

INTERNATIONAL

Abubakar pledges to start political transition program

By Dorothy R. Leavell
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Nigerian Head of State General Abdulsalam Abubakar pledged his full commitment to the transition program outlined by General Sani Abacha's administration on Tuesday, June 9, assuring he will do everything to ensure its successful implementation.

His pledge answered questions following the sudden death of General Sani Abacha on Monday, June 8 in Abuja, Nigeria about whether Nigeria would ever know democracy.

The country of 115 million people was a little less than 60 days away from the culminating election to determine the head of state in presidential elections.

The election takes place Aug. 1.

In his first broadcast as head of state and commander-in-

chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Abubakar announced he was consulting agencies at the highest level of the transition program, soliciting cooperation from all Nigerians and extending an invitation to Nigerians in self-exile to return home to join in the reconstruction.

He also declared a one-month period of national mourning beginning on June 9, and ending July 7, to solemnize the death of Abacha.

Abubakar was named Nigeria's 11th Head of State early in the morning of June 9. The Nigerian Press reported that he was also promoted to the rank of general, having held the rank of Major. Gen. He becomes Nigeria's eighth military ruler.

News of the appointment of the infantry general was broken to State House

correspondents at the end of a 25-minute meeting of the Provisional Ruling Council in Abuja by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhali Gidado Idris, at 2:10 a.m.

In his acceptance speech Abubakar said: "Yesterday morning we all witnessed a sad event in the history of our great country.

We woke up to the news of the death of our beloved Head of State, General Sani Abacha, May His Soul Rest in Peace.

"As a result of his death, the PRC has decided to declare seven days of national mourning beginning from Tuesday. Flags will be flown at half mast.

"The PRC also decided to appoint me as the new head of state. It also approved my elevation from the rank of Major Gen. to full general," he

is quoted as saying.

He described his appointment as a "personal challenge," and emphasized that "all hands must be on deck to move this great nation forward."

Abubakar also appealed to the international community: "My fervent appeal goes to the international community for their understanding and cooperation. Nigeria demands a fair hearing and constructive engagement, not isolation. We remain an important member of the international system through the framework of the United Nations, a veritable

instrument of international cooperation and interdependence.

"We shall honour all our international obligations and maintain our national commitment to international peace and security, especially in the West African sub-region. Similarly, we intend to continue to have friendly relations with all nations of the world. However, in spite of the recent developments in the country, we shall resolutely defend our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity."

Abubakar was born on June

13, 1942 in Minna, the capital of Minna State.

He attended Native Authority Primary School in Minna from 1950 to 1956, Bida's Provincial Secondary School from 1957 to 1962, and the Technical Institute in Kaduna in 1963.

He first enlisted in the Nigerian Air Force, then joined the Army where he served in many positions.

He was appointed Chief of Defense Staff at Defense Headquarters on December 1, 1993, where he served until his elevation to head of state following Abacha's death.

U.N. official says famine near in Guinea-Bissau

Special to Sentinel-Voice

MPAK, Senegal — Hundreds of thousands of war refugees inside Guinea-Bissau face imminent famine if food and medical relief aren't delivered immediately, a U.N. refugee agency spokesman warned earlier this week.

As many as 300,000 people have fled fighting in the West African nation's capital, converging on towns north of the city where there is little food, clean water or medical supplies.

Although fighting near the capital, Bissau, was not as fierce earlier in the week as in recent weeks, gunfire and the blast of artillery shells were heard near the airport.

The country's breakaway military faction has dug in there to hold off loyalist forces and Senegalese troops.

Senegal, fighting on behalf of Guinea Bissau President Joao Bernardo Vieira, has about 1,500 troops inside the country and has begun shipping in supplies and troop reinforcements from the southern town of Ziguinchor.

The two-week-old conflict was triggered when former Guinea-Bissau chief of army staff Brig. Ansumane Mane tried unsuccessfully to topple Vieira. Heavy fighting has left the capital scarred by rocket and artillery fire, its streets virtually deserted.

The vast majority of the city's 300,000 people have fled Bissau, many flocking to the central towns of Mansoa, Bafata, and Canchungo.

Few refugees have been permitted to cross the heavily guarded border into Senegal, but aid supplies and other traffic has been stopped from going into Guinea-Bissau.

In Geneva, the High Commission for Refugees has appealed to West African nations to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Guinea-Bissau's government on Sunday ruled out peace talks with renegade forces unless they declare an immediate cease-fire and explain their motives for launching a coup, the Portuguese news agency Lusa quoted a senior Guinea-Bissau official, Male Sane, as saying.

Leavell praises Abacha, hopes for democratic Nigeria

Special to Sentinel-Voice

In a recent release, Dorothy R. Leavell expressed her cooperation with the new Nigerian Head of State, while at the same time expressing her condolences upon the death of General Sani Abacha.

"The untimely death of the Head of State of Nigeria Sani Abacha was shocking to me and the delegations of African-American newspaper publishers who had met the General while participating in fact-finding missions to Nigeria beginning in 1995," said Leavell, president of the National Newspaper Publishers' Association.

"Having met with General Abacha on many occasions, we found him to be a great listener and he showed great

interest in our opinions. He often implemented ideas expressed in our audience with him and his staff. We knew him as a man of integrity and a man who sought to provide the greatest of opportunities and advancement for his beloved Nigeria and its people.

"We are further distressed that democracy and civilian rule will not be fulfilled by him personally, but pray that democracy in Nigeria will be a monument to his work. Yet, we are encouraged that new Head of State Abubakar plans to implement Abacha's transition program."

Leavell concluded, "We are all saddened by his death and send our sympathy to his wife, Mrs. Maryam Abacha and his family upon their great loss."

Also releasing a statement was Roy Innis, national chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality, who along with the Black Press was a part of the first fact-finding tour of Nigeria when Leavell led a delegation of African-American publishers in September 1995.

"Africa has lost a great son and a strong leader," Innis said. "In his short tenure as Head of State of the most powerful country in Africa, he achieved a great deal. His historic liberation of Liberia allowed them to elect a democratic government, and his ousting of a military junta in Sierra Leone and returning its elected president to power will go down in history as seminal moments."

Gene Collins for Las Vegas NAACP President



GENE COLLINS

Gene Collins, a Former State Assemblyman, who announced his candidacy for the office of Las Vegas NAACP President on May 6th, is sending out a call to the residents of Las Vegas. Mr. Collins, who pledges to embark on a drastic and dramatic turnaround of the Las Vegas NAACP Branch from its recent string of setbacks and disturbance, has assembled a 15-point platform that he believes will take the African-American community, as well as other similar situated minorities, and especially civil rights, as a whole — in this city — to the next level. Aside and apart from his 15-point platform, Mr. Collins would like area residents to respond to the following issues that he seeks to immediately address as local NAACP President:

Have You Ever Been Harassed On Your Job Because of Your Sex, Age, Gender or the COLOR OF YOUR SKIN?

Yes No

Have You or Any Member of Your Family Ever Experienced or Witnessed Any Form of Police Brutality?

Yes No

Have You or Your Neighbors Ever Experienced Any Unconscionable School Racial Incident That Should Not Have Occurred/Or School Incident That Was Not Handled Properly by School Officials?

Yes No

Have You or Any of Your Friends Been Unnecessarily Scrutinized and Then Subsequently Declined a Loan From a Bank or Credit Union from What You Believe May Have Been - Redlining/Stereotyping or Outright Discrimination?

Yes No

Have You or Anyone You Know Ever Been Falsely Accused of SHOPLIFTING or Unfairly Harassed at Any of Our "Friendly" Neighborhood Malls, By Being Followed Around the Entire Time You Were Shopping?

Yes No

Wouldn't You Like to Have the Opportunity to Become Involved in the Growth and Development of the Community College of Southern Nevada?

Yes No

Are You and Your Children Dissatisfied with Your Neighborhood Library System - Because the Books and Other Materials in Their Current Academic and Physical Condition Do Not Adequately Reflect the Diversity and Technology Of This Country?

Yes No

Would You Like to See More Done, On a Statewide Basis, to Celebrate the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - For Instance Circulating a Petition Asking the City, County and State to Match Three Million Dollars (\$3M) to Build the Martin Luther King Performing Arts and Cultural Center, Which Would Seat Between 800 and 1000 People, in Honor of Dr. King?

Yes No

Wouldn't You Like to Be Provided with More Information Relevant to the Community Tax Structure and Its Affects On Your Area Being Bestowed With Good Streets, Sewer, Transportation and Other Neighborhood Services That "Newer" Communities Enjoy?

Yes No

As a Licensed or Unlicensed Employee/ Professional Working for the Clark County School District, Have You Ever Been Singled Out and Subjected to an Unfair, Unwarranted and Unjust Evaluation or Demotion Because of Your Stance or Position on a Particular Controversial/Unpopular Issue?

Yes No

If you answered YES to a large percentage of the preceding questions, Mr. Gene Collins, a forty-year resident and Former State Assemblyman has your best interests at heart. While a member of the Nevada Legislature, Mr. Collins sponsored the following bills:

- 1983
- A.B. 99 — Declared Martin Luther King, JR's. Birthday as a legal holiday
- A.B. 508 — Provided for the establishment of distinct benefited zones in certain depressed areas of Nevada, specifically the area termed "West Las Vegas."
- A.B. 507 — Amended the City Charter of North Las Vegas to authorize the establishment of tax increment areas.
- 1985
- A.J.R. 28 — Urged Congress to Repeal the Federal Reserve Act.
- A.B. 550 — Allowed Taxpayers to build block walls around their homes without any cost to the homeowner.

Mr. Collins was one of the individuals instrumental in the legislative bill and succeeding program to construct and organize the West Las Vegas Library. Additionally, Mr. Collins is most proud of being one of the individuals who started the little league baseball program in his community.

If elected NAACP President, Gene Collins Will Continue to Make A Difference In This Community.

VOTE: November 1998, GENE COLLINS NAACP PRESIDENT!

Gene Collins

Paid for by the friends of Gene Collins

