Historicizing the Bakassi Peninsula Tussle in Retrospect.

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Abstract:

The concern of this work is to synthesize the conflict that shrouded the territorial tussle of the oil rich and fertile fishing submarine shoals generally referred to as the Bakassi Peninsula by two neighbouring African states of Nigeria and Cameroon, leading to the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague which ceded the disputed peninsula to Cameroon. This discourse however submits that the peninsula had never been a diplomatic instrument of policy of Nigeria in spite of the varying foreign policy thrusts arising from the political instability it suffered after independence. It is a fact that the boundary delimitation exercise to fix a validly acceptable demarcation line from Lake Chad to the sea was the only issue. So, the argument in this work is that, at what point did the Bakassi Peninsula become an important instrument of state policy or was it smuggled in for legitimacy challenge than a foreign policy direction? But while it is true that the cession of the peninsula to Cameroon represents a tremendous losts to Nigeria, nonetheless, this research effort advocates that the immediate transfer of the peninsula by Nigeria to Cameroon in compliance with the ICJ judgment was the right thing to be done.

Key Words: Bakassi Peninsula, International Court of Justice, Boundary, Tussle, Nigeria and Cameroon.

Introduction

The scramble for and partition of Africa was already completed by November 1884, when the Berlin Conference was convened that lasted till February 1885. The Berlin African Conference, was called by the Portuguese and organized by the first Chancellor of Germany, Otto Von Bismarck, was utilized to formalize the Scramble for Africa at the apogee of the European colonial activities on the continent. The conference was a forum under which the Europeans simultaneously eliminated whatever remained of political autonomy that existed in Africa as elsewhere in colonial history. The intensity of the competition among the various interests in Africa was reaching the point where the European powers feared a war on Africa. There were numerous conflicts over various parts of Africa amongst European nations. Kwamashie (2013)

The main consequence of the Berlin Act of 1884 – 1885 was the recognition of the authority of European powers, especially Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Belgium etc. over specific colonies within the African continent, backed by the policy of effective occupation clause of the area claimed. This recognition of authority coupled with the aforementioned clause gave the impetus to European powers to establish formal administrative structures in the colonized territories.

Essentially to prevent clashes between or amongst the colonial scramblers among other things, each sphere had defined territory which was expected to be maintain and recognized by all powers. However, in the event of clashes of interest over portion (s) in any of the colonized territory, was identified the colonial powers concerned were expected to redefine and consent to territorial amendment (s) made, through a round table agreement. The problem associated with this kind of territorial amendment (s) is that, in most cases, without the input of the indigenous colonial subjects whose first-hand information could assist the process with valuable historical facts on the disputed territory.

This non-involvement of the colonial subjects in the process of renegotiation, redefinition and amendments of disputed territories in the

present situation Michael Jayeoba shares becomes a major challenge which post-colonial Africa has to contend with. He further stressed this is clearly the oxygen responsible for the dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula by Nigeria and Cameroon as created by the colonial power of Britain who colonized Nigeria and Germany, the initial colonial ruler of Cameroon. Jayeoba (2011: 8)

This broad aforementioned geographical entity is the peninsula extension of the territorial waters of Calabar into the Gulf of Guinea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, it lies roughly between latitude 4'25N and 5'10N and longitude 8' 20E and 9' 08E, and consists of large mangrove forest islands with approximately an area of about 665Km (700SqKm). This area according to Jayeoba the currents interact and results in what he called huge foamy breakers and submarine shoals, rich in fish and other marine resources. Ukuta (2009: 41) The peninsula is generally viewed as oil-rich because it lies in the Gulf of Guinea estimated to host 10% of global oil and gas reserves and thus attracts oil prospecting companies. It should however be noted that large commercial quantity of oil was reported to have been discovered in recent times.

The aquatic splendor of the peninsula revolves around the people as a way of life and in fact depend completely on the rich aquatic resources as means of livelihood being predominantly fisher people, fish sellers, boat makers among others. It is pertinent to note here that the peninsula, is but a fishing frontier inhabited by different groups of people, join together by a common vocation-fishing. Thus, for Philip Afaha's robust scholarship that before the coming of colonialism, the peninsula was a bare land space, a den of criminals and water thieves. He further asserts the spirit of adventure drove people into the deep sea where they discovered the Bakassi Peninsula. It is not clear as to which group of people first settled in the area, the rich marine resources of the peninsula caused a score of people, mostly fishermen, to sail to the area. The consequence was a ragbag of a community which foisted upon the settlers, unique fishing culture. Afaha (2016:85)

It is however obvious from Anene's corroborative account which also shed light on the nomadic or migrant composition of the territory from the coastal region between Calabar and Douala before colonial rule. Anene (1971:47) Given the geographical as well as economic paradise of the peninsula would therefore explain why Nigeria and Cameroon tussle for the full legal control over the peninsula.

Brief History of the Bakassi Peninsula

It is significant that while a number of scholarly accounts have shed much light on the Nigeria – Cameroon border question, recently emphasis has shifted to the International Court of Justice Judgment on the Bakassi Peninsula, but these were rather dressed in nationalistic garbs and sprayed with some tribalistic perfume. The implication of this is that there appears to be a great disservice or disconnect of History associated with respect to the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913 which is the grundnorm of the colonial history of the peninsula, was misrepresented. While the blame for this is put on the long absence or neglect of History in the education system, but it is true the dialogue between History and the nation is a continuous process it is an unending interaction. For, the nation is a product of history in the sense of historical circumstances and events, and therefore the nation cannot escape from its past. Ade Ajayi (1991:11)

Be it as it may, it is this reality of past events and the effort of historians to consciously retrieve and interpret something of that reality lies the burden of history. As Professor Ade Ajayi however notes the nation is shaped by the effort of historians, among others, who try to establish the history of the nation, influence its group memory, and seek to define its nationality wherein lies their identity as a people. Conversely therefore without historical scholarship citizens group experience robs them of their humanity, and the knowledge of who they are, according to Robert Daniels rendering them as victims of collective amnesia, leaving them to grope in the dark for their own identity, Daniel (1966:6) which is why a historicity of

the Peninsula necessarily becomes a quintessence in view of wide spectrum of scholarship in this single subject.

It is however appropriate to trace the genesis of the problematic which arose following the now famous Anglo-German 1913 treaty, as it were, between two imperial powers and subsequently Nigeria and Cameroon as successor states on the basis of pacta sunt servanda meaning that agreement must be kept, is a well-established principle of customary international law. In view of this , when the League of Nations ratified the arrangement partitioning the territory of German Kameron (Cameroon) between Britain and France as a result of the former's defeat. Talla (1996:5-6) So, after the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles divided all German territories aforementioned were subsequently placed under British and French mandate by the League of Nations in 1922 and remained separated after 1945 when the United Nations, successor seized from Germany and her allies at the end of the Second World War. Ekine (2014:150-151)

Going forward, the Trusteeship agreement of 1946, built on the foundations of Article 76 of the United Nations Charter, specifically defined that one Cameroon two imperial powers indicated separate entities. It practically showed that the territories would develop separately and achieve the goals aptly defined in the enabling article, which articulated the task of preparing the territory for independence as such, the Cameroon territories remain separate. Also the British and French, administering authorities signed separate trusteeship agreements for their territories. (United Nations, Year Book:1946-1947)

Arguably therefore a quick glance of events from 1946, when the trusteeship agreement were signed, to 1961 when British Cameroon become independent, the territories were administered with policies quite distinct from the other following the peculiar interests of the colonizing authorities. As usual the British utilized their favourite principle of indirect rule as elsewhere while the French on their part, adopted the direct rule policy. Ikimi (1977:7-8) But a closer look portend francophone Cameroon a much more firm and well-coordinated as one piece, linked to the metropolis

(Paris), the British did not link their portion(s) directly to the metropolis (London). Rather, the British put in place two separate administrative apparatus for their portion, which they split into Northern and Southern Cameroons. This division of the British Cameroon into two spheres administered in Nigeria as if they are part of it created enormous bad blood as the idea brought disunity for the trusteeship territory. In light of this Victor Amaazee notes;

> The British, for what has been described as economic convenience, the British administered their portion as part of Nigeria, their bigger territory to the West of the Cameroon. Specifically, the Northern Cameroon was attached to the Northern Nigerian region and administered from Kaduna while Southern Cameroon was attached to the Eastern Nigerian region and administered from Enugu. Amaazee (2000:7)

Available evidence as defined by the 1946 "order in council" issued by the British authorities contained detailed provisions pertaining the one but two Cameroon called 'Northern Cameroon' and 'Southern Cameroon' as well as the border separating these two regions, now conveniently administered from colonial Nigeria but not part of it. Also, the 1954 'legal order' issued by the Secretary of State for the Colonies defining the boundary between Nigeria's Eastern region and the 'Southern Cameroon'. Bakassi Peninsula was in the 'Southern Cameroon', distinct from the Eastern region and the Calabar province and maps of the colonial period show this very clearly. Obasanjo (1981:93)

Certainly with the spate of political convulsion all over Nigeria in which ethnic politics become underpinnings of the crisis in the political fabric. It is a fact that the totality of the myriad of nationalistic tendencies exacerbated in the colonial era were borne out of ethnicity. As it were, Dr. E M L Endeley became the president of Cameroon National Federation (CNF) in 1949, as aforementioned, the two British Cameroons was

administered in Nigeria. John (2018) Following a dispute in the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly at Enugu in May 1953, nine out of thirteen members from the Southern Cameroon, who had been elected on the platform of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), opted for 'neutrality'. The explanation for the action that they were not Nigerians. As backlash for their action Mr. S. T. Muna, the only Southern Cameroonian in the cabinet was sacked. Njende (2018) It is evidently clear from the above account that the crisis led to the change of name from 'National Council for Nigeria and Cameroons' to 'National Council of Nigerian Citizens'.

The point be made here that there are no records at any time that claimed Bakassi Peninsula belonging to Nigeria outside of primordial references highlighting this development Salvation Ukuta however corroboratively notes thus and quite aptly that;

> During the July, 1953 London Constitutional Conference, Endeley, afraid of Nigerian domination, requested for the unconditional withdrawal of the Southern Cameroon from the Eastern Region of Nigeria, and its transformation into a separate region of its own in line with its trusteeship status. Britain agreed and implemented the separation in 1954, making the Southern Cameroon …, a semi-autonomous quasi-region of the Nigeria Federation with its own House of Assembly and Executive Council located at Buea. During that period, Endeley was called the leader of government business, not premier, primarily because Southern Cameroon was not yet a full region. Importantly, the Bakassi Peninsula, which was part of Kameron/Cameroon since 1913, as inherited in the League of Nations after World War I, was also excised from co-administration with the Eastern Region along with the rest of the Southern Cameroon at that time. There is no evidence that anyone made an issue of the matter … Ukuta (2001:35-36)

The imperative for the above is not far-fetched. In the January 1959 Southern Cameroon election (in which Bakassi residents participated), Dr. Endeley was voted out of power and replaced by John Ngu Foncha on the platform of the Kameron National Democratic Party (KNDP). The party's goal majorly was complete secession of Southern Cameroon from Nigeria and eventual reunification with francophone Cameroon as it came be. Consequently, on January 1, 1960, Cameroon's territory under France gained independence, followed by Nigeria on October 1, 1960. But Cameroon's future under trusteeship of the British remained an issue. S.J. Eple writes plebiscites were held on February 11 and 12, 1961, with the final termination of trusteeship in the Cameroon to determine the status of the populations of these territories, the population of West/Southern Cameroon decided to unite with the Republic of Cameroon (French) while the Northern Cameroonians voted to remain as an integral part of Nigeria.

In light of this, at independence the first Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa signed an exchange of notes with the United Kingdom avers to pacta sunt servanda and did same in 1962 with Cameroon. By customary international law, therefore, Nigeria inherited (and agreed without question) all the international boundary regimes of Nigeria, with Dahomey (now Benin), Niger, Chad and Cameroon, as originally defined by various colonial Anglo-German Treaties. Therefore, the Southern Cameroon (including the Bakassi Peninsula, which was now under separate direct British rule as a trusteeship territory), asked Nigerian troops stationed there to leave. So, were horribly replaced by British battalions.

However, available record shows that, it was the same pressure mounted by the Southern Cameroon might have informed the expeditious delimitation of the boundary by the Enugu-based 1st Queens Own Nigeria Regiment (IQONR) supported by other Nigerian troops as an internal security precautionary measures to forestall violence from the local population in the territory. The same old Anglo-German border of 1913 was resurveyed according to Miners that the Nigerian Army foot patrols to confirm the location of old beacons, and new police posts were constructed

along it for clarity. The whole idea was because the beacons were too far apart, and essentially to put in place inter-visible beacons along the original 1913 boundary. This exercise could not continue consequent on the first military coup d'etat and the civil war.

As we have consistently argued in this piece that Bakassi Peninsula was not an issue rather the maritime border which was vaguely defined by the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty. This is that the off-shore boundary appears unclear since there was no detailed demarcation of the 'navigable portion' of the approach channel to the Calabar estuary. But following the Nigeria civil war, both Nigeria and Biafra were in an international rat race for support and recognition. Nigeria lobbied its neighbours to prevent Biafra from using their territory as either a launch pad for military operations or a source of weapons supply coupled with the threat of the Bakassi Peninsula being used by Biafra drove General Gowon, necessitating more specific diplomatic exchanges with Cameroon authorities to clarify its position.

Of course curiously Nigeria got assurances from Cameroon the Bakassi Peninsula, would not be used by hostile elements. Nkemleke (2018) This is in addition to the fact that late President Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon whose father was originally from Kano, Nigeria. In fact, Ahidjo grew up around Yola and Mubi in Nigeria with friends like Senator Iya Abubakar. It was Nigeria's deliberate action to appoint his former district head in Nigeria late Ambassador Malabu, who was made ambassador to Cameroon to cement the relationship. Thus, Nigeria gained and sustained Cameroon's support during the civil war, not by territorial concessions as have been widely speculated, but by utilizing primordial sentiments shared between Ahmadou Ahidjo and people of northern Nigeria. Daura (2018)

Paradoxically, the 'territorial concession' issue under reference however came agog and amplified that General Yakubu Gowon, the former military head of state ceded Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon for support is arguable. Late president Ahidjo was only guided by an old adage that those living in glass house should not throw stones. Well served the purpose. Not forgetting the Southern Cameroonians stones and since he and key

elements in the francophone Cameroon bureaucracy were concerned of the consequences on Southern Cameroon of a precedent for secession by supporting Biafra. In addition, the 'rumour' that was making rounds that Biafra would also annex Southern Cameroon along with Fernando Po (Equatorial Guinea) after a successful secession raised eye brows on the part of Cameroon.

While on the one hand, in supporting Biafra, France was interested in breaking up Nigeria, the giant threating Anglophone nation, but was not interested in the balkanization of Cameroon which it, therefore kept discreetly informed of developments inside Biafra. On the other hand, such 'intelligence' and 'rumour' about alleged future Biafra intentions, were never actually confirmed by anyone but it played into old rivalries in the NCNC and Eastern region politics when the Southern Cameroon was administered alongside Nigeria as a trusteeship territory. Bimbo (2018)

Besides the personality diplomacy aforementioned, after the civil war, General Gowon and President Ahidjo in a frantic effort to gag records decreed that the name 'Biafra' or 'Bight of Biafra' be removed from the maps of the Gulf of Guinea close to the Nigeria-Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea border territory. Therefore, it was consequently changed to 'Bight of Bonny'. The other related issue was the security challenge during and after the Nigeria civil war resurrected the question to clarify the boundary. It was amplified however by reports that Cameroon had been exploring oil along the not yet to be demarcated maritime border between both countries when crisis engulf Nigeria in the 1960s. In order to avoid crisis between the two countries, several meetings were held by the Nigeria – Cameroon joint boundary commission, the consequence was the Yaoundé II Declaration of April 4, 1971 and Maroua Declaration of June 1, 1975 that was tendered at the ICJ by Cameroon.

Interestingly, however, unsatisfied concerned citizens as well as then foreign minister, Dr. Okoi Arikpo who was himself from the then South – Eastern State, asked the then Attorney General Professor Teslim Elias for a formal legal opinion on the matter to guide him in making

recommendations to the Head of State, General Gowon. Enthusiastically therefore the learned professor wrote his landmark legal opinion that actually guided the entire process. Unambiguously, he stated thus and it is reproduced here below;

> This ministry has given a most careful consideration to the whole question in the light of all the available evidence, and the conclusion is that there is no legal basis for Nigeria's claims to the Bakassi Peninsula for the reasons stated herein. According to the information received from the Federal Directorate of Surveys, the Bakassi Peninsula has never included as part of Nigeria in 1961. Also, the Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region (Definition of Boundaries) proclamation 1954 (LN 126 of 154) showed the Bakassi Peninsula as forming part of the then Southern Cameroon. Moreover, by a diplomatic note no. 570 of March 27, 1962, from your ministry to the embassy of the Cameroon in Lagos, to which was attached a map prepared by the Federal Surveys, Nigeria recognized the Bakassi Peninsula as forming part of the Cameroon. Ukuta (2009:7-8)

Again, the President Shehu Shagari government commissioned Professor Geoffrey Marston of Cambridge University, who submitted a detailed report to the then Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief R.O.A. Akinjide. The learned Professor Marston's advice was in line with the opinion of Professor Elias' quoted above. Thus far the rest of what transpired in 1981, 1994, 1996 and since then, is well-known, as evident by the activities of the General Abachi regime to formally institute a Bakassi Local Government Area and all the military clashes Akonye & Nwapi (2009) have been put to rest by the verdict of the International Court of Justice on October 10, 2002.

The Verdict of the International Court of Justice and Formal Transfer of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon.

At the Hague, after years of legal tussle for and against between Nigeria and Cameroon, the court on October 10, 2002 ruled that, sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula lies with Cameroon. According to the learned jurist, Cameroon's title over the territory was based on the 1913 treaty signed between Britain and Germany before the First World War. However, he added that the agreement signed on March 11, and April 12, 1913 in London, and Obokun respectively, delimited the boundaries of the two countries as they then were. The Court, therefore, held that treaties entered into during colonial period had fixed the land boundaries between the two countries, and it upheld the validity of the treaties. Importantly, it can therefore be said that the seed of the war over the Bakassi Peninsula by two neighbouring African countries of Nigeria and Cameroon was sown by the colonalists.

Also, among other things the ICJ ruled that:

- The inhabitants of the Bakassi Peninsula, mainly Nigerians were not required to move away or change nationality.
- The Cameroon government was mandated to protect the rights, infrastructure and welfare of the Nigerian population.
- Nigeria must as a matter of fact withdraw its troops from the territory, especially the northern frontier of the Peninsula

In order to maintain international peace and order, Nigeria finally agreed to hand over Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon in the UN brokered Green Tree Agreement signed in New York (USA) on June 12, 2002 by Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Paul Biya (Cameroon). The said agreement was packaged under the auspices of the Nigeria – Cameroon Mixed Commission that was set up by the U.N Secretary General, Kofi Annan. However, the symbolic transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon took place on August 14, 2006 in the Archibong town. The historic transfer was witnessed colourfully by the African Union (AU),

British, French, Germany, and US among other officials under the watchful eyes of the UN Secretary General's representative in West Africa. The Justice Ministers of the two nations, Bayo Ojo (Nigeria) and Maurice Kam (Cameroon) signed necessary documents to officially formalized the transfer.

It should however be highlighted that while transferring the Bakassi territory to Cameroon, Nigeria gave her citizens, domicile in the area two carefully designed open options;

- To continue living in the territory under the Cameroonian authority;
- To be prepared for resettlement elsewhere within the Nigerian territory as permanent measure to keep body and soul alongside their ancestral kiths and kins in Nigeria.

Obviously, the people of Cameroon were happy to have gained the Bakassi Peninsula and formally handed over to, like every contest there are bound to be winners and losers. And the official statements credited to Cameroonian government, in ensuring that the population of both countries can co-habit peacefully and harmoniously in Bakassi, is bound to be like a flower that is born to blush unseen and to waste its sweetness in the desert air. And therefore, the decision of the Nigerian government did not however go down well with many people, especially indigenes of Bakassi. Expectedly, splinter groups emanated among other things declared Democratic Republic of Bakassi and so on. In other cases Nigerians are calling for the reversal of the decision especially as the new government of President Yar'Adua assumed office on May 29, 2007. Also lending its voice on the issue, the Nigerian parliament in Abuja on 22 November, 2007, rejected the transfer and resolved to commence a debate on the issue on the floor of the house to determine the way forward.

It is significant to note that these responses are quite patriotic or nationalistic. However, this piece is submitting that the decision of the federal government, under the Obasanjo administration, to transfer Bakassi to Cameroon in compliance with the judgment of ICJ, was a welcomed

development for the respect for international rule of law. But this is not to undermine the fatal psychological, physical, economic and political blow on this unfortunate group of Nigerians as well as sought the input of the Nigerian Parliament (Senate), at least for ratification before the formal transfer is a sine qua non.

The aforementioned position or submission is therefore predicated on the following viewpoints:

- It is a common knowledge that Nigeria diplomacy which has crystalized and concretized into the doctrine of Africa as the centerpiece of the country's foreign policy is a philosophical and pragmatic conviction characterized in the liberation of the African continent is not news again. This is that Nigeria is regarded as the leader nation of Africa in the world politics and as such, the immediate transfer of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon was one sacrificial price that Nigeria had to pay for her leadership in Africa, especially when the ruling of the ICJ favoured the handing over.
- That Nigeria is a beautiful bride and highly respected continentally for being the arrow head of mediation between or among countries in dispute. So, as it were, if Nigeria undermines the judgment of ICJ, it might possibly undermine its influence to mediate effectively in a similar case involving other countries.
- Despite the fact that Bakassi Peninsula would have been an added economic boast to Nigeria, it is pertinent to state that one of the basic ingredients for internal political stability and economic prosperity is for a nation to be at peace with her neighbours. This is even more necessary as Nigeria is trying another democratic experience and making frantic efforts to revamp her ailing economy.
- The global system consist of numerous independent countries that interact with each country being governed by a defacto and dejure government which are expected to maintain and respect international order as communicated by the world body UN and regional organizations like the AU, EU and so forth. And that it is

desirable for Nigeria not to attract unnecessary and avoidable backlash from the United Nations and the whole international community for the non-compliance of the ruling of the ICJ. This compliance, accordingly, gave Nigeria the needed requisite full concentration in her quest to becoming Africa's economic and financial hub and one of the best 20 global economies in the world with a note on good governance and resource utility paradigm. Orugbani (2019)

- Beside the above stated consideration among other spectrum of course, wise counsel and good judgment demand that whoever lives in a glass house would not throw stones. If indeed Nigeria wishes to be the giant of Africa as it used to be. This is so because South Africa has over taken Nigeria in all fronts strategically. Onuoha (2008) Therefore she must be wise to use her call time card, especially her quest for a permanent seat at the Security Council, the highest decision making organ in UN must be meticulously guided by her actions. Therefore, the peaceful and formal transfer of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, in spite of the humanitarian crisis that arose there from should not deter her averred African centerpiece diplomacy in the 21st century to attract unnecessary sanctions, suspensions, fines, embargoes etc. which would down play its potential as well as a question mark on Nigeria's record on international rule of law and world peace. This is the whole essence and spirit of African brotherliness and diplomacy with lessons therein for the national interest, nonetheless, the sleeping giant may relapse into coma.

Conclusion

It is a fact of history that the tussle over the Bakassi Peninsula by two neighbouring African countries of Nigeria and Cameroon was basically a creation of the imperial powers, Britain and Germany, who entered into agreement over the peninsula without the input of the indigenous colonial

subject people who could assist with accurate and compelling historical facts for appropriate renegotiation, redefinition and territorial amendment. This problem is not however peculiar to Nigeria and Cameroon but common to most African countries in post-colonial international relations as elsewhere in global history.

It is instructive as well as ironic to note that despite the ICJ judgment it may not be strange for Nigerians to have advocated for the reversal of the government decision to transfer the territory to Cameroon because of the rich natural endowment of the Bakassi Peninsula. Indeed, if a referendum was conduct, citizens would massively vote for the retention of the territory by Nigeria for the accruable economic advantage and national pride. The piece however highlights compendium of historical evidence to support the ICJ ruling that sovereignty lies with Cameroon and have adduce reasons for the transfer of the territory to Cameroon in compliance with ICJ as stressed elsewhere.

Furthermore, the piece stresses Nigeria's leadership within the African continent. It is pertinent that Nigeria has made many sacrifices to ensure total emancipation of the African countries like South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and recent globally respected efforts to enforce peace and tranquility, military, political stability and socio-economic progress in many African countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Guinea Conakry, Southern Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia etc. all of this good record would definitely go down the drain should Nigeria disobeyed the ruling of the ICJ which ceded Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon that never declared war with Nigeria over the territory but wisely approached the International Court of Justice for peaceful resolution of the case.

Thus far, it is clear that for Nigeria not to incur the wrath of the world body (United Nations) which has the mandate to enforce the ruling of the ICJ on all member nations. This is in addition, Nigeria should endeavor to maintain good relations and be at peace with her neighbours as well as the wider international community and avoid unnecessary war, embargo, sanction etc.

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