

Freedom of Expression and Human Rights in Nigeria

Whereas playwright and journalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights campaigners have recently been executed by the Nigerian Government in response to their peaceful activities against the degradation of the farmland of the Ogoni people by the Shell Oil Corporation and their demands for sharing oil profits with local communities.

And whereas the Nigerian military government has detained Chief Moshood Abiola, the likely winner of the 1993 presidential elections;

And whereas the Nigerian military government has detained former Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo and other human rights activists;

And whereas the people of Nigeria are denied their rights to peaceful voice their opposition to the current military regime;

And whereas there is a worldwide movement calling for sanctions against the Nigerian military government;

And whereas the U.S. Government and the European Union have instituted an arms embargo against Nigeria;

And whereas Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ) have introduced legislation (S.1419 and H.R. 2697) to ban all new U.S. investment in Nigeria and freeze the assets of top Nigerian officials;

And whereas leading African-American members of Congress have called for oil sanctions against Nigeria;

And whereas the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has called on the Dutch Government to stop Shell Oil from exporting oil to Nigeria;

Therefore be it resolved that ALA supports comprehensive sanctions against the Government of Nigeria, including oil sanctions;

And resolved that this resolution be sent to all members of the U.S. Congress and the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States.

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Turock reported that ALA Goal 2000 would be highlighted during the National Library Week, April 14-20. The theme this year is *Libraries Change Lives*. Turock said that on Tuesday, April 16, libraries would be asked to join in offering public demonstrations of the information superhighway as part of *Log on @ the Library Day*, an event designed to educate and to mobilize public support for libraries.

President Turock also mentioned the launch of the American Association of School Librarians "*Kids Connect*," which is an online question-and-answer service to help students navigate the Information Superhighway.

In conclusion, Turock said that beginning at Midwinter Meeting and culminating on Library Legislative Day, May 7, librarians are being asked to sponsor a national petition drive at their libraries. She said the purpose of the petition drive was to send a powerful message to Congress from the American public encompassing the message that "Americans must have equity on the Information Superhighway and it must start with our nation's libraries."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT. Elizabeth Martinez thanked Council for its support of the first year of *ALA Goal 2000*, which she said had moved ALA further toward being able to position itself to represent the public's interests in a free and open information society. She also noted the redesign of *American Libraries* and the establishment of the ALA Home Page as major accomplishments.

Martinez reported that a "Team 2000" concept had been created at Headquarters to further involve staff in *ALA Goal 2000*. As part of the Team 2000 concept, a staff creed was developed. The creed reads: "We are dedicated to providing excellent service not just to staff, but particularly to our members and our public, because that's why we're here. Our work environment is open and we welcome diverse ideas and opinions. We are a team. We will operate as a team. We will work to make libraries essential in the information age. We are empowered, we partner with our member leaders. Every one of our jobs is important. Everyone contributes. And, we are fast, focused, flexible and friendly."

She ended by thanking the Executive Board and the ALA staff for their support.

Councilor Herbert Biblo asked whether a report on the status of affirmative action programs at Headquarters could be given to Council at the Annual Conference. President Turock said that that this could be done.

TELLERS REPORT, CD#24, Exhibit 20. Jack Forman, chair of the Tellers Committee, reported that the following person were elected to serve a four-year term on the ALA Executive Board, beginning at the 1996 Annual Conference: Robert Newlen, management specialist, Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, and James Neal, director, Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University. Elected to serve a 1-1/2 year term on the Executive Board, beginning at this 1996 Midwinter Meeting, was Martin J. Gomez, Brooklyn Public Library, NY. Members of the Tellers Committee were: Michael Deller, Mark Goniwiecha, and Jack Forman, chair.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT, CD#18-18.2, Exhibit 21. Councilor E.J. Josey, chair, expressed appreciation to Bob Doyle, IRC and IRRT staff liaison, who recently announced his resignation from ALA to accept the position of executive director of the Illinois Library Association.

Josey then moved the adoption of CD#18.1, Freedom of Expression and Human Rights in Nigeria, which called for "comprehensive sanctions against the government of Nigeria because of that government's violation of human rights and freedom of expression." Josey said that the resolution had been brought forward in response to the Nigerian government's execution without due process of playwright and journalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights campaigners.

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Councilor Ann Haley, former IRC chair, said that while she felt that the actions of the government of Nigeria were unconscionable and reprehensible, she understood that in the past Council had taken actions only when foreign librarians or others directly connected with the library profession were involved. Therefore, she felt the resolution was outside of Council's purview.

Councilor Kenneth Haycock asked whether the resolution had come from the Nigeria Library Association or any other group within Nigeria; by what the criteria Nigeria had been singled out; and against what other countries ALA had taken this type of action.

Josey said the resolution was based on ALA Policies 58.3, Abridgment of the Rights of Freedom of Foreign Nationals, 58.4, Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He said he felt that the resolution was within ALA's purview. Josey further stated that the initiative had come Nigerians living in the United States and studying in U.S. library schools.

Immediate Past President Arthur Curley voiced his support of the resolution. Curley noted that endorsement of Article 19 meant that ALA could and should address the grievances of foreign nationals where the infringement of their rights of free expression has been violated. He said that it would be a serious error for ALA not to go on record against the actions taken by the Nigerian government.

Council then

VOTED, To adopt CD#18.1, Freedom of Expression and Human Rights in Nigeria, which read: "That the American Library Association support comprehensive sanctions against the Government of Nigeria, because of that Government's violation of human rights and freedom of expression."

Josey then moved and by **CONSENT**, Council voted to adopt CD#18.2, Resolution Commending the Library of Congress for Restoring its International Lending Program, which read: "That the American Library Association commend the Library of Congress for initiating the restoration of international interlibrary lending through cooperation with OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. and Research Libraries Group.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES REVIEW COMMITTEE, CD#39, Exhibit 22. Councilor Kay Cassell, chair, moved and Council

VOTED, To establish the ALA Conference Committee.

The charge and composition for the proposed committee will be reviewed by the Committee on Organization, which is to bring an official recommendation to Council at the 1996 Annual Conference.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT, CD#25-25.1, Exhibit 23. Councilor Pamela Bonnell, chair, moved and Council

VOTED, To amend Bylaw Article I, Section 1.A.5, by striking \$10,000 and inserting \$18,000.

Bonnell pointed out that this amendment would allow more library workers to qualify for the reduced dues in the "Other Members" category.

Bonnell moved to amend Article VIII, Committees, by striking out Article VIII, Sections 1-4 and inserting the following in their place:

Article VIII. Committees

ALA American Library Association

Freedom of Expression and Human Rights in Nigeria

WHEREAS, Playwright and journalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights campaigners have recently been executed by the Nigerian Government, without due process, in response to their peaceful activities against the degradation of the farmland of the Ogoni people by the Shell Oil Corporation and their requests for sharing oil profits with local communities; and

WHEREAS, The Nigerian military government has detained Chief Moshood Abiola, the winner of the 1993 presidential elections and former Head of the State Olusegun Obassajo and other human rights activists; and

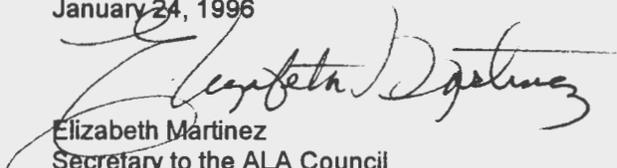
WHEREAS, The people of Nigeria are denied their rights to voice peacefully their opposition to the current military regime; and

WHEREAS, There is a worldwide movement calling for sanctions against the Nigerian military government; Nigeria has been suspended from the Commonwealth of Nations, the U.S. Government and the European Union have instituted an arms embargo against Nigeria; and Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ) have introduced legislation (S.1419 and H.R. 2697) to ban all new U.S. investment in Nigeria and freeze the assets of top Nigerian officials; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association supports comprehensive sanctions against the Government of Nigeria, because of that Government's violation of human rights and freedom of expression.



ADOPTED BY THE
COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
January 24, 1996


Elizabeth Martinez
Secretary to the ALA Council