Cultural Daily

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The Road to Dukana: a Tribute to Kenule Saro-Wiwa

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, July 1st, 2015

It was a cloudy day on 10 November 1995, when Nigerian writer and environmental activist Kenule Saro-Wiwa was hung, along with eight other prominent Ogoni activists, at the Port Harcourt Maximum Prison, Rivers State, Nigeria, by the government led by General Sani Abacha. In November 2015, it will be twenty years since the death of the writer and producer of one of the most followed TV series of the 90s, *Basi and Company*.

In the twenty years without Ken, there has been a vacuum in the demand for indigenous rights for the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta. The Nigerian government has undergone a transformation from military to civilian government, but many things have not changed since Ken's death. The abandoned oil wells in Ogoni and other parts of the Niger Delta are often broken by desperate youths. Sometimes, due to poor maintenance, there are massive oil spills. There have been three cases of successful international lawsuits against Shell, the firm in the centre of the chaos.

The United Nations Environmental Programme released a report in 2011 that echoed the same outcry for remediation of the environment. The programme noted that it would take a thirty year period to have the land fully restored for farming and fishing, which constitute the basic occupations of the Ogoni locals.

Bura-Bari Nwilo

Bura-Bari Nwilo, a Nigerian writer of the Ogoni extraction who was probably eight years old in 1995 when Mr. Saro-Wiwa was executed, has begun a small project to remember the man he believes spurred selflessness in him. He is gathering material, letters and tributes, for a book entitled *The Road to Dukana; Tributes and Letters for Ken Saro-Wiwa*, a project he believes would encourage younger people to be steadfast in the fight for the environment.

For the title, Nwilo explains that Dukana was a fictional community which appeared in Ken's writing. Bura-Bari Nwilo says proceeds from the project would go into setting up a mild sized statue of Ken Saro-Wiwa in Bori, Ogoni, the traditional headquarters of the Ogoni people and Ken's birthplace.

Nwilo, who is an undergraduate student of English and Literature at the University of Nigeria,

Nsukkais, is on the project with his friend and writer, Zoe Valery, a postgraduate student of English Literature at Oxford.

To participate in the project, the team has put out a call for submission of letters and tributes. Please follow the link: http://www.rottenbiro.blogspot.com/2015/05/call-for-submissions.html

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