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For Immediate Release:

STATEMENT ON THE RECENT COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LAGOS STATE CHAPTER OF THE NURTW

The recent comments attributed to the Chairman of the Lagos State Chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) have, quite rightly, been perceived by many as a disturbing, yet all-too-familiar attempt to intimidate, coerce, and undermine the free electoral will of Lagosians.

The Chairman's post-DSS explanation — that he was merely speaking to his union members about union affairs is wholly unconvincing. Even if that were the case, there is absolutely no justification for using threatening or coercive language in relation to any citizen's right to vote, let alone towards union members whose rights and welfare he is duty-bound to protect.

Viewed in the context of the NURTW's troubling history of political involvement and violent episodes in Lagos, these comments are not only reckless they are dangerous.

The Lagos State Government's silence in the wake of these remarks is deafening, though unsurprising. It is important to recall that this same NURTW is involved in the distribution of sensitive election materials and personnel across the state, by INEC and LASIEC, a reality that makes these threats all the more unacceptable.

This episode reflects a troubling pattern of behaviour long associated with the Lagos NURTW leadership and its proximity to the ruling establishment in Lagos. But as their threats grow louder, their influence continues to diminish in the face of the growing, resolute will of the people.

To individuals like Sego, I offer this advice: spend more time listening to the people including your own members and less time trying to intimidate them. The majority of NURTW members, like most Lagosians, are economically marginalized and disproportionately bear the burden of poor governance, while the benefits are reserved for a select few, including leaders like yourself.

It is also worth remembering that the NURTW is but one of many affiliate unions in Nigeria's organized labour landscape.

I will also say: "Awon omo yin o sise ni 2023. Won fi ti omo j'ise eru ti e ran won ni." What you referred to as a "mistake" in 2023 was, in fact, a conscious, growing expression of collective dissatisfaction - a signal of the future, not a misstep.

Be prepared, because what was once a rumble is fast becoming a roar.

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