautiful Party of Nigeria (BBBPN)
18. Welfare Party of Nigeria (WPN)
19. Liberal New Movement Party (LNMP)
20. Movement of Nationalists And Dynamos (MONAD)
21. Brotherhood Club of Nigeria (BCN)
22. United Front Party of Nigeria (UFP)
23. Abuja United Front (AUF)
24. New Democratic Alliance (NDA)
25. People's Alliance Party (PAP)
26. The All People's Party (TAPP)
27. People's Progressive Party (PPP)
28. National Development Party (NDP)
29. People's Convention Party (PCP)
30. Oriental Progressive (OP)
31. Nigerian Emancipation Party (NEP)
32. The Voice Group (Bendel) (THVP)
33. Commoners People's Party (CPP)
34. Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC)
35. Nigerian Farmers Revolutionary Council (NFRC)
36. Northern Youth Council (NYC)
37. Socialist Party of Workers, Farmers And Youth (SPWFY)
38. Nigerian Republican People's Party (NRPP)

Of the 38 political parties formed, 13 had applied for registration by 6 p.m of July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989, the deadline fixed for the submission of application. These were:

1. <i>Peoples Front Party of Nigeria</i>	<i>PFN</i>
2. <i>Nigerian People's Welfare Party</i>	<i>NPWP</i>
3. <i>Nigerian National Congress</i>	<i>NNC</i>
4. <i>People's Solidarity Party</i>	<i>PSP</i>
5. <i>The Republican Party of Nigeria</i>	<i>RPN</i>
6. <i>National Union Party</i>	<i>NUP</i>
7. <i>Liberal Convention</i>	<i>LC</i>
8. <i>National Labour Party</i>	<i>NLP</i>
9. <i>Patriotic Nigerian Party</i>	<i>PNP</i>
10. <i>Ideal People's Party</i>	<i>IPP</i>
11. <i>All Nigeria People's Party</i>	<i>ANPP</i>
12. <i>People's Patriotic Party</i>	<i>PPP</i>
13. <i>United Nigeria Democratic Party</i>	<i>UNDP</i>

Among these parties, were several which in the words of General Ibrahim Babangida himself, had “deep roots” in Nigeria politics. Indeed, veterans of the National Council for Nigeria and Camerouns (NCNC), Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), Action Group(A.G), and United Middle-Belt Congress (UMBC) of the First Republic, many of whom had played active roles in the struggle for Nigerian independence were found in these parties. Also found, were activists of the People’s Redemption Party (PRP), the Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigerian People’s party (NPP), and the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) of the Second Republic.

Impossible conditions were set by the military for the registration of political parties. Satisfying the conditions for registration did not only require the parties to spend hundreds of millions of naira, it also required them to put in place elaborate organisation, logistics, equipment and personnel, which even the military government could not fulfil, even when they later banned these parties and decreed the SDP and the NRC into existence. It was clear that the regime had imposed these impossible conditions because it had no intention of handing over to a democratically elected civilian government. This was known to Chief M. K. O Abiola as he himself said in a lecture he gave in a public meeting in London, on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1993, to justify his anger at what Babangida later did to him. He said, *“Yes, Babangida is my friend. We have been friends for quite a long time. The first time he started this democratic race of his, I asked him whether indeed there was a vacancy, since I do not like applying for a job which is not vacant”*. When he satisfied himself that the office was not vacant, that means General Babangida had no intention of handing over, Chief Abiola issued a statement to the effect that *“over the last few weeks, thousands of people have urged me to stand for the presidency of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, whilst some have counselled otherwise. Having carefully considered both sides of the argument, I have decided that I will not offer myself for this great office at this time”*

In a broadcast to the nation, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 1989, General Ibrahim Babangida announced that *“the thirteen political associations are dissolved with immediate effect.”* Not only were these parties banned, they were also forced to close their offices and stop all activities, or risk having their members being arrested and detained by the military regime. The military regime then created two political parties, the SDP and the NRC, and directed all those who were interested in politics to join either of the two.

Thus, the SDP, the primaries of which Chief Abiola won to become the candidate in the June 12<sup>th</sup> presidential elections, and the NRC, had their constitutions and manifestos produced by the military and formally launched by General Babangida at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Press Centre in Dodan Barracks on Monday, December 4, 1989. In his broadcast to the nation, on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1989, General Babangida said that *“The draft constitution of these parties as approved by the Armed Forces Ruling Council shall be identical. The National Electoral Commission shall submit (these) draft manifestoes to the Armed Forces Ruling Council for preliminary approval within two weeks from today...The draft manifestoes may be amended at the national conventions of each party subject to NEC guidelines. They shall then be sent to the Armed Forces Ruling Council, which*

*shall approve the amendments, after which the draft becomes a party manifesto". Thus, not only had the parties no independence whatsoever, their members and even the ordinary Nigerian voter were denied even the choice of programmes, as the parties had "identical manifestoes" which they cannot in reality amend.*

This undemocratic situation was captured by the editorial in **The Guardian** newspaper of Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1989, which states that : *"Whether it is in the area of the economy, education, health, etc. that one takes, we find that there is little fundamental difference between the manifestoes of the parties. Even their preambles, which should reveal the basic philosophy and the nature of social order they want to construct, fail to provide any meaningful differences between the two parties. And if parties do not differ in their basic philosophy of society, then, differences over strategies become cosmetics. Their language, uniformly bland, is bereft of the commitment and dedication to goals and ideals that should inform manifestoes."*

The SDP and the NRC were not only creations of the military regime, but they were also funded by that regime. Their state, local government and national offices were built by the military government. The Federal Military Government alone voted N676.5 million for the construction of 21 party offices in the state capitals, while the state military governors were ordered to construct two offices each for the parties, in each of the local government areas of the country. They budgeted a total sum of N546.6 million for this, making the total expenditure on the offices of these two parties, to come to the huge sum of N1.22 billion, equivalent, at that time to US\$111.2 million.

Even the membership cards of the two parties and their symbols and colours were dictated by the military regime of General Babangida. What is very significant with regards to the status of the June 12<sup>th</sup> election is that the adoption of the two-party system was what Chief M. K. O Abiola had canvassed for since 1985. In an interview in the **New Nigerian** of 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1985, Chief Abiola, *"commended a two-party system and described the five party system as a 'ridiculous rubbish' because it was expensive to run and did not guarantee a better government."*

### **Clearing the Field for Abiola**

Clearing the field for the emergence of Chief Abiola as the SDP presidential candidate by the military government of General Babangida started since 1991. First, General Babangida announced a ban on most people who had held public offices and who wanted to become presidential candidates. When some of these politicians refused to accept such a ban and continued with their political activities, they were arrested and detained on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1991, and later arraigned before the Transition to Civil Rule Tribunal, in order to frighten and intimidate them. These politicians were:

1. Major General Shehu Musa Yar 'Adua (rtd)
2. Alhaji Lateef Jakande
3. Chief Bola Ige
4. Chief Solomon Lar
5. Alhaji Muhamadu Abubakar Rimi
6. Chief Christian Onoh

7. Dr. Olusola Saraki
8. Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe
9. Alhaji Bello Maitama Yusuf
10. Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu
11. Mr. Paul Unongo
12. Alhaji Lawal Kaita

After this, the effort of clearing the field for General Babangida's best friend moved to the organisation of the party presidential primaries. One of the conditions for free and fair election is the conduct of free and fair election of candidates by members of the political parties in the primaries. These primaries must be organised by the elected officials of the parties concerned. This was the case with the presidential primaries in the two political parties conducted in October, 1992. However, these primaries which were won by the late Major General Shehu Yar Adua, in the SDP, and Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, in the NRC, were annulled on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1992, on the spurious ground that they were not properly done. The candidates, together with all other contestants, were banned again from contesting for the office of the president. Many others were cowered into silence.

It was no other person but Chief M.K.O Abiola who rose to defend this brazenly unfair decision by General Babangida saying in **The African Guardian** of 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1993 that “ *I do not agree with those who believe that it was the government that sabotaged the presidential primaries.*”

When Chief Abiola joined the SDP to contest for the presidency, the ground had been further cleared for him. First, all the elected officials of the parties, from the federal down to the state and local government levels were dismissed by General Babangida. In their place, the military regime appointed administrators at the national and state levels, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, 1993 to administer the parties. In all, 88 sole administrators and executive secretaries were appointed to run the parties in all the states of the federation, including Abuja. All the officials were answerable not to the members of the parties they were administering but to the Armed Forces Ruling Council headed by General Babangida through the National Electoral Commission.

The undemocratic, and regimented, nature of the parties is even more glaring in the case of the SDP. For, in the period 26<sup>th</sup> January to 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1993, when the party's primaries which produced Chief Abiola as presidential candidate took place, the party was administered by a retired air force general, and former military governor of Kano State, Air Vice Marshal Stephen Shekari. This airforce general presided over the Jos convention of 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1993, which produced Chief Abiola as the SDP's flag-bearer.

As far as the composition of the party electorate which voted for Chief Abiola to become the SDP's flag-bearer is concerned, there was nothing free or fair about it. There was also nothing democratic, or free and fair, about the formation and control of the party which nominated him. Therefore, Chief Abiola's candidature had its roots in the military regimentation of the electoral process, in violation of all the norms of freedom and fairness in democratic elections.

## The Election Campaign

Any attempt at honestly, and rigorously, understanding the June 12<sup>th</sup>, issue, cannot ignore the role of Chief M. K.O Abiola in the campaign for the perpetuation of military rule in Nigeria. Far from being a democrat, as we are now made to understand by those shouting for “the actualisation of June 12”, Abiola is one of the leading Nigerian civilian public figures who had always supported, and financed, military coups, as a means of changing governments. Thus, when he fell out with the National Party of Nigeria, in 1982, over his failure to get elected as the chairman of the party in order to be in a position to contest as its presidential candidate in 1983, he resigned from the NPN, claiming that he had left active politics, while in reality he was busy conspiring with the military to overthrow the democratically elected government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. This, they finally did, with his financial and media support on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983, with his bosom friend, General Ibrahim Babangida, emerging as the Chief of Army Staff.

When the sterility and repression of the General Buhari’s military regime became obvious and its draconian decrees widely hated, Chief M. K. O. Abiola came to the defence of the regime, adding that “*Any body who is a threat to the government can be restricted*”. As his newspaper, **National Concord** of 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1985 reported, he was “*putting his full weight behind the curtailment of dangerous elements within the system*” These “*dangerous elements*” were the 1979 and 1983 democratically elected civilian political leaders at the state and federal levels, who had been locked up in jail for over one year without proper legal trial. Those who were tried, were tried before secret military tribunals.

When the Buhari regime came under intense public pressure to allow people to discuss the political future of the country, Chief Abiola was one of the very few leading, civilian, Nigerians who gave yet another spirited defence of the military regime, by saying in the **New Nigeria** of 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1985 that, “*we have a government headed by Major General Buhari, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief. What is of concern to me is that he rules Nigeria well to the betterment of every Nigerian That is all. It doesn’t bother me how long he stay there. The longer he stays from my point of view the more stability we will have.*”

When General Babangida seized power on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1985, Chief Abiola became even closer to the military regime, because Babangida was his close friend and he also financed this coup. He defended almost every action of that regime , stating blandly that “*there was nothing they have not done that I don’t particularly like*”, as reported in the **National Concord** of 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1986.

In spite of some hiccups in his relationship with the regime, connected with the actions of some of his journalists and his children, Chief Abiola was seen by the generality of Nigerians as General Babangida’s man. The main pillar of his election campaign was that he was so close to General Babangida and the military, that Nigerians thought, he should be voted for to get rid of the military, who would be willing to hand over to him, as he has been very close to them, at every level.

This view was reinforced by the fact that the security apparatus of the regime had imposed a light-weight businessman, Alhaji Bashir Tofa, as the candidate of the other party, the NRC. For, while Chief Abiola is giant among Nigerian businessmen, Alhaji Bashir Tofa remained, up to his nomination, essentially an errand boy of Brigadier General Halilu Akilu, head of Babangida's security services; as he has earlier been an errand boy of Kano NPN tycoons, who made him the National Financial Secretary of that party.

The election campaign was therefore heavily loaded in favour of M. K. O. Abiola, by this very fact of his personal and warm friendship with General Babangida and the light weight rival candidate produced for him by the military regime.

Not only was the campaign made easier by the puny status of Alhaji Bashir Tofa, as against Chief Abiola, even in Kano, but the security apparatus of the regime promoted a campaign against Alhaji Bashir Tofa publicising accusations of dishonesty in the oil business against him.

Chief Abiola, meanwhile, continued to bask in his aura of belonging to the magic circle of the closest personal friends of General Babangida. A few months before he joined the SDP to contest for the presidency, General Babangida sent him a warm message of congratulations on the occasion of his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1992. The **National Concord** of 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1992, the former editor of which was a close aide to Chief Abiola, Mr. Duro Onabule, who became General Babangida's Chief Press Secretary, reported that the message was unique. In it, General Babangida said, : *"...you have not stalled in your philanthropic activities for which I assure you history will duly reward you most appropriately. It is also noteworthy that your business continue to widen, all aimed at providing job opportunities and enhanced standard of living for our fellow countrymen. May Allah grant you more years of useful service to the nation and humanity."*

### **The Conduct of the Election**

The conduct of the election of June 12<sup>th</sup> did not make it the freest and fairest in Nigeria. In the first place, it is well known that Chief Abiola used massive amounts of money to bribe election officials and security personnel to ensure his victory. For, in spite of the way the campaign had greatly favoured him, he was not the one to take any chances with his wily friend, General Babangida. Everybody knows that with regards to the bribing and corrupting of election officials and security personnel, the 1993 presidential election was worse than the 1979 presidential election. As far as the turn out of voters was concerned, the number of people who came out to vote in 1979 was 16.8 million, while in 1993, with a larger population, only 13.6 million voted in the presidential election.

There was no time for election petitions, since the results were annulled before they were formally announced. Therefore, it is very difficult to assess the freedom and fairness with which it was conducted and with which the judicial machinery for it operated.

## The Conspiracy

The fact that the results of 12<sup>th</sup> of June Presidential election were annulled by the military regime of General Babangida cannot by itself make the election free and fair. The evidence available clearly establishes that, right from the way the two parties were imposed by military diktat, funded, housed and controlled by the regime, and had their primaries and campaigns largely determined by the regime, there was very little that was democratic in the whole process culminating in the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993, election.

The only inference one can draw from the facts available, is that a conspiracy to install Chief M.K.O Abiola was, at the last minute, aborted by General Babangida and others, perhaps including General Abacha. This conspiracy may actually go back to the early 1980s, when these two generals began plotting with Chief Abiola, and others, against the democratically elected government of Nigeria; a conspiracy which successfully bore fruit on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983, when, the then Brigadier General Sani Abacha, announced the overthrow of the democratically elected governments of Nigeria and M. K. O. Abiola led in the campaign to support this act of treason, and General Babangida took up the strategic position of Chief of Army Staff, which in August, 1985 he relinquished to General Abacha on becoming Head of State.

Indications of such a conspiracy can be seen in the way Chief M. K. O. Abiola consulted very closely with General Babangida over who was to be his running mate, even after, according to him, he had felt that his friend was no longer with him. He, on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1993, said: *“ We got to Jos, the first shocker for Babangida was that I won in Jos very narrowly but I won...the problem is that I need a Christian as a running-mate...The President (Babangida) was suggesting that I should pick Bafyau...So I went back to see Babangida the next day Friday. He was still insisting on Bafyau. It became very clear that we were on a collision course...I phoned the President at midnight before the announcement and told him that out of courtesy I must let him know that there is no way I can pick Bafyua. I was going to announce Babagana Kingibe in the morning.”*

Other indications of Chief Abiola's deep conspiratorial involvement with the military, particularly with the two generals most influential in the overthrow of our last democratic governments, also come out in the way he went to express such public confidence in General Abacha's commitment to hand over power to him as soon as the latter had executed the November 17, 1993 military coup. Speaking at SDP Kaduna State office, at Kawo, Kaduna, on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1993, he said: *“I really commend General Sani Abacha because out of love of the country, he puts his common sense, experience, tact and intellect to ease out (the former President, General Ibrahim Babangida). I have no doubt that it is that common sense, that patriotism, that intellect that will enable him to ease out his Babangida surrogates..but for people like Sani Abacha this country would have plunged into bloodshed”.*

If, what Mrs Titilayo Abiola told **The Post Express** in an interview on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1998, that Chief M. K. O. Abiola was so much looking forward to coming out and meeting General Abacha, that he cried when he heard of his death is

true, it further indicates that his connections with General Abacha, at least as far as he was concerned, remained a very important part of his life, even after the latter has locked him up for over four years.

It is difficult at this stage to fathom the depth and ramifications of the layers, upon layers, of conspiracy involved. But there can be no doubt that an election cannot, suddenly, become free and fair, just because a military President falls out with one of the candidates in a presidential election, with whom he had a long standing conspiratorial relations against democracy in Nigeria, and goes ahead to annul the victory of his co-conspirator.

### The Facts and the Figures

The fact that those campaigning for the “actualisation of the June 12<sup>th</sup> election” refused to face is that out of 36.7 million Nigerians who registered to vote in that election, only 7.7 million voted for Chief Abiola while 5.9 million voted for Alhaji Bashir Tofa and 23.1 million abstained. In other words, 29.0 million Nigerian voters, equal to 79% of the registered voters refused to vote for Chief Abiola, either by abstaining, or by voting for the NRC candidate. How can a candidate, who fails to obtain the support of 8 out every 10 voters in a country, be made to appear to have obtained a special mandate to rule that country, irrespective of time, of laws and of the constitution? Certainly, in democratic elections of the type we have, a candidate can be validly elected, even with a smaller proportion of the registered voters voting for him, or her. But to claim that a candidate has a mandate to rule a country even five years after the election, there surely should be better evidence of solid electoral support, in fact, repeated over a number of elections.

It is not only when looking at the figures for the whole country, that we find that the overwhelming majority of Nigerians refused to vote for him but even in the South-western States of Nigeria, 61.1% of the voters either abstained, or voted, for Alhaji Bashir Tofa, thus effectively refusing to vote for M. K. O Abiola. In Lagos State, where it is claimed he has his main support base, 63% of the registered voters refused to vote for him by either abstaining or by voting for Alhaji Bashir Tofa. The table below brings out these facts clearly.

#### **Chief M. K. O. Abiola’s Performance in the June 12 Presidential Election in the South Western States of Nigeria.**

State	Total number of registered voters	Total number of votes for Abiola	% of registered voters who voted for Abiola	% of registered voters who did not vote for Abiola.
Lagos	2, 397, 421	883, 965	36.9	63
Ogun	941, 889	425, 725	45.4	54.6
Ondo	1,767, 896	803, 024	45.4	54.6
Osun	1, 056, 690	365,024	21.0	79
Oyo	1,597, 280	538,001	33.6	66.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7, 761, 176</b>	<b>3,015,739</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>61.1</b>

Source: *Newswatch*, June 28<sup>th</sup> 1993, p.10

Those leaders of NADECO, and the pro-democracy groups who threaten that if Chief M. K. O. Abiola is not installed as President of Nigeria, because he won the 12<sup>th</sup> of June election, the Yorubas will break away, have to explain how the political fate of Abiola who 61.1% of the registered Yoruba voters refused to vote for can be used to legitimise the secession of the Yorubas from Nigeria. Is it because this majority does not have any rights because they choose to refuse to vote for Chief M. K. O. Abiola? Clearly, this secessionist threat has nothing to do with justice, equity, and the democratic rights of the great majority of Yoruba voters, who refused to vote for Abiola on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993, and, therefore, cannot be expected to fight for “the actualisation of the mandate” which they never gave him.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, Chief Abiola did not obtain any democratic mandate through a free and fair election, for, no such election took place June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993. But, even, granted that in spite of all its severe limitation, that election reflected the will of the Nigerian electorate, at that point in time, and in those special circumstances, it does not provide a basis for Chief Abiola to be installed as a civilian dictator, outside any democratic political party, without any elected federal legislatures, without any, elected, state executive and legislatures, or, elected, local government councils; leaving him effectively propped up by the military, in this so-called “Government of National Unity”. For, those who advocated that he should head this government are asking for this; including his taking the powers to appoint sole administrators over the states and the local governments, for the next two years.

If, as has been clearly established above, he received no genuine, democratic, mandate to rule Nigeria, in the years 1993-1997, how can he now have this mandate, after 1997? Is it because Chief Abiola is placed on a special pedestal of representing the Yorubas, even though 61.1% of voters in the Yoruba states refused to vote for him? Those advocating this, whether explicitly or implicitly, have to explain what it has to do with democracy or national unity. In fact, they have to explain what it has to do with any form of constitutional government under the rule of law. For, to install Chief Abiola to head a “Government of National Unity” simply because of his tribe, or race, is to actually establish a Government of National Disunity and National Confusion.

For, such an imposition by the present military regime, even for one month, as NADECO has been pleading in Abuja, has no basis in democracy, but amounts to an unprincipled and dangerous compromise with the military and civilian conspirators who, since 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983, have taken our country backwards from where it had reached on the weak, but sound, democratic, system we were gradually building in the Second Republic, on the basis of the 1979 Constitution.